

Who has the onus now?

During last Monday's meeting, Robert Raun, president of the Board of Regents, announced that the board had decided to divulge its reasons for blocking the faculty appointment of Michael Davis. Raun stated that the regents had approved the "final form" of the letter and that it would be forwarded to Davis "for his release."

Those who were following the Davis case closely hoped that the reasons would be made public soon and were encouraged when Davis (who had not yet received the letter) stated that he could "could think of no reason" why he would not release them.

As the week wore on, there was increasing criticism of Davis for not having released the letter and speculation grew that the regents' arguments were so strong that they had silenced him. However, in a telephone conversation last evening, Davis said he was composing a reply and that a copy of the regents' letter and his reply would be mailed to Dr. Robert Dewey, chairman of the Philosophy Department.

Davis also mentioned that he didn't receive the letter till Friday, four days after the regents announced that the "final form" had been approved, and that the letter would be "forwarded." He also said that the postmark on the regents' letter head Oct. 14 — two days after the board's announcement.

This is not the first time that correspondence from the regents has moved so slowly. During their first September meeting, the regents stated that a reply to a letter from Davis had been composed and would be sent to him. That was on a Monday and Davis had not received the letter by noon of the following Friday. Davis, however, gave his permission to release that letter to *The Nebraskan* on Thursday evening.

By procrastinating, the Board of Regents has damaged Michael Davis' position in the public eye. Their own slowness has appeared to be Davis' and has brought him unjust criticism. Since no facts have yet been made known, much of Davis' credibility rests on appearances and it is most unfortunate that the regents should damage this man's position because of their tardiness while no shadow falls on them.

Sheldon's short shorts

The Nebraska Union will sponsor "Short Suite", a series of ten short films, at Sheldon Gallery on Tuesday. In the past few years, poor attendance has marked the Sheldon film series and finally forced its closing. *The Nebraskan* hopes that efforts such as "Short Suite" will be a success and that an audience for this sort of entertainment can be cultivated — and that one day the Gallery might able to sponsor its own series again.

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"There's a bomb set to go off . . ."

Our man hoppe

Slaughter of the innocents

by Arthur Hoppe

A young girl I know and love phoned me the other morning, her voice uneasy and unsure.

She had been awakened in her college dormitory by the loudspeaker. It ordered her to evacuate her room immediately. An anonymous caller had warned that a bomb had been planted somewhere on the campus.

"Do you know anything about it?" the young girl asked hopefully. I said I didn't, but I'd check. Should I call her back? "No," she said, "I guess it doesn't really matter, does it?"

What she wanted from me, I think, was reassurance — some verity in this new world of bombings, kidnappings and hijackings where innocence is no protection.

I couldn't give it to her. I said the things you say: Don't worry, it's probably just a hoax. Don't worry, don't worry . . .

"I know," she said and I could sense her fear. "But it's an awful way to start the day."

This time, it was a hoax. This time, there was no bomb. And yet I think the fear, hers and mine, was justified.

I don't so much fear the bombs. The chances of my being blown to bits are, thus far at least, infinitesimal. What I fear is the self-righteousness of the bombers — these young people who would slaughter the innocent to build a better world.

I have met a few. In many ways I admire them. The ones I met are bright. They are dedicated to doing good for mankind. They are ready to sacrifice themselves for their ideals. And they are oh-so-terribly sure they are right. I fear this most.

For each man must justify to himself what he does. How much easier it is to justify your means when you are absolutely certain your ends are

righteous. How easy it was for Lee Harvey Oswald. How easy it was for Sirhan Sirhan.

"What does it matter if a few innocent people die here?" these young militants say. "You are slaughtering thousands of innocent people in Vietnam. The System must be destroyed."

How sure they are of this. To prevent the slaughter of innocents, they would slaughter the innocents.

"We'll spread fear," they say. "And when the System is frightened enough, it will react with repression. And when the repression becomes bad enough, the people will join in our revolution."

And what frightens me is not that they may be wrong in these tactics, but that they may be right.

For the fear is spreading now. A few innocent people have been killed, a score of buildings blown up, a hundred bomb hoaxes called in.

On Capitol Hill, Congressmen nervously debate more repressive anti-crime legislation. The fear is spreading.

And with it comes an unease. For our system is based on the concept that innocence is the best protection from harm. And now innocence is no protection at all.

So it may come. In the ugliness of our fear, in our own self-righteousness, we may set forth to hunt down and kill these bombers, slaughtering the innocents who get in our way.

Perhaps, in the end, the bombers may even win. But I don't think they will build a better world. For I keep thinking back to that young girl — the way her voice sounded, the way she had been awakened to another day.

And I think that if you must methodically set about to frighten even one innocent young girl to build a new world, it won't be a damned bit better than the one we've got.