

HELL WEEK

Consistent With Fraternity Goals

"We, the member Fraternities of the Interscholastic Council of the University of Nebraska recognize our responsibility as a leader of the fraternity world to set forth a new training creed. We recognize the need for a program that trains pledges to carry out effectively their responsibilities when they become active, one that is consistent with modern thinking. This program must recognize the difference between today's highly independent youth and those of thirty years ago while retaining the ideals of gracious living, character development, and scholastic achievement.

"We therefore recognize that mental and physical degradation, personal servitude, and such programs that hazard the health, well-being, and scholarship of an individual are inconsistent with the aforementioned ideals . . ."

Fraternity pledge training is once again in the public eye. During the past week, several chapters on this campus have been engaging their pledge classes in Hell or Help week, in most cases the same. Last week, Alpha Gamma Rho managed to get particular attention.

We do not plan to dwell on the AGR incident for other than a few short comments. First, we feel the act was completely ridiculous. Secondly, we feel it is in direct violation of Interscholastic Council legislation and certainly not conduct becoming a University student or organization.

AGR and too many other fraternities on this campus are still relying on the pledge training tactics that were used 30 years ago. Too many Fraternity men set back and say, "well, I went through it, he can too." Too many Fraternity men encourage their own chapters to violate University, Interscholastic Council and even their own national fraternity rulings which outlaw and condemn hell weeks or activities which are degrading and inconsistent with the ideals of the fraternity.

One would think that a fraternity would learn after being prosecuted once before for its pledge training. AGR was cited and fined \$300 two years ago for violation of IFC legislation.

But the question is not whether boys will be boys and kill rabbits to prove it. The question here is, what has been done to eliminate Hell weeks on this campus? What has been done to promote the necessary change in pledge training that must be made?

We would like to quote from an anonymous letter received by the Nebraskan. It points out quite well what the situation is within the chapters on this campus.

"I am not a quitter. I finished their 'hell week' and then told them where they could go. I slobbered on my belly; I ate their eggs; I bared my buttocks for their paddles; I let them organize me, de-apathize me, chastize me, but after four days of agony, when the rest of my so-called brothers were ready to become active I stated that it was no longer my desire to join their select group . . ."

"If they think that I would like to be on the other end of the paddle, they are wrong. I would not even want to be the grocer who sells them the eggs that slide down the gulleys of their pledges. If they glory in making a group of men crawl and scream and vomit, then they do it—not me . . ."

"Unity, fraternity, social ability—bosh—"

the objectives of the fraternity have become either 'be subservient to the active' or 'be superior to the pledge.'

"The advance information that I had (about fraternity Hell Weeks and pledge training) talked about scavenger hunts and games and a work project of some kind. Well, we had all that . . . but that game only took an hour. The rest of the time we would be jumping when they said jump, sitting when they sit and eating when they said eat. Our games were exercises, and our work project was our minds and our bodies. Everyday we would clean the house, only to watch them explode the next night with more fun and filth . . ."

"Hell week ended with cleaning, but no matter how much soap and water we scrubbed into those walls the stagnant odor nearly turned your stomach when you entered the house. Everything ended with that final cleaning—including me. That is when I told them goodbye.

"I think it took guts for a man who had just subjected himself to four sleepless days and nights of physical and mental maltreatment to refuse a cold beer and leave the house that had been a part home to him for four months . . . I have no desire to play the role of Simon Legree to the new pledge.

"I am glad that I quit, and my purpose in writing this letter is to explain that I am not a quitter in the cowardly sense, but to explain that I just did not sign up for the next course—a course in fraternity exploitation of the body of a man—a temple of God."

This situation is not unique only to its writer. It is, in full or in part, fairly prominent across the campus. Parts of it can even be tied into the sorority system's infamous Hell Night or fun and games week.

Some people thought that legislation passed four years ago was strictly public relations. Some people thought and still think that Hell Week is tradition and must not be altered at any cost. Some people feel that amusement for the active chapter should take precedence over character development.

We are aware that fraternity is going through a change. A period of evolution. We are told that expansion of the system, and reeducation to our ideals and principles is of necessity.

We are also aware that the Fraternity picture on this campus has rapidly changed. But one aspect has completely been neglected. Freshmen training. Can the fraternity develop character, personality, individual leadership and citizenship without fun and games? Without personal servitude? Without regard for individual human dignity? Without killing rabbits?

We think so. We urge the IFC to discuss Pledge training. We hope they will investigate their pledge training creed which was passed only a few short years ago. Yes, the fraternity must change and is changing. Fraternity does have a significant position on the campus community. Fraternity does have high ideals and purpose.

But it has flaws and problems. We hope that this incident with AGR, which could have happened or could still happen to a dozen chapters, was not necessary to provoke an investigation into how to develop men. It is not only a black mark on the system, but one on the University.

