

Nebraskan editorial page



"A small elite group of men decided what you would or would not see on television . . ."

The big stick being wielded

by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie

I have written and spoken many times about the dangers of a divided country. After the 1968 election I hoped that some of the bitterness had been washed out of our system and that Americans could talk to each other and listen to each other. In recent weeks I have watched anger and division rise, aided and abetted by Vice President Agnew.

When a country is torn by dissension over national issues such as Vietnam, we need leadership dedicated to the reduction of unnecessary differences. We need leadership committed to the exchange of reasonable arguments as the surest road to wisdom and national unity.

Instead, we have an administration which talks about unity and does all it can to drive us apart. This is bad for our country and unhealthy for the administration.

There is little that is constructive in conceding the right to dissent, while heaping abuse on the heads of those who disagree. There is little credibility in an attitude which describes an "open administration", while insisting that public demonstrations for ending the war in Vietnam will have no effect on that administration. The President and his administration need not agree with their critics, but they ought to be willing to listen to what the critics have to say. None of us is infallible, and few of us are completely fallible.

There was an ominous undercurrent in the Vice President's attack on the news media. It was not that all his criticisms of television news coverage were wrong; it was the focus of his complaint, his tone and the implications of his warning. That warning was underscored by FCC Chairman Dean Burch's direct calls to the three television network heads, requesting copies of the transcripts of the commentaries following President Nixon's Nov. 3 address.

However the White House may try to explain the Vice President's remarks, the fact remains that the trigger for the speech was the reaction by television newsmen immediately following the speech. Those comments were generally unfavorable. The White House, quite clearly, did not want an unmanaged reaction to a careful effort to build up support for the President on his Vietnam posture. I think it is reasonable to doubt that the Vice President would have objected to "instant analysis" had it been favorable to the President. It is also reasonable to assume that Mr. Burch's official interest in the transcripts of those commentaries would not have been very great.

It is true that the administration has not asked for formal censorship. It has attempted something far more insidious: silence by intimidation.

Television coverage does need improvement, including expanded regional coverage, greater emphasis on in-depth reporting, and new efforts at stimulating dialogues on issues. But I am not certain that this would please the Vice President and his colleagues. They obviously wished no dialogue on what the President had to say, November 3; at least, not until the immediate impact of the speech had passed.

I agree that we should not allow ourselves to be molded by a small group of men in charge of the television channels — whether those men are in the executive offices of the networks in New York, or in the Executive Office of the President. I agree that there should be diversity in the views presented on television, through reporting and through commentary. And I hope that Americans will be listening to those diverse views, in the White House as well as elsewhere.

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Times are changing?

by Don Stenberg

Student member, curriculum committee

Hi there, faithful readers! I'll bet you can't wait to find out what's been going on inside the tower, or in the smoke-filled room (or wherever it is something goes on) since Biology 3 sprang to life. Please allow me then, in my humble way, to enlighten you.

Two significant proposals received the support of the Curriculum Committee at the last meeting. One of the proposals was for the establishment of a major in Integrated Studies. The other was a proposal for a change in the group E science requirement.

The Integrated Studies program, if approved by the faculty, will allow a student to establish, in conjunction with an advisor, his own major requirements. That is, instead of majoring in chemistry or English, a student might set up a program in Black Studies, Russian Culture, or any other area for which he could find a faculty sponsor.

This program also should prove quite useful to pre-med and pre-law students who want to have a relatively general background without taking a traditional major. As the current proposal reads, the student wishing to participate in this program need only draw up a proposed course of study and find a faculty advisor, approved by the Dean, to sponsor the program.

The proposed change in the science requirement was essentially that which was introduced by the Arts and Sciences Advisory Board. If this change is approved by the faculty, the science re-

quirement will become much more flexible than is currently the case.

Although a student will still be required to take three courses to fulfill the requirement, he will be able to choose any combination of mathematics or biological and physical sciences that he wishes to study, the only restriction being that he participate in at least one course in which he does lab work.

These two proposals represent the work of many, many hours on the part of faculty, student, and student-faculty committees. They have been discussed and rewritten a number of times. The fate of these proposals is now in the hands of the Arts and Sciences faculty.

I hope that if there are questions about these proposals, they will be raised and resolved before the faculty meeting, rather than allowing the work of many months (20 months on the Integrated Studies program and 7 months on the science requirement) to be rejected in the heat and confusion of a few moments.

