

LETTERS to the NEBRASKAN

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,

The comments in the Dec. 9 issue of *The Daily Nebraskan* by James G. Kendrick, professor of agricultural economics suggest that some of the remarks attributed to me recently in a story (*The Daily Nebraskan*, Dec. 3) need clarification.

Among other things, I attempted to stress that the farmer typically operates in markets dominated by large corporations, both with respect to the things he buys and the sale of his products.

Some data from the Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly of the U.S. Senate show, for example, that in the manufacture of breakfast cereals the eight largest firms accounted for 96 per cent of the industry output; in flour milling 50 per cent of output is concentrated in the eight largest firms; and in the manufacture of farm machinery and equipment the eight largest firms are responsible for 59 per cent of output.

Food processing, like other sectors of the economy, has been caught up in the most extensive merger movement in our history, a development fraught with grave danger both for political democracy and the free market system.

The matter of corporate farming is more complicated. As an agricultural economist I trust Mr. Kendrick is not so uninformed that he does not understand that most farmers and farm organizations use the term "corporate farming" to mean the takeover of farming by giant "agribusiness" corporations. If he doesn't, I suggest that he talk with a few Nebraska farmers.

The issue is not the use of the corporate form of business organization for a small family-owned operation. No one, obviously, sees this facet of the corporation in agriculture as the major problem. Though Mr. Kendrick no doubt views "agribusiness" in benign fashion, to the farmer it frequently appears as a threatening combination of highly organized national food chains, corporate giants in the food processing industry, and conglomerates seeking new fields to conquer.

The tenor of Mr. Kendrick's response tells us a great deal about why the ordinary farmer's distrust of the USDA and many agricultural economists has become almost total. Instead of addressing himself to the farmer's genuine unease about the corporate threat, Mr. Kendrick cites an array of statistics—from USDA of course—to show that all is really well in Nebraska and the great plains. The farmer's fear does not stem from the current proportion of agricultural output under corporate control, but what the future portends.

What they see on the horizon is the threat of a totally integrated land-to-market production of food by the agribusiness giants in the food processing industry. What Ralston Purina

and others have already done in owning, feeding, and processing poultry for sale to supermarkets can easily be duplicated for other types of agricultural production. The farmer knows he is being crushed and forced into a sharecropper's role in which his main function is to supply cheap raw materials for the giant processors.

In other parts of the nation the threat of a corporate takeover is real. Sen. Adlai Stevenson II, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, recently stated, "In California... 3.7 million acres of farmland are now owned by 45 corporate farms; one corporation, Tenneco, controls more than a million acres in California. Nearly half the agricultural land in that state is owned by a tiny fraction of the population. . . More than half the land area of the state of Maine is owned by about 12 corporations. . ."

Perhaps Mr. Kendrick will dismiss Sen. Stevenson's concerns as "political emotionalism" unrelated to the real needs of a modern agriculture. If he would listen a bit, he would also learn that rural Nebraska is rife with rumors and reports about land acquisition in the state by large owners, corporate and otherwise. Some hard research on this issue would be of more social value than continuing to tell farmers they would be better off if they did something else.

And this brings me to the real issue of agricultural policy today. And that, simply, is whether the trends of the last few decades shall be allowed to continue until all of rural America becomes an empty wasteland, drained of most people farmers, small businesses, and small towns. Much of the bitter reaction to the Butz appointment came from the belief that he belongs to that genre of agricultural economist who never sees the problem in terms of human beings with their hopes and fears, but simply one of "resource use" and market forces to which the farmer ought to adjust. Well, Nebraska farmers and small businessmen are bitterly resentful of being the sacrificial goat on the altar of impersonal economic efficiency. A modern agricultural policy demands that first and foremost there be a commitment to halting these trends, rather than simply a rationalization for them. If this is political emotionalism, so be it.

Wallace C. Peterson

Dear editor,

The one thing that seems so clear to Gary Seacrest (*The Daily Nebraskan*, Dec. 9) is not so clear to others. The Board of Regents took their action concerning student fees in light of a pending legal suit filed against them. This suit, filed by students, challenges the concept of mandatory student fees.

These mandatory fees, whether controlled by the Regents or the "student

establishment," are a tremendous setback to the concept of self-determination. If programs do, in fact, benefit students, they will be voluntarily supported. We don't need the Regents or the Union clique telling us what's good for us.

"Greater control of student fees by students. . .", means control by a certain group and it makes little difference which group that is, they're all equally obnoxious. The present system has failed so miserably that it has forced some students to go out and raise money for legal action.