How Do You Teach Democracy?

One view of the educational implications of Francis Gary Powers' Moscow trial is offered here by Raymond English, professor of political science at Kenyon College in Gambler, Ohio:

"Q. Defendant, did you realize whether by intruding into the airspace of the Soviet Union you were violating the sovereignty of the USSR?"

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Do you think now you did your country a good or bad service?"

A. I would say a very bad service . . .

Q. Did it occur to you that a flight might provoke military conflict?"

A. The people who sent me should have thought of these things. My job was to carry out orders. I do not think it was my responsibility to make such decisions.

Q. Do you regret making this flight?"

A. Yes, very much."

This exchange, in which U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers exposed his lack of political sophistication before a 1960 Russian tribunal which sentenced him to 10 years in prison for spying, was abruptly recalled last week when the 32-year-old airman was dramatically released in exchange of convicted Soviet spy Rudolf Abel.

Among other things, Americans who remembered the trial recalled that Mr. Powers (a) exposed his unawareness of any reasons which his government might have to suspect the aggressive preparations of a totalitarian dictatorship confessedly dedicated to burying his own country; (b) admitted that he knew nothing about politics, and (c) confessed that he was principally motivated by the desire to earn money on a fairly lavish scale.

Pews Is Not an Exception

Most of us, in similar circumstances, would probably have behaved as unheroically as the pilot of the U-2. We are an unheroic lot, the spineless, latter-day generations of a civilization upon which the barbarians appear to be closing in. And, no doubt, even if the pilot had possessed vigorous moral and political loyalties based on real intellectual conviction, the Russians would not have brought him to trial until they had thoroughly broken his spirit.

But the disquieting evidence, for Americans and for the whole world was that little pressure was needed to make this man appear as he did—as a mercenary, rather than a free citizen serving with affection and honor. The episode was a crimsonly embarrassing.

Unfortunately, the incident must be brought back to mind. We must keep bringing it back, just as we must keep remembering the revelations of self-like political indifference in many prisoners-of-war of the Korean conflict. We must remember these things, and ask: Why does the country which is the leader of the "Free World" produce citizens who appear to know neither the meaning of freedom nor the impera-

tive loyalty which freedom demands? The captured intelligence report from a Chinese interrogator in Korea can hardly be repeated too often:

"The American soldier has weak loyalties: to his family, his community, his country, his religion, and to his fellow soldier. He is ignorant of social values, social conflicts, and tensions. There is little or no knowledge or understanding, even among American university graduates, of U.S. political history and philosophy; the Federal, state, and community organizations; states' and civil rights, freedoms, safeguards, and how these allegedly operate within his own decadent system."

The Problem of Cynicism

The indictment is painfully near the truth. Conceivably, the young men and women of 1960 are less cynical and ignorant than those of 1950. Yet a short while ago a student—a frank, manly, likeable 20-year-old—chose in an examination to write an essay in answer to the question: "What would you do, if you were a prisoner-of-war in Communist hands, and saw that your fellow prisoners were being affected by Communist propaganda?" His answer, excruciating as it is, deserves to be quoted: "Now what could I do? I can just imagine the situation, stuck in some hole for two years, eating a half cup of rice, hardly any clothing, and my fellow prisoners treating each other worse than the Communists do. My widowed mother back home not collecting her pension because some politician, who is a cheat or a crook, thinks that if you hold any job after 65 you don't get pensions . . . The officers in the army getting the warm clothing 10 miles from the front while we freeze doing the dirty work."

"And after taking American history and political science courses I know that our whole constitution is a farce . . . And the minority groups, Negro, Catholic, Jew, are being held back. Most Americans are greedy and money hungry and don't give a damn about the guys in the prison camp."

"What would I do? — I'd keep my mouth shut."

This is an unusually honest if rather bad-tempered, statement of a legitimate and perhaps fairly widespread point of view. Granted the right of the young man to have strong opinions of his own, we cannot repress a certain revulsion not only at his failure to grasp the real and profound contrasts between a relatively free social and political system (with all its imperfections) and a totalitarian system, but at his conscious rejection of any personal responsibility in the predicament.

If he can feel so totally irresponsible in an imaginary situation, one wonders how he will react in a real one. Above all, one searches for indications of the idealism of youth—for a trace of love, faith,

chivalry, and self-sacrifice.

These are extreme illustrations of a social malaise which troubles the free societies in varying degrees. Comparable cynicism and worse ignorance doubtless gnaw secretly at the totalitarian societies, but the diseases of slave-states can hardly comfort the free. Nor can the remedies used by such states—censorship, narrow indoctrination, heresy-hunting, brainwashing, and terroristic inquisitions—be usefully imitated.

This point must be underlined since many of us are periodically tempted to take the short-cut of indoctrination instead of the long rough road of education. We fail to notice that the short-cut does not lead to the same destination as the long road.

