

# PROSPECTUS in retrospect

...Rodney Powell

Here it is, almost the end of the "Soaring Sixties" and journalists everywhere are turning out recaps of the News Highlights from that Fabulous Decade, or entrancing us all with predictions about the Future of the Human Race. Yes, it's time for journalists to prove how brilliant they are, to show how much about Our Society they know, and to beguile us all into thinking that, with enough facts and informed comment, we can all understand what's going on.

Everyone, of course, tends to overestimate his own importance, but the sad thing is that so many people believe the journalists; even if people are uninformed, they kowtow to the power of Information.

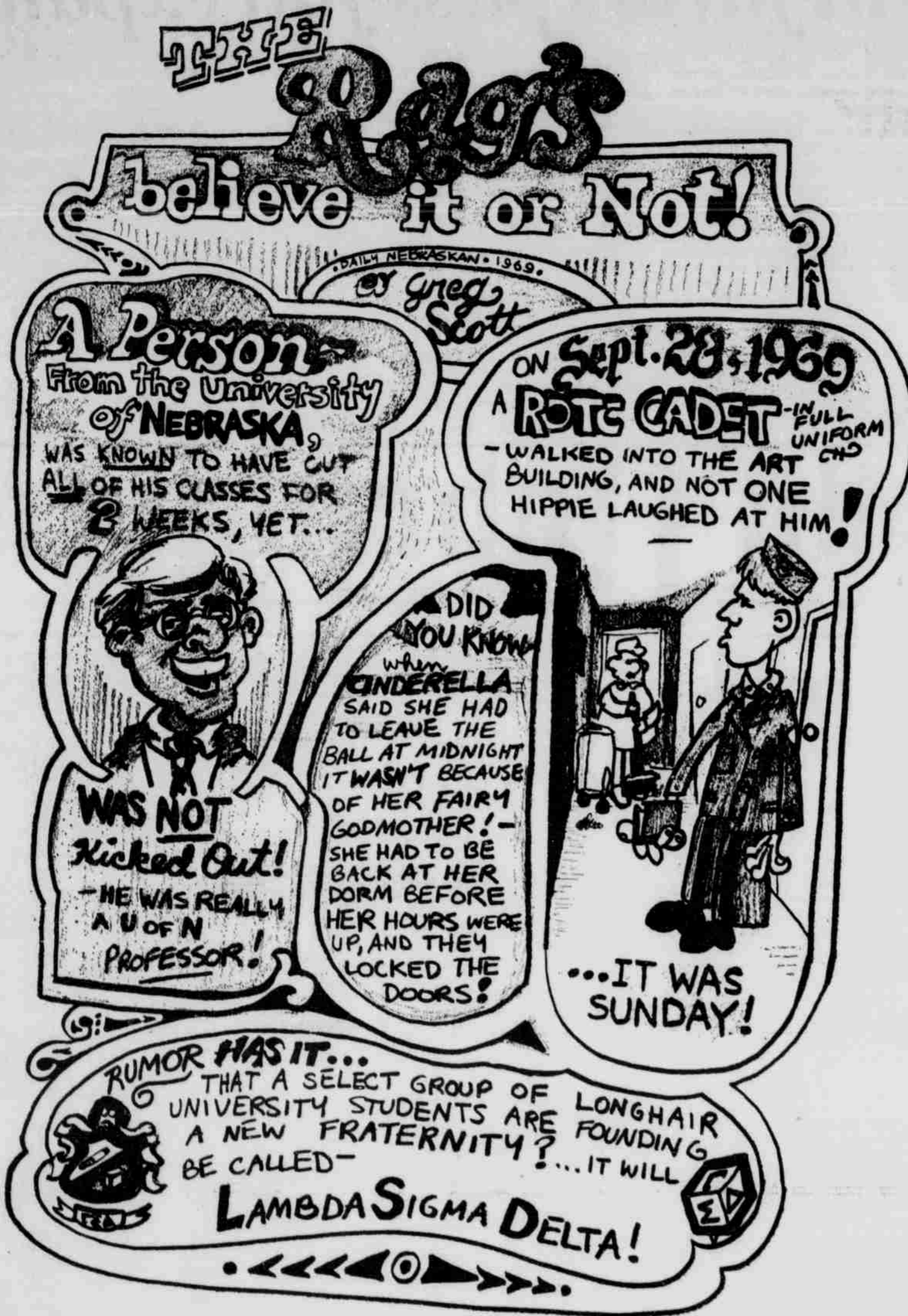
Well now, I've already managed to slip into the old Facile Generalization, so I'd better stop right away before I get carried away into a veritable sermon. Of course I'm supposed to be turning out some mind-nourishing swill because of my vast experience and superior intellect, but since I find getting out of bed to be a major challenge (with brushing my teeth not far behind), I hesitate to offer advice (friendly or otherwise) on Vital Matters.

