



jeffrey hart

Is welfare well?

The report that "welfare reform" translation: vastly increased Federal welfare funding is dead in Congress represents much more than a crystallization of public opinion against one particular proposal.

True enough, public opinion was nudged here by the remarkable events this summer in New York, where 20 per cent of welfare recipients failed to pick up their checks, thus discrediting the claim of the welfare establishment that only 1 or 2 per cent of the recipients are ineligible or fraudulent. Still, particular abuses can be corrected or minimized.

At the very least we have passed beyond the Age of Innocence where social legislation is concerned, for program after program, undertaken with the best of intentions, not only fails to solve the problem but, worse, goes on to create new problems.

The conventional apologists for welfare argue that the vast increase in the number of

dependent families is due to available jobs not paying enough to support a family, and therefore husbands were motivated to desert the family to qualify it for welfare. And so, this argument runs, the thing to do is to provide "income supplements" for the "working poor" to keep the husband in the house.

But now the paradox. New York has long provided such income supplements. The family need not be husbandless to qualify. And yet it is exactly here that the increase in the number of deserted families has been most spectacular.

In a searching article in the current issue of Commentary magazine, Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer concludes that is is the "liberal" and "humane" character of New York welfare legislation that has caused the vast increase in abandoned families. The sanctions that formerly kept more husbands in the home have been eroded by the "humane" measures to keep families together.

But it is not only welfare

that is in question. The evidence is accumulating that "solutions" generate new problems.

"If we look at a country like Sweden," writes Glazer, "which presents a much more moderate range of social problems that the United States, we will see how even the most enlightened, least conflict-ridden effort to deal with social problems leads to a tax budget which takes more than 40 per cent of the Gross National Product."

"And new items are already on Sweden's agenda of social demands that should raise that percentage even higher. Additional demands are being formulated "that would require further increases in taxation-- if any society can go much beyond a taxation rate of 40 per cent of its Gross National Product."

Reflect upon these figures, and upon Glazer's conclusions, and where social policy is concerned you will pass out of the liberal Garden of Eden.

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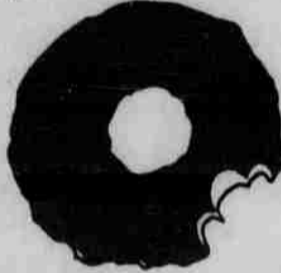
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Brevity in letters is requested and the Daily Nebraskan reserves the right to condense letters. All letters must be accompanied by writer's true name but may be submitted for publication under a pen name or initials. However, letters will be printed under a pen name or initials at the editor's discretion.

Dear editor

In our efforts never to be any less open minded than the most open minded, and to hate and ostracize bigots with the best; perhaps we as students have become more interested in furthering personal desires than in actually changing the scene.

In the early 1960's civil rights was the issue. People talked and had "Time Outs", and argued and in general, a few did a lot, a lot did nothing but talk and a little was accomplished. Today civil rights are only imperceptably better than before.

In the late 60's, the popular indignation was over the war in Vietnam. And being the aware, empathetic people we are, we talked a lot, had some more "Time Outs" and did nothing but marvel at our own concern. But the war rages on, undisguised by lies and tactical maneuvers from the administration.

Last spring the ASUN candidates all talked of educational reform. And lo and behold look about you. Can't you just see the change?

Our "Time Out" this year is a topic that really lends itself to righting social wrongs. You see, it's more important that a black person have the right to be gay than to walk into a restaurant and order food. Isn't it better we guarantee everyman the right "to do it in the street" than to guarantee him the right to walk on that street.

"We can't take "time out"

to examine how to continue pressure and end all support to South Vietnam. We can't take "time out" even to consider meaningful educational reform in Nebraska.

But we can talk about human sexuality because it's a nice, vague topic that has been talked about for years. Besides, we must show how open minded we are, especially when there is a chance to gross out outstate Nebraska. What fun!

But mainly we must concern ourselves with ourselves and damn the world around us. Damn the blacks, damn the Vietnamese, damn the Chinese, damn the starving and the poor because we just haven't got time; "we gotta go do it in the street."

Steven J. Winston

Dear editor:

The youth of this country has an important decision to make. Will they or will they not allow oil into the Arctic of Alaska and the construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline? What they decide will determine whether we continue this downward spiral of our society and its environment or whether we finally turn the country around toward a better tomorrow.

We should not be debating this issue of oil in Alaska. Instead we should be demanding a full scale investigation into why the oil industry has become so

powerful. The petroleum industry is undermining national security and threatening our very survival by squandering away resources in its lust for profits.

In less than ten years we put a man on the moon. But in nearly 80 years since the automobile has been on the streets of this country, we still get less than 15 miles to a gallon of gasoline. This is progress? Where are our priorities?

Our mass transit system is on the brink of collapse, yet the oil industry vigorously promotes the highway trust fund. What kind of social responsibility does the petroleum industry practice when it lets our cities strangle themselves just so oil can satisfy its own selfish aims?

But will the young generation follow the same path of apathy that the older generation did? If it does it will be sowing the seed for alienation and a generation gap far greater than exists today. It too can expect to feel the sting of "hypocrisy" and "hypocrite" flung at it by the next generation and with more profound vengeance.

More efficient forms of energy are being suppressed. Why? Will those concerned about the future of this country win out over greed, or will greed write the final chapters to this planet's history?

Kenneth Quade
Pembine, Wisconsin

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