If political education is indeed one major remedy to the problem, we find three questions before us. First, are we not already doing a good job of political education in America? The answer seems to be: NO! All along the line, the institutions of education—family, church, schools, colleges, service clubs, labor unions, political parties, the media of mass-communication—are generally doing a fumbling job in the field of preparing and maintaining the knowledge of the values the facts, and the personal qualities needed by free men.

Vigilance Is the Price

The second question is more tricky: Can you have political education without turning it willy-nilly, into political indoctrination? The answer here must be that the price of political education for liberty is eternal vigilance, and that if we cannot maintain the distinction we deserve to lose our freedom. The working hypothesis of a free society must be on the following lines:

It is probably true that the price of liberty is a great deal of intellectual confusion and much emotional suffering and rebellion. In Russia or Communist China, as in Nazi Germany, the Party creates its prearranged contradictions and imposes hate, love, and suffering upon the subject people according to the calculated requirements of the regime. But in Western European democracies and the United States, the individual citizen must find his own way through conflicting values and interests, deciding what to love, what (not whom) to hate, and what to suffer and sacrifice for.

This does not necessarily mean that there are no social norms or no absolute ethical values in free, constitutional states, but it does mean that in such states no government or monopolistic party will or may dictate and indoctrinate such norms or values. If the norms and values are correct, they must— we assume—be fairly self-evident, so that the free man or woman will come to ac-

cept them thoughtfully, securely, and voluntarily.

What Kind of Education? So we come to question number three: What sort of education will help men and women to choose freely and rightly? Notice, as a fundamental necessary assumption, that, although our working hypothesis is that correct norms and values are voluntarily discoverable, we must also recognize that they are not easy to discover.

On the contrary, they are at least as difficult as mathematics or physics or the mastering of a foreign language. They call not only for hard work and hard learning of facts and ideas, but for training in mental and emotional self-discipline; for the cultivation of the imagination; and for the steady and critical acquisition of sophisticated personal and vicarious experience of one's self, one's social environment, and one's relation to the world, mankind, and to God.

Courage (moral and physical), self-control, self-sacrifice, loyalty, kindness, honesty (intellectual and economic), and similar basic qualities of the free life do not "come naturally," although they are correct and admirable. What come naturally are selfishness, laziness, cowardice, greed, dishonesty, cruelty. Thus one tremendous task of education in home and in school is to expose the individual to the full implications and responsibilities of the free life.

The process of exposure involves great efforts for teacher and student. Those efforts are not being made. During the past four years, vast heavings on the bootstraps of scientific and linguistic education have been seen. But in literature and in history—the two areas where young people learn most about the great human problems and the ideas, values and errors of free men and free societies—little toughening of curriculum or instruction has been attempted.

Are we equipped even to know how little we know? How much so-called education in politics at school consists of visits to the waterworks or the post office, or preaching about the duty of voting? How little effort goes into revealing the staggering problems of power-politics, moral decisions, strategic calculations, geographic relationships, economic and ideological factors, mass-hysteria, racial tensions, emotional catchwords, the nature of propaganda, patterns of recent history, and so on?

The liberal education ought to be part of the business of the schools, and the liberal education is a grim and exacting business. There is little enough of it left in the universities and colleges. We ought to try it again sometime.

—National Observer

About Letters

The Daily Nebraskan invites readers to use it for expression of opinion on current topics regardless of viewpoint. Letters must be signed, contain a verifiable address, and be free of libelous material. Pen names may be included and will be retained upon written request. Brevity and legibility increase the chance of publication. Lengthy letters may be edited or omitted. Absolutely none will be returned.

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GOOD LUCK GIRLS

Panhellenic Re-Evaluation

Panhellenic is to re-evaluate its activities, organizational pattern and responsibilities today. We feel that the campus will be interested in what some of the decisions are in regards to this organization. Panhellenic is one of the major "power" organizations on this campus. Its program and policy effect the lives of over 1000 co-eds.

It is interesting to note that the sororities have all elected new representatives. It is also interesting to note that the information sheet given to the representatives urged that they appropriately consult their houses, the old representatives and officers in the house. It is also interesting that each was asked to talk to the alumna Panhellenic adviser from their chapter.

It is also very interesting to note that supposedly the representatives turned in their evaluation sheets Friday so that ample time could be given to preparing a panel for the Monday session.

Three cheers. This makes one ask if the material will be cut, edited, abridged or altered to give a picture of niceness? We are certain that the panel will know all the answers, too. It's about time that the Panhellenic Representatives stood up and opened their

mouths—that they said something worth while, that they accomplish something.

