

Nebraskan Editorials:

That They Might Appear

For some time The Nebraskan has been editorially discussing the contributing factors to and resulting conditions of the demotion of Clyde Mitchell as chairman of the department of agricultural economics.

In its editorials The Nebraskan has considered the oblique reflection which such a demotion casts upon the reputation and professional competence of its victims and, more important, the damaging effects which such administrative action produces in faculty morale, the occupational stature of its institution and the principles of academic freedom.

In its news columns today The Nebraskan places six specific charges made by Mitchell alongside those which have been printed in recent weeks by University professors and faculty members who have recently left the institution.

The Mitchell Charges:

1. Repeated attempts were made to "tone down", modify and even to censor my publications.

2. I was advised to curtail my speaking and writing activities.

3. I was advised to resign my position and move elsewhere, assured that I would never get a salary increase at the University, and that I was on the Regents' "blacklist."

4. I was notified in February, 1955, that because of continuing controversy over my views, including strong objection from the legislative groups responsible for University funds, I was going to be relieved of my chairmanship, and that, furthermore, if such controversy continued, I would probably be discharged, notwithstanding my academic tenure.

5. I was notified in September, 1955, that the change would be made while I was out of the United States on my Fulbright Fellowship, and that if any "reasons" would be demanded, an official statement would be made that I had performed my professional duties inadequately.

6. My annual contract of appointment to the position of department chairman ends on June 30, 1956. From 5000 miles away, I cannot be certain on the legal point, but it appears that the University has violated a contract in removing me as of May 1, 1956. In view of the fact that abrogations of freedom

have occurred constantly, contract violation is perhaps a minor matter.

The statements which Clyde Mitchell has courageously placed before the faculty, students and citizens of the state of Nebraska assume such proportions of gravity that they can no longer be tossed off as "ridiculous," "mere opinion" or with the hypocritical transparency of a "strictly administrative matter."

The question which these statements raise are of such seriousness that they threaten the very principles upon which this University—and every university—have been founded.

Is this the sort of support which a faculty member can expect at the University?

Is this the kind of cooperation which a professor can expect from his administrative superiors?

Is this the nature of defense which a University employee can expect when his speeches, his publications, his very views come under attack?

Is this the kind of confidence which the institution has in the standards of academic independence, the fundaments of intellectual freedom and the right of every man to "think what he likes and say what he thinks?"

Is this the sort of assurance we have that our University puts its faith in the American ideals of freedom and higher education?

If our cherished freedoms are in danger, it is not because their opponents are too strong; it is because their supporters are too weak.

If our basic liberties are jeopardized it matters not who is against these principles; it matters who is for them.

If our constitutional rights are impaired, it makes little difference by whom they are put under attack; it makes all the difference by whom they are defended.

If the spirit of academic freedom is endangered at the University, it has little effect who has exerted or yielded to the pressures, but it does make all the effect in the world who is not afraid to stand forth and resist them.

In short, let us trust that those who have imperiled the independence of the University of Nebraska can be solidly reinforced with men who have the resource, the vision and the courage to oppose the trend.—B.B.

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS

by Dick Bibler



—The Challenge—

Are Our Teachers Afraid To Teach?

By ROBERT M. HUTCHINS
Former Chancellor of
University of Chicago

Competence or professional skill will not protect the teacher. In the investigations that have gone on around the country, I do not recall one in which it was charged that the teacher was not a good teacher.

I do not remember more than one or two in which it was suggested that the teacher attempted to get his pupils to adopt his alleged political views or even that they knew what those views were.

When a school board conducts an investigation, it will fire a teacher for insubordination if he refuses to answer a question. The constitutional protection open to the American citizen in criminal trials or Congressional investigations will not save a teacher's job.

In most colleges and universities in the country, a professor who refuses to answer the questions of any governmental authority will be compelled to resign.

Harvard is an exception. And look what happened to Harvard. Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy has warned mothers and fathers against our oldest university, calling it a sanctuary for Communists and a "smelly mess."

The senator's objection to Harvard is that it has refused to discharge a professor who stood on his rights under the Constitution that the Senator is sworn to defend.

Harvard is the richest university in the world; it has a strong tradition, sanctified by time. Yet, even an ancient and wealthy seat of learning can hardly welcome the repeated public attacks of a senator of the United States.

These are times when nobody wants to be criticized by anybody for anything, and Harvard is not immune to the spirit of the times. The professors at Harvard have now been notified that the inquisitor's eye is upon them. They are human: They will watch their step.