ASUN? No, Virginia there is no ASUN! The only question, with regard to that group that claims it represents the Associated Students of the University of Nebraska, is whether it will collapse internally before external actions being conducted in the courts cause its demise.

To defend the World in Revolution Conference on the grounds that "any attempt to squelch the World in Revolution Conference would be a violation of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly as well as the principle of academic freedom," shows that Mr. Seacrest is ignorant of the basis for the law suits. The essence of these suits is that mandatory student fees are a violation of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly. Those that think academic freedom has been violated had better find out what academic freedom is.

It will be a dangerous precedent if the Regents decide what information and speakers the students will be allowed to hear. It was a dangerous precedent when they allowed a situation whereby a small group of students could decide what information and speakers we would be allowed to hear.

Bob Vlasak

Dear editor,

The critics of the Young Republican registration drive are starting to sound a little hoarse. Some try, very hard, to blame the non-success of the League of Young Voters' drive solely on the failure of the Young Republicans (20-some members at the time) to endorse it.

Individuals in YR were encouraged to work on the drive, and did—a fact that critics ignore. We also decided to make the additional, separate effort, to register Republicans.

We grant Roy Baldwin the right to support Muskie. May we have the same right to work for the GOP?

Unlike some workers for Democratic candidates, we did not attempt to interject partisan campaigns into the drive. We, at least, respected its expressed desire to remain non-partisan, so that we've been somewhat surprised to find it contradicting itself, and firing at us for messing it up!

And as for the implications that we wanted to hamper young voter registration because "everyone knows young people are Democrats,"

the latest figures (from Democratic State Party Headquarters, even) show 54.7 per cent of 18-20 year-olds registered Democrat, 45.3 per cent Republican—ahead of the national average for all ages. Also, the very early returns from the dorm survey show the Republicans leading a little bit.

Hindering registration is the last thing we want to do! But we do choose to work in the GOP, to help it be more effective, and we demand freedom to do so.

Matt Bosley
Mary Cannon
John Vihstadt

Dear editor,

In the article "Foreign Morality" (*The Daily Nebraskan*, Dec. 9), Tom Braden, commenting on the Nixon Administration's role in the India-Pakistan war, asks why "we should back a dictator in Pakistan against the only democracy in the East?" He also asks why "should we back a dictator who is certain to lose?"

As for the "only democracy in the East," Mr. Nixon should know that it is only a matter of time when she will become an even bigger democracy. In 1947 she made Junagarh a part of her democracy, in 1948 Hyderabad and Kashmir were made democratic and then in 1961 Goa was made Democratic. The last in the series looks like East Pakistan.

Because India is the "only democracy in the East," does she have the right to change all other nondemocratic nations into democratic ones, particularly when she has the power of Russia behind her?

Malik M. Ahmad

Dear editor,

I read with great interest your recent articles concerning 199 courses and the proposed American Studies major. It should be pointed out, however, that a program that allows a student to design his or her own major has been in existence in the College of Arts and Sciences for two years—the Integrated Studies option.

The variety of undergraduate programs possible under Integrated Studies far exceeds that possible under the proposed American Studies major. A great strength of the American Studies proposal, however, is that it may open an Integrated Studies type opportunity in other colleges of the University.

In practice, students regularly use the 199 numbers to do original research or study for the purpose of tying their formal Integrated Studies coursework together in a manner meaningful to them. The policy of virtually college-wide independent study, even for freshmen, under an easily-recognized number such as 199, is, like Integrated Studies, an Arts and Sciences first.

You are to be commended for your fine coverage of the academic aspects of University life, including the series on reform. We would appreciate it, however, if you would also remember to remind your readers that the College of Arts and Sciences is already years ahead of them in many ways, in the area of academic reform, and that the College of Arts and Sciences will continue to be the source of major curricular directions, regardless of the activities of other groups on campus.

John Janovy, Jr.
Assistant Dean of
Arts and Sciences

Dear editor,

Ron Kurtenbach, in his guest opinion column published in the Dec. 9 issue of *The Daily Nebraskan*, wrote a paper very well-fitting a student working in English.

However, in one aspect his article is definitely lacking, that of word choice. He used obscenities where they were completely unneeded. This use of obscenities shows one of two things: (1) he does not have sufficient vocabulary to avoid the use of profanity, or (2) he uses obscenity to add force to his arguments, much as a six-year-old might.

Wayne Stuenkel