We feel that one of the major faults of Panhellenic is its system of electing, if one can call it that, their officers. Their undemocratic system of rotating leadership does not consider the fact that an undynamic person could assume leadership and easily be "railroaded" out of her ideas and swayed to take those of other "conductors"

While they might argue that "the rotation system gives every house a chance to have officers," we counter with the argument, "why sacrifice quality in leadership?"

One of the points listed on the Panhellenic information sheet was: "What about the committee system—are there any new ones for which you see a need?"

The question might have been, "What about the committee system—could it be more effective and get broader participation and interest if committee memberships were selected from without the body itself and from girls who have a genuine interest?"

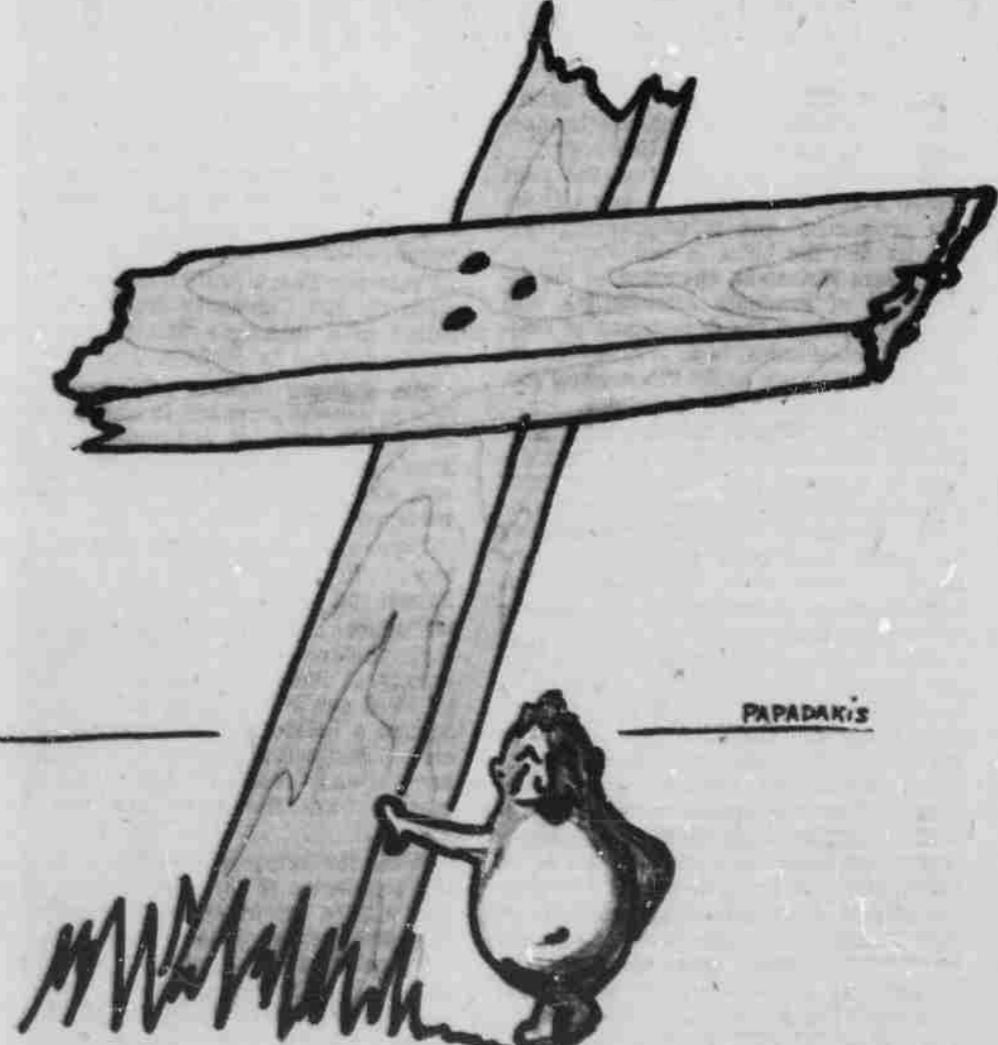
The more people who participate in an organization; the more people

who work for an organization because of desire; and the more people who participate in an organization because they have the qualifications of leadership, knowledge and interest, the better off it will be.

Another phase of Panhellenic that we question is its method of voting. The representatives are virtually powerless. We question if this is indicative of the type of people that sit as representatives. The theory which should prevail is that the girl elected to Panhellenic is their representative and should have the authority to make a decision for that house. Running back and forth with legislation makes one more cog in the area of efficiency.

Or is the underlying reason for this voting method that the organization itself does not do anything of major importance? Are its decisions made by its alumnae or other person(s)? If this is the case, we wonder then, why even have a Panhellenic.

One of the major purposes of Panhellenic and the entire Greek system is to develop leaders. Panhellenic might ask itself if its operational procedures are contributing to this factor.



'Naw, we don't have a HELL WEEK'