I feel that the vote (nine to two on the science requirement and unanimous approval for the Integrated Studies program), of the Curriculum Committee which is designed to represent as many areas and factions of the faculty as is possible, should be given a great deal of weight and consideration when voting on these proposals.

At this point a decision must be made. Will the decision indicate a stagnation of the educational system or will it demonstrate a willingness to strive for the improvement and the advancement of education at Nebraska?

John Mitchell's star falls

by Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden

Washington —Atty. Gen. John Mitchell, who came here as the tough "candor" man of the Nixon Administration, is rapidly destroying himself before the eyes of colleagues who began their Cabinet careers in his awe.

The former campaign manager has been responsible for most of Mr. Nixon's political mistakes, but that is a minor problem compared to the fact that he is now responsible for the President's personal embarrassment. The past, one senses here, is still prologue.

It began with Maj. Gen. Carl Turner, whom Mitchell hired as chief U.S. marshal without the investigation which might have revealed that the Pentagon was looking into allegations that he had covered up fraud in the now-famous case of the Sergeants' Ring and had taken guns in the name of the Army to sell for personal profit.

There followed the lame attempt to do away with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 under the guise of imposing a nationwide standard. Leaders of both parties virtually laughed it out of Congress.

Then there was the Judge Clement Haynsworth case. Almost weekly, the President was confronted with new conflict of interest charges, all of which should have been uncovered by Mitchell who had assured the President that the nominee was above reproach. Haynsworth backers in both parties joined in blaming Mitchell for most of their troubles.

Meantime, Mitchell had guided the Administration into a school-segregation position so extreme that the President's newly appointed Chief Justice Warren Burger joined his colleagues in rapid and unanimous rebuff. The spectacle of the U.S. government pleading with the Supreme Court to continue to delay equal rights to Negro children in

Southern schools will plague the Republican Party for years to come.

But all of this is arguable, as political judgment always is. Embarrassment, on the other hand, is not arguable. It is the attorney general's wife, Mrs. Mitchell, who has given the President his first major political embarrassment.

Then, as far as the "take-a-Bolshevik-to-lunch" campaign went, Mitchell laid down some ground rules. He would prefer, he said, "academically inclined Marxist Communists" to "violent-prone militant radicals," and he would exchange them gladly, two for one.

The test came swiftly. This week, expressly overruling Secretary of State William Rogers, Mitchell turned down the visa application for U.S. travel of Dr. George Mandel, a Belgian philosophical Marxist who had been invited to repeat an earlier lecture tour at several American universities.

Mandel, as it turns out, was a leading Marxist critic of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, but it took minimal research to find that out, and research — evidently — is not Mitchell's long suit.

The attorney general may ultimately be overruled by the courts in the Mandel case, as he was in the case of the Southern school districts. But a larger test of credibility and respect lies ahead. Mitchell — despite his enormous power — is rapidly becoming a Washington joke.

The test, in short, is whether a municipal bond lawyer from Wall Street can find happiness as the nation's chief upholder of the Constitution. His remark after the defeat of Judge Haynsworth — "Some Senators don't understand the President's constitutional prerogatives" — is being widely used here as an argument for the negative.

The Next War

The long war had ended.
Its miseries had grown faded.
Deaf men became difficult to talk to.
Heroes became bores.

Those alchemists
Who had converted blood into gold
Had grown elderly.
But they held a meeting,
Saying,
"We think we ought
To put up tombs
Or erect altars
To those brave lads
Who were so willingly burnt,
Or blinded,
Or maimed,
Who lost all likeness to a living thing
Or were blown to bleeding patches of flesh
For our sakes.
It would look well.
Or we might educate the children."
But the richest of these wizards
Coughed gently,
And he said,
"I have always been to the front —
In private enterprise —
I yield in public spirit
To no man.
I think yours is a very good idea
—A capital idea —
And not too costly.
But it seems to me
That the cause for which we fought
Is again endangered.
What more fitting memorial for the fallen
Than that their children
Should fall for the same cause?"
Rushing eagerly into the street
The kindly old gentlemen cried
To the young:
"Will you sacrifice
Through your lethargy
What your fathers died to gain?
Our cause is in peril.
The world must be made safe for the
young!"

And the children
Went.

