

On apathy: an epitaph

A long time ago, when today's book-weary seniors were wide-eyed, pledge-pinned freshmen, every time the editor of the *Nebraskan* couldn't think of anything else to write, he tackled apathy. "You students aren't concerned," he would say. "You just don't give a damn. Why don't you do something?"

But that was a long time ago, when the grass was green and the war was just starting and only Watts was burning. That was when editors could still chirp about closing 14th street or building more parking lots without feeling silly. That was before SDS and before Chicago and before Robert Kennedy.

Apathy had its roots in the 1950's, in Dwight Eisenhower's administration, in panty raids and pledgeship. Everyone condemned it, but nothing changed.

THEN CAME THE WAR and Che Guevara and Eugene McCarthy and Mark Rudd and Robert Kennedy and Chicago and Carl Davidson. Somewhere between Khe Sanh and Selma, Alabama, apathy died, as it had lived, quietly. As the New Left grew, the Old Right became more belligerent. There were still the books and the fraternity parties and AWS. But now there was Hyde Park and the rag went commie and the ASUN president acted like he knew who Frantz Fanon was and sort of admired Che Guevara.

A bunch of people bought flowers for their cars and went to McCarthy rallies and worked for Bruce Hamilton. Apathy was buried beneath the soils of Nebraska, and everything was changing. Everyone was convinced we could do better and was going to work to make sure it happened.

AND OF COURSE the students' new-found desire to participate began to show everywhere. Eugene McCarthy won the Democratic nomination and was elected President. We pulled all our troops out of Vietnam. Racism came to an end in Nebraska and across the nation. George Wallace and Ronald Reagan became forgotten men. Eldridge Cleaver was granted a full professorship at the University of California.

The administration agreed to allow the students to control student fees, women's hours and dormitory rules. Ernie Chambers was elected to the Omaha School Board. Lewis Hershey was replaced by Dick Gregory as Director of the Selective Service.

As the writers had predicted, the world, after apathy was buried, became a much better place in which to live.

Ain't it wonderful?

Jack Todd

The twelve days of Christmas . . .

by Jim Evinger

This Christmas season heralds two things: —to most of the world it signifies a special season;

—to many of the University's fraternity pledges it marks an intensification of physical and mental hazing as a pre-finals climax to pledgeship.

The pledges of one house, for instance, will probably begin today a "Christmas Party" thrown annually by their actives. The "party" is unique in that it features mental and physical strain. A group of actives, feigning anger with the world and espousing the "Old Guard" brand of pledgeship, will begin a week-long performance.

In the past, about six actives have taken over a floor of the house, indulging themselves in a destructive and senseless spree. Prompted by fear of chastisement by and alienation from the actives, pledges undergo pushups on floors covered with broken beer bottles.

Mental stress supplements physical dangers in this "Christmas Party."

—sometimes a fist fight is staged between the six and the house president;

—the housemother, after being serenaded with obscene songs, moves out (in accordance with the plan of the "party");

—in recent years a robbery of the house treasurer's safe has been staged by the six in front of a pledge who is forced to witness the affair. He is threatened with physical harm if he reveals what he has seen.

Though this 40-year-old tradition and other aspects of the house's pledge program are in direct opposition to its nationally stated policies, the "party" goes on with full knowledge and consent of alumni, at the local and national level. Local chapter alumni also participate in the "party."

The pledges are emotionally torn between bolting the chapter and putting up with the emotional and physical pressures. It is a paradoxical situation that pledges must undergo such activities in the name of friendship.

A number of houses are moving away from this type of malevolent hazing which has been rationalized as brotherhood and kinship. Many of these houses, which are moving towards a progressive pledge education program, are suffering transitional pains. There is conflict in members with traditional attitudes attempting to implement progressive programs.

Criticism can be leveled at this one particular house, but many, in varying degrees, also permit such practices. In the arcane and antiquated vernacular of pledgeship, there is "no excuse" for houses not to actively seek the remedy of this situation.

Houses who have signed the IFC Pledge Contract and ignore its principles should commit themselves to the ideas outlined in the contract.

The purpose of pledgeship is not to train pledges to become actives who will train pledges to become actives who will train pledges . . .

Too long have Greeks emphasized the freshman by constructing pledgeship programs. Too long have upperclassmen thought such programs irrelevant to their lives. There would be value and meaning for all members of a house if a fraternity program was implemented. Pledge education can be an integral part of this without being the vocal point of house activity.

Any external pressure will not change complacent attitudes. Change must be from within the house. Progress must be now.

Greek houses that fail to move forward are not only stagnant, but actually losing ground at the expense of their members.



"Why don't you write a letter to the editor . . . ?"

Editorials

Commentary

George Kaufman

How straight can you get?

The STS (Students for The Society) meeting came to order, sort of.

"Now," said Dave Bundle, radical sort-of president, "we're here tonight to revive STS on this campus and do all sorts of radical things just like we see going on at other campuses on the Huntley-Brinkley Report every night."