They will speak less freely. They will write on guard. They may decide that, on many issues, the safest course is not to speak or write at all.

The attack on Harvard will not be lost on other, weaker institutions. If this can happen to Harvard, think what can happen to them. And so professors everywhere will hesitate before they express opinions contrary to those of Senator McCarthy, or before they say anything that can be twisted—somehow, sometime, by someone—into an unpopular statement.

The full, frank, free discussion upon which education depends must therefore disappear. The freemarket in ideas may well be strangled by fear. I have seen the effects of legislative investigations on a university I had the duty of administering.

They were paralyzing. The faculty came to feel that saying anything to which the more benighted

members of the Illinois Legislature might take exception could embarrass the institution. Yet, the legislative investigations turned up nothing discreditable to the university.

The view is growing that we must avoid "controversial issues" in the classroom. But issues cannot be omitted from education, except through falsity, distortion or concealment. If an issue is presented as though it were not one—that is, as though there were only one side to it—this is not education; it is indoctrination.

This is precisely what the Russians do. And those who pass through a similar process in the United States are being trained to become passive subjects of a police state.

They cannot think and act as independent citizens in a democracy. They will not know what are the issues with which, as citizens, they must cope; they will not know how to go about facing those issues.

Depending on the political atmosphere at any given time, some issues are hotter than others. Today, the issues about which people feel most strongly lie in the realm of international affairs or concern the political and economic life of the country.

The realm of the political is peculiarly the realm of opinion, and hence of proper controversy. It is absurd to suggest that, on these issues, teachers should present only "facts;" the selection of the facts to be presented always involves a judgment.

And though the facts may be accepted, the conclusions to be drawn from them may be far apart.

A teacher is supposed to teach, not echo. A teacher is an intelligence, not a phonograph. The greatest absurdity of all would be to forbid the very consideration of issues in the educational

Eds. note: Today's "Challenge" article was reprinted in the March 9, 1954 edition of Look magazine and was written by Robert Maynard Hutchins, former Chancellor of the University of Chicago and presently affiliated with the Ford Foundation. The article was entitled, "Are Our Teachers Afraid To Teach?"

system; for that would mean that the rising generation of Americans would be both unequipped and unprepared to meet the life-and-death problems that confront it.

What can we ask of our teachers. We can demand the fairest possible presentation of a problem—of all sides of a problem. We must demand for our children the freest exploration of ideas. That is not what vocal pressure groups are yammering about. They want only their side presented, and any-

—Plan Proposed—

Exam System Said Outmoded, Illogical

By JACK FLYNN

With the final exam season approaching I think it is a proper time to evaluate our outmoded exam system. I am amazed that the progressive educators in our progressive university have not legislated a change in the method and manner of final exams.

What is the purpose of the final exam? If we are to take our present exam system as a measure of purpose we would determine that grading of the student is the primary end purpose of testing.

Grading of the student is most necessary if we are to be demanding and selective. However, it would seem that this purpose is secondary to another and should be relegated to a secondary position of consideration.

The other purpose I have mentioned also falls in the field of evaluation—the evaluation by instructor and student of their work so that they may determine their strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of teaching and study. They can then better themselves by making use of their findings in follow-up work.

Experiments have shown that the value of examinations dimin-

ishes in a direct ratio to the time it takes to return them to the student in their corrected form and it is also known that the value of examinations increases in a direct ratio to the amount of time spent in post-exam student-teacher discussion.

Then why the present final exam system with late-returned papers and no student-teacher discussion? What logical justification is there for the present system?

I suggest a system of early finals given at least two weeks before the last period. These exams could be administered during regularly scheduled class periods, thus eliminating the time-consuming exam period.

Exercise of expediency in correcting the exams would allow a minimum of one week for student-teacher discussion, also during regularly scheduled class periods. This system may not be the final answer, but it is a step in the right direction.

I would caution the parties responsible for perpetuation of the present system that if they do not see fit to renovate I may circulate a PETITION.

Jan Brownell

Campus Issue Talked Over

I hope my readers will pardon this tear-stained sheet, but this is my last column for the Nebraskan and I feel that I have a right to be misty-eyed.

After all, a two-year string of cliches is no small accomplishment. However, I admit that the prospect of having a full-time drinking schedule is some consolation, and makes things much easier for me.

I notice that Roger Henkle, the raffish ragamuffin of Rathbone Road, also wrote his last column this week, an event which caused such loud cheering that it nearly

drowned out the sobbing and wailing which accompanied the announcement that this would be my final effort. At least the paper won't be handicapped from the start next year.