—Osbert Sitwell (1920)

Rapping at random . . . Ron Alexander

I went to Washington for the Nov. 15 peace march. I participated in the October activities in Lincoln and wanted to participate again in November.

The idea of a half-million people converging on Washington sounded like an occasion of history. We were going to tell our elected government that we wanted an early end to the war. It sounded like it could have been a politically significant event in the anti-war movement.

We wanted to talk to our individual congressmen, hopefully to the President, and indirectly to the people of America. Letters were sent to our Senators and representatives for appointments when we arrived. We hoped to talk to them about the war, about their feelings and to discuss America's commitments abroad.

When we arrived in Washington, all of our congressmen were "out of town for the weekend." The President who asks us to lower our voices and talk was barricaded behind buses in the White House watching a football game — refusing to see any marchers or hear any of the people. And the people of America watched an Apollo shot. Despite the disappointment in not

talking to our officials I hoped the march would cause some thought on the part of these Americans who still have not thought about our involvement in Vietnam. We didn't succeed in starting a debate.

All in all, I think the intention of the march was to be a political expression to our officials and our fellow citizens. It failed because our president and congressmen refused to talk. It failed because America couldn't see beyond the radicals and into the concerns of those assembled peacefully.

The march became a mini-Woodstock festival of friendship for the participants, bewildering to the viewers.

But the facts of the affair become more serious when one considers that our officials wouldn't talk, that five Nebraskans were not around when approximately fifty Nebraskans came to talk. The march speaks ill for those newspapers who dwell on the insignificant amount of violence in Washington.

Perhaps a mass march can never achieve satisfactory political response. But the march served to show that our officials are avoiders and that accurate coverage is not a thing one can expect, particularly in our local Nebraska papers.

Open Forum

Dear Editor:

The University of Nebraska is by tradition a progressive institution with the best educational interests of its students always considered in a modern fashion.

Should anyone dispute this statement, he has only to consult the "Family Report" newsletter recently sent to all parents of students, prepared by the propaganda branch of the university's "monarchical administrative complex" (the Board of Regents and its supporting bureaucracy) to have this statement verified. Of course, those of us living in subjugation, at the hands of the duly elected and ordained members of this "central committee" do entertain blasphemous doubts.

After reading the aforementioned "Family Report," I have concluded that the Board of Regents and its helpers have, through the years, become expert at methods of propaganda liberally dotted with half-truths.

This report does have merit in that it tells when financial assistance forms should be submitted and lists university-oriented television viewing.

However, the coed visitation issue is not presented quite as clearly or as truthfully as the public deserves. For example, the proposal for visitation in graduate dorms is presented as a nebulous statement claiming greater maturity of graduate students as the main point in its favor.

In reality, the average age of students in graduate dorms is in the mid-twenties, several Roman Catholic nuns reside in these halls, and residents are exclusively graduate students.

The lounge experiment is outlined inaccurately, to the point that one dorm it says, Pound Hall, is part of the experiment, which it is not. Further, it says student assistants and floor officers are responsible for control of behavior, which is not necessarily the case.

The issue now before the Regents is not visits by members of opposite sexes in dorm rooms, but who has the right to decide whether such visits will be allowed. Should it be decided by the Regents, who recently toured the dorms,

or by the students who live in these facilities? Beyond this lies the question of who shall set rules and regulations for any and all outside-the-classroom student activities.

The Regents approved creation of the Council on Student Life, a body which they empowered to determine and set student social regulations. Now they apparently wish to take back this right before the CSL even can consider an issue.

These are the men in charge of the University of Nebraska, the reverend Board of Regents. These are not the men I want in charge. I want men who don't set rules on everything I do without even listening to me. I want men who don't follow the great bureaucratic tradition of ignoring basic issues and problems of the academic community. The Church did this sort of thing in the 1400's, and look what happened to it.

We can have the right men in charge. What we will have to do is explain to the voters of Nebraska the real issues, truthfully, honestly, frankly, not with slanted propaganda. We will have to seek out and support the kind of men Nebraska needs on its Board of Regents. We will have to see that voter interest is generated, and that the candidates and their qualifications are known to the public. We will have to publicize all facts pertinent to the election of five Regents in November, 1970.

Through a concerted effort on the part of our 20,000-member political interest group, we can do all these things.

Alan Gless
ASUN senator.

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