While the world cries for the intellectual equivalent of Ann Landers (Dear Ann: What do I do about these reactionary right-wingers? They just won't leave me alone! Confused.), I can only offer those old standbys — reading (books, I'm afraid) and thinking. Yes friends, it's time to get back to the old virtues, and Marshall McLuhan is full of shit.

Just how sappy the infatuation with the myths of the media has become is evidenced by the reaction to that paramount example of the New American Pretentiousness in films, "Medium Cool." It's an interesting film, but a failure; its simple-mindedness and heavy-handedness about the Violence and Insensitivity of Our Time is disastrously apparent on a second viewing — the easy ironies on the soundtrack (the cut from the roller derby to the bedroom, while roller-derby sounds continue; the juxtaposition of shots of the injured in Grant Park with "Happy Days are Here Again" from the convention); the cop-out ending with the necessity of any resolution removed by the expedient of the accident (a trick borrowed from Godard, who at least is original — one would think that people would learn from him what it is impossible to do) — all this for the daring revelation that the police do bad things, that professional journalists may become callous, that some people are cowards, and that things aren't entirely happy down on de ol' plantation. If Wexler had stuck to the only interesting characters, the mother and her child from Appalachia, he might have made something, but as it is, "Madam Cool" fails as art (too simple-minded) and as journalism (it's not news).

But then, do many people want anything that isn't simple-minded? It seems to me that evidence of the proper attitudes is about all that a student audience looks for. Language has become so debased that "pigs" and "fascists" are no longer joking epithets, but are used seriously by those whom I am tempted to call radical idiots. A sort of petulant disbelief in the possibility that the "enemy" is human is pervasive; there are entirely too many people around with a too-certain sense of their own virtue. Smugness and arrogance are not found only in the Evil Establishment.

Here I am, preaching again! I have only a couple of slightly tattered Deep Thoughts to offer you all; I don't know if they will be enough to make it through the 70's with, but then what will be? So, with no further adieu, my Parting Shots: "Radical" implies getting to the root of things, not idolizing Che Guevara; Eliot Rosewater, in Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s "God Bless You, Jr. Rosewater," makes one of the few Profound Comments in contemporary literature when he supplies this advice to his grandchildren: "Goddammit, kids, you've got to be kind." Now that's relevance; to hell with Herbert Marcuse.



## Truth now on My Lai insures against future horror

by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie

Thanksgiving weekend I went to England to address a Conservative Party conference and to participate in a British Broadcasting Corporation television interview program. While there I had an opportunity to talk with a number of political leaders in the Conservative and Labour parties, and I was questioned at length by British reporters.

The chief topic of interest for Britons seemed to be the alleged atrocities in Vietnam. This was the subject of pictures and news accounts on television and in the newspapers. The reports on My Lai had shocked the British, partially because of their bitter memories of the Hitler years, and partially because they had never expected this of American troops.

At the same time, I found considerable sentiment among political leaders of both major parties in support of the United States presence in Vietnam. It seems clear that the margin of support for continued United States involvement in Southeast Asia is higher in the British Parliament than it is in the United

States Congress. It is almost as if the British expected us to substitute for them as a major western force in the Orient.

This is not to say that opposition to the Vietnam war is not strong. There is vocal opposition among Labour members in the House of Commons and among private citizens. That opposition gained a new focus in the incident at My Lai.

I pointed out to my British questioners that the incident at My Lai cannot be explained away as an isolated act of brutality or as a simple by-product of the Vietnam war. It is a problem which will be around even when that war has ended.

The incident at My Lai is a terrible reminder that man's capacity for inhumanity cannot be eliminated by a mere statement on behalf of human rights or by an avowed devotion to democratic principles. The incident was sickening and shameful. Those who are accused must be tried. Our country's official and active opposition to such actions must be demonstrated.

But we must go beyond the specific trials to the underlying questions of why My Lai happened. We must take steps to prevent further incidents of such inhumanity. That is why I have suggested that we establish a special commission to investigate the problem and to report to the country.

It would be easy to write off the incident at My Lai, to hang it on our own personal preconceptions of why it happened. That might satisfy our desire for a scapegoat, but it would not enable us to understand and to avoid such horrors in the future.

If we are to insure the survival of the democratic traditions of human dignity and individual worth, we must learn better how to forecast and avoid developments which lead to the My Lais of our world. What we learn about the perils of conflict, confrontation and hatred, which can let loose man's capacity for cruelty and destructiveness, can help other nations avoid such problems. They need to understand what we have learned: it can happen here.

The Ledger Syndicate, Inc.

## DAILY NEBRASKAN

Second class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb. Telephone: Editor 472-3588, News 472-3289, Business 473-3286. Subscription rates are 14 per semester or \$4 per year. Published Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during the school year except during vacations and exam periods. Member of Intercollegiate Press, National Educational Advertising Service.