(Actually, Henkle has done a good job, but I couldn't resist the temptation to fling the final insult.)

Before I leave you, though, I feel that it is my duty to pass on a little advice. If my college experiences have been neither happy nor profitable, at least they may be of some benefit to you.

When I came to the University, I was a brash, healthy, youngster, with twinkling eyes and a roguish smile which fairly melted the ladies' hearts. Since then I have been beset by more worries and plagued by more ills than this solid flesh could bear.

They have left their marks on me, to be sure, but through it all I have managed to retain my life

Jess Jestin'

and my sanity. I achieved this by wrapping myself in a mantle of cold indifference.

And that is my advice to you. If you wish to come successfully through college, remain indifferent. Once you allow yourself to be moved to enthusiasm by anything, you're caught. Merely put your trust in God and the efficiency of the degree mill, do as little work as possible, and you will be reasonably safe.

Well, it's time for me to be on my way. I don't know where most of you are going, to the Devil probably, but I think that I'll just slip into the nearest bar for a long, long rest. I deserve it.

—Distrust, Suspicion—

Russians Outmaneuver U.S. Foreign Policies

By JOHN HEECKT

The recent Russian announcement that she would cut her military manpower by 1,200,000 has placed the United States once more behind the international eight-ball. Russia has again managed to win a skirmish by a clever retreat.

The United States failure to find any agreement with the Russians on disarmament and the resulting Russian propaganda affect on the rest of the world. They

have managed to make it appear that they, not we, are indeed the real champions of peace.

Russia has been able to do this because of her proximity to the trouble centers of Europe and Asia. As she can mobilize and move overland to any of these areas with much more speed than we can move overseas with a full army, it has become unnecessary for her to maintain an army of the former size and she can easily turn this manpower to work in her

lagging industry where it will be of much more value. The United States is unwilling to make a similar cut at this time for a comparable reason. If we were to drastically reduce our forces we would have to reduce our forces in Germany, Asia and other areas, leaving us vulnerable to an attack without sufficient manpower to hold a front until our lines of supply and reserve become adequate.

The possibility that the Russian government may be on the level and seriously in favor of relieving tension by cutting armaments seems not to have entered the mind of the American diplomats.

Our experience has been one of distrust and suspicion, and consequently we are not going to gamble that the Russian move is on the level even though we are losing a battle in the cold war.

Unfortunately, the rest of the world is apt to view the Russian move with joy and turn a cold eye on us in the future.

Perhaps the United States should beware that her suspicions do not cause her to follow those policies that serve to defeat her interests rather than promote them.

The Portfolio

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—Nebraskan Letterip—

Outstanding Nebraskans

To the Editor:

I would like to congratulate The Nebraskan staff and especially its editor for their presentation of the Mitchell case, and fading academic freedom on this campus.

Although some will tell you to ease up on the justified criticism, it is only because of the truth of the old adage: "the Truth hurts."

If this University is going to be run by an administration of small minds, let them admit it in words as they have in deeds.

The wishy-washy, innocuous statement of Chancellor Hardin will do nothing to calm the situation; in fact, such a statement which is contrary to the actions of the administration only invites ridicule.

No one denies the legal right of the administration in demoting anyone. But, as tyranny usually begins, they have been able to violate the spirit of academic freedom under a cloak of legal power and flowery words.

Of the several professors I have talked to, all have felt that while a case could not be made out before a faculty committee, since the administration acted within its legal right, the administration has definitely violated the spirit of academic freedom, and felt that the administration yielded to outside forces.

If the reasons were true which were given for Mitchell's demo-

tion, then why doesn't the administration demote other equally "incompetent" department heads?

Since the Nebraskan is asking for nominations for Outstanding Nebraskans, I would like to nominate Regent Welsh and Chancellor Hardin, the former for leading the conservative forces, and the latter for yielding to those forces and then covering up by words.

Gold medals should be given to these men for outstanding work in spreading the reputation of the University in influential educational circles in the United States, and even abroad. (I wonder what the international scholars studying under Dr. Mitchell think of Nebraska.)

They have done more to spread Nebraska's reputation than any of our famous, illustrious party-raids ever did or will.

Keep up the good work, and let's impress upon our administration that such acts as they have done—our statements notwithstanding, since the two don't agree—will not be tolerated by a student body interested in a search for truth.

Since, if the administration knew my name, they could link it with the professors to whom I have talked, in order to prevent any possible reprisals against them and what academic freedom is left on the campus, I am requesting that my name not be published.