"But how are we going to do that?" asked a coed incredulously. "After all, this is Nebraska, not Columbus or Burkley."

"I know, I know," replied Bundle. "But I've just read the latest Ramparks interview with Mark Rudd and I've got a lot of good ideas. First, we're going to work for equality for blacks."

"But," interrupted the same coed, "we couldn't even get one Negro . . . that is, ah, black . . . to come to our meeting."

"Well, never mind that," said Bundle. "We'll work on that later. Right now, let's attack ROTSEE on campus. Any suggestions as to how to do it?"

"How about we burn down the M and M Building?" suggested one member, turning to page 97 of his paperback autobiography of Jerry Rubbage.

"No, we can't do anything I might get arrested for," answered Bundle. "I've got to student teach next semester and that would look bad on my record."

"How about we all burn our draft cards on the steps of the M and M Building?" asked another.

"No," countered the guy sitting next to him. "My draft board is considering my Two-Ess deferment right now and that would really sack it. Besides, my parents would stop sending money."

"Also," protested one of the coeds, "we girls couldn't take part in it."

"Well," said Bundle, "then we'll all think about it and I'll appoint Fred to head a committee to receive suggestions and he can report back at next month's meeting."

"I can't do that," objected Fred. "I sent in my draft card last month and I'll be in

trial next month."

"Let's march around with wooden guns and attack ROTSEE for fighting with guns instead of ideas," offered another.

"We can't do that," said Bundle. "Then I'd have to get rid of all my Jay Guevara posters and burn my copy of the Jay Guevara Diary."

Suddenly a young man stood up.

"Why," he said as attention focused on him, "can't we just meet ROTSEE intellectually instead of trying to stage a circus all the time?"

"Man," muttered Bundle, as the group filed out of the room glaring at the young man, "how straight can you get?"

CAMPUS OPINION

SDS asks that academic credit for ROTC be taken away as a first step towards removing the military from the University all together. We believe that ROTC inherently opposes the ideals of free inquiry on which this university is based.

One of the prime functions of the military is to instill obedience and a fearful respect for regulations. The Reserve Officer Training Corps teaches college students to expect and demand this obedience from their underlings while at the same time obeying blindly orders from this type of obedience.

IT IS ALL TOO easy to follow orders without thinking of the consequences when obedience to military regulation is placed on a higher level than a man's conscience. A man who wouldn't think of harming a child napalms both children and their mothers in Vietnam because he has been taught not to think and not to question his orders. So we see that while on the one hand the university promotes free inquiry and intellectual honesty on the other hand, through the ROTC program, it promotes blind servility and an undue respect for regulation.

After obedience ROTC teaches conformity. A university strives to promote an atmosphere where differing points of view can be brought up and discussed. ROTC forces conformity down the throats of its students. Not only are there strict uniform and personal appearance regulations but ROTC also tries to regulate the minds of its students by constantly drilling on what political and

sociological thought is correct.

Differing opinions are stifled. Several freshman students were told by their instructors not to accept literature being passed out by the Nebraska Draft Resistance Union. Dissenters in ROTC are quickly shown that they had better conform to the norm if they want to get anywhere.

MANY A SENIOR ROTC student can be spotted as he unconsciously marches around campus. Such action is indicative of the state of his mind. He has been so instilled with the rightness or wrongness of things like marching or political thought that his mind is closed to different ideas. We see that this unthinking conformity to a standard is diametrically opposed to the ideals of individuality on which this country is based.

In the last six years there have been two Kennedys murdered, Martin Luther King killed, and riots and campus disorders in every major city in the country.

People act perplexed at all the violence and dash frantically around trying to throw violence out of the culture. They censor television, movies, comic strips, and children's books.

But this fights only the symptoms of the disease leaving the disease itself untouched. People ignore the fact that American universities teach the violence of Hiroshima — the violence of Vietnam — to its students, tomorrow's leaders! As long as the university trains men in violence, attempts to curb violence in other areas will go for nothing.

PEOPLE WHO TRY to defend ROTC on at least a semi-rational basis usually point out that ROTC is strictly on a voluntary basis and that the student can take it or leave it. This argument stands up under only the most superficial examination. Actually the most vicious forms of coercion are used to attract students to ROTC.

Besides spreading propaganda about the All-

American army officer and bringing in unwitting coeds to make it look like a social organization, ROTC recruits by threatening with the draft. The bedazzled sophomore looks at the draft, the coeds, the monthly paycheck and signs the next six years of his life away. There are many senior ROTC men around who wish they could go back and make the decision about going advanced again.

Four years of the service after graduation doesn't seem so bad until you're about to graduate. Right boys? It's obvious that pressures like the monthly paycheck and the draft take away much of the element of choice and work towards pushing the sophomore ROTC student into signing his future — and maybe his life — away at a time when he may not yet have had a chance to see opposing views.

SOONER OR LATER anyone advocating the end of ROTC must face the argument, "But what do you guys want to do anyway? Give up our armies and let the communists take over?" Some day this argument will be looked on with the same contempt that the Joe McCarthy era is now viewed with, but for now it remains the indignant and instant reply to anyone talking about ending ROTC.