The Daily Nebraskan is a student publication, independent of the University of Nebraska's administration, faculty and student government. Address: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Editor Roger Boye; Managing Editor Kent Cocksion, News Editor Jim Pedersen; Night News Editors J. L. Schmidt, Dave Filippi; Editorial Assistant Holly Rosenberger; Assistant News Editor Janet Maxwell; Sports Editor Randy York; Nebraskan Staff Writers John Dvorak, Bill Smitherman, Sara Schiedler, Gary Seacrest, Steve Sinclair, Bachitar Singh, Diane Waneke, Mike Barrett, Sue Pettey, Sylvia Lee, Ben Whitten, Carol Anderson; Photographers Dan Ladely, Jim Dean, Howard Rosenberg, Mike Hayman; Copy Editors Dan Ladely, Jan Parks, Suzi Schlicke-meier, Phyllis Addison; Business Staff

Business Manager Ed Icenogle; Local Ad Manager J. L. Schmidt; National Ad Manager Meg Brown; Bookkeeper Ron Bowlin; Business Secretary and Subscription Manager Janet Bowman; Circulation Manager James Steiner; Classified Ad Manager June Wagoner; Advertising Representatives J. L. Schmidt, Joel Davis, Joe Wilson, Linda Robinson.

## Nixon's self-created tax bind pretends economic woes

By Roland Evans and Robert Novak

Washington — Congressional tax-writers are set to defy President Nixon's veto threat against a tax bill with tax and Social Security Christmas presents to the taxpayer, thereby confronting the President with a dilemma of grave dimensions — partly political, partly economic.

The immediate source of Mr. Nixon's problem is his unusually explicit press conference statement Dec. 8, an unpleasant surprise to Capitol Hill, that he would veto a tax reform bill containing two costly Senate amendments: a 15 percent hike in Social Security payments and an increase in the present \$600 personal income tax exemption to \$800. Choosing not to believe the President' threat, the Senate-House conference now writing the final version of the bill is determined to approve something close to the blacklisted provisions.

If the tax conference meets its difficult timetable of a finished product by Dec. 19, Mr. Nixon will have a cheerless Yuletide choice. He can sign the bill only by sacrificing the credibility of both his own word and his commitment against inflation. But because the bill's extension of the surtax and repeal of the investment credit produces more money than it loses in the short run, a veto might do more economic harm than good.

This dilemma merely illuminates one of the least understood economic facts in Washington: the Nixon administration has lost control of the fiscal situation. Whatever Mr. Nixon finally does about the tax bill, the Federal government unwittingly will be pouring

out more consumer money to fuel the fires of inflation.

Actually, before last Monday's press conference, the President had been criticized for not speaking out in behalf of fiscal responsibility. Treasury officials wanted Mr. Nixon to publicly urge restraint on the tax bill. A similar request was made by Rep. Wilbur D. Mills of Arkansas, foremost Congressional taxwriter and chairman of the Senate-House conference.

The President's new hard line only became visible, even in private, at his weekly meeting with Republican Congressional leaders on Dec. 3 when he promised to veto any bill if necessary. But nobody in Congress — certainly not Mills — was prepared for Mr. Nixon's uncharacteristically blunt press conference pledge to veto a bill constructed to the Senate's specifications.

What made this disconcerting to Congressional tax-writers were the hard facts of life on Capitol Hill. No matter how much Mills cleans up the spendthrift Senate bill, the provisions that Mr. Nixon finds objectionable cannot be eliminated.

Indeed, Congressional leaders of both parties warned Mr. Nixon weeks ago that the 15 percent Social Security boost would be in the final tax bill despite its inflationary impact. Acknowledging this, the President conceded privately that his proposed 10 percent increase in a separate bill was not sweet enough for Congressional taste.

Capitol Hill demands for a higher personal income tax exemption are only slightly less insistent. Should the conferees completely eliminate the new \$900 exemption, their work would be reversed by the Senate and perhaps the House. Thus, Mr. Nixon's allies in

the conference hope for no more than a stretch-out to delay its inflationary impact, and perhaps scaling the exemption down to \$700.

Although veteran Congressmen cannot conceive of the President's vetoing this kind of bill after a full year's work, high Administration officials in close contact with Mr. Nixon disagree. The President, they insist, meant exactly what he said Monday night. For the President to concur in an out-of-balance tax bill, they said, would convince corporate business that his anti-inflation stance is frivolous.

But a veto of much-desired tax relief would carry its economic liabilities. The bill contains extension of the surtax at a 5 percent rate for six months and repeal of the investment credit. Accordingly, the veto would remove more than \$10 billion from the plus side of the budget and free more dollars for both consumer and industrialist.

Furthermore, if the tax bill is vetoed, it is unlikely that Congress would extend the surtax or repeal the investment credit in separate measures next year.

That is the essence of Mr. Nixon's dilemma. The much-advertised budget surplus for the current fiscal year is turning into a deficit even under suspect new accounting procedures, and Administration economists privately say the need now is for a tax increase to fight inflation. But anti-tax sentiment in the country is so intense that such a proposal would face instant death in Congress.

Thus President Nixon is trapped: his strong words Monday night struck the right note, but they came so late that they helped to set the trap.