A Graduate Student

The Duty Of Newspapers

To the Editor:

As an alumnus who has long been deeply concerned about intellectual freedom at the University, I have followed your recent news stories and editorials with great interest.

I have been proud of The Nebraskan and its editor who have consistently exemplified responsible journalism. Your integrity of purpose has been evident and should not be subject to question, nor to aspersions.

I have been dismayed to find no editorial voices among the newspapers of the state supporting your

courageous stand. One would hope that not all of them are subservient to pressure groups.

Your stand has been brave, and you have kept the discussions dignified. You have shown journalistic leadership which is encouraging to all who believe that it is the duty of newspapers to help preserve freedom, academic and otherwise.

In the present controversy, it is my opinion that the administration has come off second, and the newspapers of the state, a very poor third.

An Alumnus

Pseudo-Sophistication Infests Student Body

By FRED DALY
Editorial Page Editor

A favorite target of student editors after the failure of some school function or another is "student apathy," a rather vague attitude covering lack of interest, lack of ambition and the startling ability of college students to be uninformed.

Whenever a school event falls delicately flat, the failure of the occasion is either traced back to the group who organized it in the first place, or to the students who failed to contribute by just being there.

After the function is over, and the monetary deficit totaled and sent with quivering hand to presidents of sponsoring groups and the college comptroller, a slow dirge is played and those most involved in putting the thing on gather together and try to figure out just what happened.

These dirges are becoming more prevalent at the University.

The reasons why University functions don't come off as they did "in the good old days" are not the kind that can be rapidly deduced and set down on paper.

There are no really concrete factors available; instead, there seems to be a general feeling running through the student body that might very well indicate that the students just don't care what happens. Is this, then, apathy? It would appear so.

But why general student lack of interest on a campus that in past years fairly reeked with "collegiate" spirit? School functions were well-attended, athletic contests drew large numbers of the student body as well as fans from out in the state and there was a genuine Cornhusker attitude that made students want to attend these events.

Lately, however, a feeling of pseudo-sophistication can sometimes be seen to prevail, when it is considered square to get excited over anything, and even more odd to show this excitement with anything more than a polite shrug.

Many people blame the recent and vigorous administration attitude on drinking, which has put an iron hand on most house functions. Students have the idea they can't possibly have a good time without a bottle under

the table.

This may be true, in an F. Scott Fitzgerald sort of way, but it is rather frightening. It is quite foolish to say that college life nurtures a society of budding bottle cases, but the glass crutch under "social awareness" at informal student gatherings has become established.

Naturally, you don't have to drink to have a good time or to be accepted by others, but a growing number circulating in the extra-curricular campus social orbit do it anyway.

Also, many people firmly believe that campus functions don't offer the kind of recreation and facilities that students want.

The University honestly offers some pretty good things for the student body. This group, however, would rather overlook this fact. We are too interested in sitting around doing nothing and complaining about nothing to do to realize what is going on.

This realization, however, would take a little effort. And we are college students, and are too busy to waste this effort of pulling our heads out of the sand.

'Liberal' Nebraska?

(Eds. Note: The following editorial was published in the May 21 issue of The Denver Post under the headline of "Liberal Nebraska?")

We are sorry to note that at the University of Nebraska, Dr. William F. Swindler has resigned as director of journalism, stepping down to a professorship at no reduction in salary.

Bill Swindler had some ideas about education for newspaper work which were worthy and timely. He visualized journalism as a professional school for which students were to be selected, exposed to learning-in-depth, and given transfusions of special knowledge in preparation for a life of extraordinary intellectual endeavor.

He did not, apparently, communicate his ambitious program to the administration or regents with sufficient persuasiveness to overcome their ignorance of the subject or to make journalism really competitive with other university offerings.

In a wholesomely candid statement announcing his resignation, Dr. Swindler expressed regret that the regents had reduced the school of journalism to the status of a department from its former autonomous position as a professional school.

The one ominous note in an otherwise mannerly agreement to disagree appeared in the director's reference to

"pressures" from "vocal and hidebound elements" who have apparently objected to Dr. Swindler's insistence upon examining "both news media and issues in the news."

That does not sound like the great liberal state of Nebraska. But time and circumstances change, even in Nebraska.

Perhaps the Cornhuskers are not yet ready to approach the teaching of journalism with the same intellectual intensity or professional thoroughness as Columbia, Missouri or Minnesota Universities. In which case Dr. Swindler does not belong at the head of the school. But Nebraska is losing a bet.

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