There are other good arguments against the intimate involvement between the military and the university, and the points advanced here could be expanded ten times. If you have additional ideas or want to help — talk to us. SDS and America needs you now!

Pete Johnson
Dave Bunnell

Inside report . . . Nixon and governors

by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Palm Springs, Calif. —As President-elect Nixon met privately with Republican Governors last Friday afternoon during their winter meeting here, outspoken Gov. Norbert Tiemann of Nebraska brought into the open what was foremost in their minds.

It is essential, Tiemann politely told Nixon, for the new President to communicate effectively with the people. Consequently, Tiemann continued, wouldn't it be a good idea if he worked through the 31 Republican Governors to reach the people?

WITHOUT MAKING commitments, Nixon nodded agreement. But Tiemann's question reflected apprehension about the President-elect on two levels which was informally but widely discussed among the Governors here.

On one level, the Governors recognize that Nixon received little pre-convention support from them, never had been close to them, and might well ignore them from the White House. But on a deeper level, the Governors were worried that Nixon's personal isolation from everybody but his intimates during both the campaign and the transition period might continue during his Presidency, to his great disadvantage.

Actually, Nixon did much to still these fears Friday when he met all 31 Governors in small groups at the Palm Springs home of Walter Annenberg, publisher of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

NIXON PROMISED THE Governors they would have control of Federal patronage in their states. He pledged that the often slipshod liaison between statehouses and the White House during the Johnson administration would be improved with Vice President-elect Spiro T. Agnew as the go-between. To the puzzlement of some Governors, Nixon told them he planned to keep them abreast of foreign affairs developments.

Most important was the image of quiet confidence he gave. In private conversation over cocktails here some Governors had expressed fear that Nixon was afraid of the burdens of the Presidency. His performance Friday dispelled such worries.

After those meetings Nixon aides slipped out the reassuring word that Governors will play a big role in the Administration. Apart from the appointment of Governors to the Cabinet, they were informed a high post will be found for the defeated Gov. John Chaffee of Rhode Island, immensely popular with his colleagues — perhaps as director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

WHILE LEAVING Palm Springs less apprehensive than when they arrived, however, the Governors were not fully satisfied. They complained that the President-elect — for all his reassurances — gave precious little hard information in the meetings at the Annenberg home. "He talked indirectly — in parables, you might say," one Governor told us.

Moreover, some Governors are still muttering about the Nixon campaign which, in many states, drained almost all Republican campaign money. When Governors seeking election pleaded for funds, they were told that they could ride home on Nixon's coattails. Thus, those who in fact ran ahead of Nixon are now self-righteous on it.

Such aggravation has been compounded in the transition period when Governors, including the few who backed Nixon for the nomination, had almost no contact with the President-elect until the Palm Springs meeting. That gave rise to their fear that he will be isolated by his buttoned-down young aides in the White House.

WITH THIS BACKDROP, the Governors here were surprisingly querulous on relatively minor matters. Western Governors grumbled about a possible non-Westerner as Secretary of the Interior; farm Governors grumbled about a possible non-farmer as Secretary of Agriculture; most Governors grumbled about Nixon's long-range intention to purge Ray Bliss as Republican National Chairman.

Besides, all did not go as well here between Nixon and the Governors as was advertised. An imaginative plan by the Governors to place their representatives in all departments of the Federal government to facilitate state-Federal relations was eviscerated by Agnew's staff, apparently acting under the Nixon staff's direction.

Once the Nixon administration actually begins, so almost surely will the traditional honeymoon period start. Then, the complaints of the Governors probably will turn to cheers. But the unease they displayed at Palm Springs shows that the image left by the Nixon campaign and transition period poses more of a problem than Nixon insiders suspect.

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Student power

There are approximately twenty-four thousand people living in Lincoln and Lancaster County with incomes below poverty level. Many of these people are in desperate need of services for which they are unable to pay. Most of these people want a better life and with the proper kind of help can achieve a better quality life if the proper kind of help is given them.

The past several years have seen the rise of "Student Power." It has manifested itself in demonstrations, disorders, campus take-overs and political campaigns, its effects have been profound — not always prudent, but profound. Were the same energies directed in waging war on poverty, the battle could be won.

STUDENT POWER WOULD be a positive, relevant force which could in the near future win the war on poverty. The demonstrations have had their day; they have served their purpose. The time for the sit-in, walk-in, yell-in is over. Now is the time for the work-in. There are jobs to be done for which no agency can be funded. Jobs which are in the main unglamorous.

Most of you are young and healthy, you all have some ability which can be used. We offer you an opportunity to be of service to those who most need your skills. On Thursday night at 7:30 I and some of my staff will be in the Student Union, Room 332, and we will at that time answer any questions you might have about our program and your role in it. We will also be ready to sign up volunteers for a variety of unglamorous jobs.

John Calloway
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of Lincoln Action Program

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