

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The troubled gays

Being a homosexual is not easy in our American society that places a high value on conformity.

As was pointed out last week in a *Daily Nebraskan* series on homosexuality, gay life is often characterized by oppression, discrimination and traumatic experiences. Homosexuals often find it difficult to accept themselves as normal when doctors tell them they're sick, the state tells them they're criminals and their church tells them they're sinners.

But gay life is undergoing a rapid change as militant homosexuals, under the banner of the gay liberation movement, are now demanding acceptance, equal rights and even approval.

Homosexuality, long considered a taboo subject, is now discussed and debated openly as evidenced by the recent ASUN conference on human sexuality. An increasing number of homosexuals are also coming out of their closets and taking personal pride in their sexual preference. Locally this new pride has been shown in the formation of the University of Nebraska Gay Action Group.

Gay liberation represents the advent of another oppressed minority group in America. But there is a fundamental difference between the gay movement and other minority protest movements. "What sets the militant homosexuals apart from society," according to *Newsweek Magazine*, "is not a matter of birth or ethnic origin or philosophical convictions; it is a set of attitudes and behavior patterns that many medical authorities regard as literally sick."

Central to gay liberation is the idea that homosexuals are normal people. The government and the psychiatric establishment, according to gays, are the two institutions most responsible for keeping homosexuals from attaining a normal status.

The movement's primary goal with regard to the government is the passage of laws that would permit homosexual acts in private between consenting adults (four states now have such laws). Nebraska currently has severe sodomy laws, but the statutes have not been enforced for the past few years. Thus it seems realistic for Nebraska to repeal its sodomy laws and permit homosexual acts in private between two consenting adults.

Gay libbers are also rightfully demanding an end to discrimination in housing and employment. A logical way to accomplish this is to expand present laws against discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment to include the term "sexual orientation."

The psychiatric community, which often regards homosexuality as a sickness, probably presents a bigger battle for gays. Yet gay liberation does have some allies. Many sociologists reject the theory of homosexuality as aberrant behavior and instead regard it as an accident of the child rearing process or as an alternative life style.

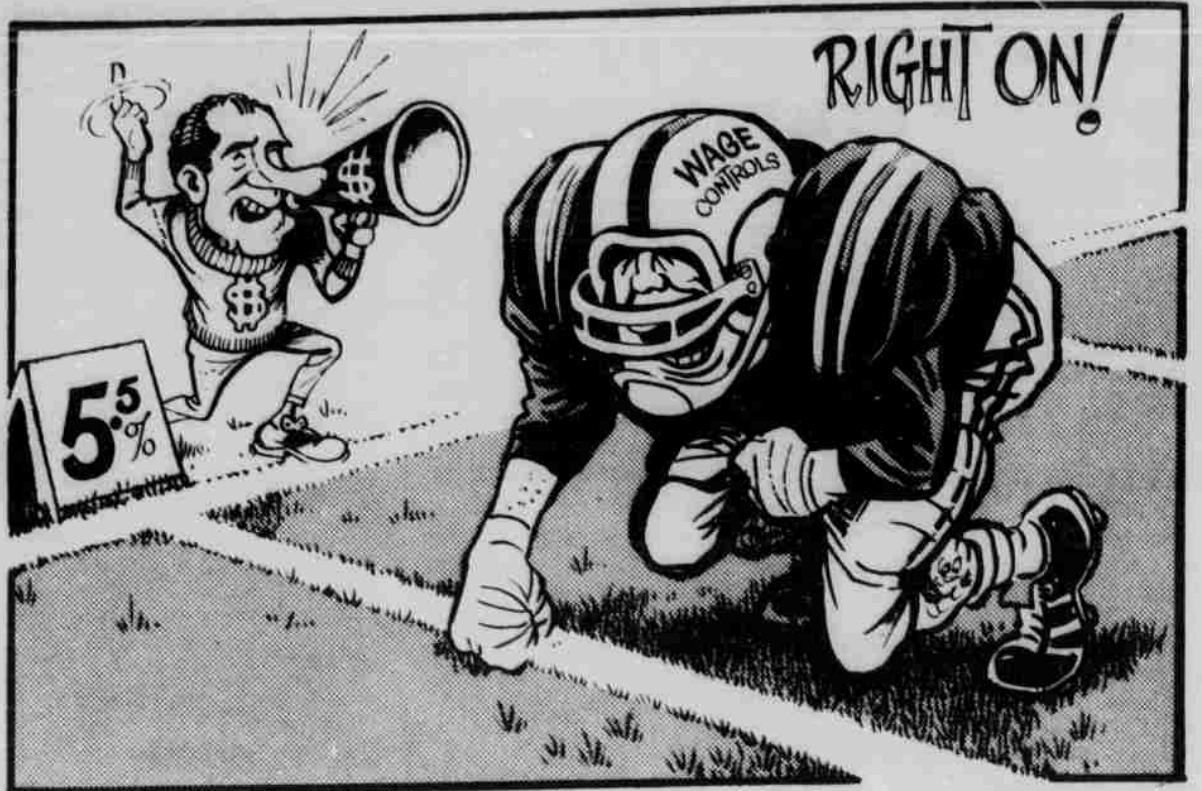
However, there are some perplexing issues to create an image of normality. Certainly no one tries to raise his children as homosexuals. In addition, some people have asked the question: is gay really "good" for millions of unhappy homosexuals and homosexually inclined people who might want to change their sex lives if they could?

The questions about homosexuality are many, the answers few. The many issues about gay liberation will require extensive study and debate.

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"Hold that line! Hold that line!"



"Hold that line! Hold that line!"



jeffrey hart

Here comes Teddy

The campaign being waged for the Democratic nomination by Senator Edward Kennedy—and campaign it assuredly is—bears an odd resemblance to Richard Nixon's campaign in late 1966 and early 1967. The off-year election of 1966, in which Nixon had campaigned furiously for Republican candidates, was a triumph for the Party, but also for Nixon. Surely he would now begin to round up delegates and ice the nomination.

No, said Nixon, and declared he was going on a six-month world tour. To his intimates he said, "Let Romney take the point," using the familiar military expression. George Romney, then Governor of Michigan, was a leader in the polls, Nixon had had plenty of exposure nationally, and there were exciting new faces around like Ronald Reagan and Charles Percy. Nixon's calculation that Romney would falter turned out to be correct. By the time of the New Hampshire primary the Romney candidacy was dead.

In the early running Teddy Kennedy left the field to Senator Muskie, though, unlike Nixon, he had little choice in the matter. Until Chappaquiddick, Kennedy was the odds-on favorite. In the wake of his behavior that weekend, however, most of the electorate would have viewed a Kennedy candidacy as an impossible outrage. Muskie therefore emerged as the front-runner, and the media began discovering his Lincolnesque qualities.

Richard Nixon once remarked that he had learned in 1962 in California that a Republican could not win with the Right alone, but that he could not win without the Right either. Similarly, a Democrat cannot win without the Left, even if he has the solid center of the party.

Muskie's weakness is that he has found no way to appeal to the youth vote, the campus, the intellectuals, the media, the chic Left, or to those Left Democratic wealthy types whose money flows in direct proportion to ideological purity. Muskie, even as

Humphrey in 1968, is too square—a "drug store liberal." has been taking a variety of very visible rhetorical positions, championing relief for Bangla Desh, urging the students on to new fevers of activism, telling the British to get out of Ulster, gestating a vast new scheme of socialized medicine, denouncing the Nixon Administration in harsh terms, attacking the handling of May Day rioters and so on. Muskie's cautious temperament forecloses for him this political route to high visibility.

Here is a possible projection. In due course, Muskie's strength will keep him the front-runner. Such a prospect will produce defections on the Left, among the factions enumerated above. Eugene McCarthy will heave into view, and there will be a move toward a Fourth Party. Under these circumstances, Kennedy will be the only candidate acceptable to all factions—chic Left, bread-and-butter liberals, Richard Daley and George Meany, intellectuals, media.