

by Chris Harper

*Chris Harper is a junior from Boise, Idaho, majoring in English and journalism. He coordinates Nebraska Free University and is a member of the University Curriculum Committee.*

## guest opinion

A question is a central element of the educational process. The ability to question and conceptualize an answer precipitates reflection, experimentation and decision. The question is too often isolated to the factual material presented in the University classroom.

Process, method of instruction and the purposes of education should be frequently questioned and evaluated by the individual student. Education as a dynamic encounter

must naturally involve active participation and questioning by the student and can not deteriorate into the passive acceptance of authoritative decisions.

However, students are infrequently active participants in the educational process at the University of Nebraska. We are becoming merely observers and accommodators of educational stimuli. In too many instances students allow administrators and faculty members to determine the tone and substance of the classroom experience. More importantly, many students placidly accept these decisions.

This evolving dependence of the students upon other individuals damages the framework of any university. Where there is no input there is no change and while bureaucracy may be static, a person and his thought process should not be.

Dependence intensifies student boredom and minimizes natural curiosity, thus creating an atmosphere of frustration for the concerned educator.

The University of Nebraska provides several opportunities for self-determined study. The integrated studies program in the College of Arts and Sciences, independent study courses (199 and 299), and the Centennial Education Program are some examples of excellent means for active participation in education.

Nebraska Free University offers another opportunity in its coordination of group independent study courses this semester. These programs offer significant freedom and flexibility to demonstrate a person's education need not occur only within a lecture format.

However, an amazingly small percentage of the student body take advantage of these opportunities. Perhaps most people are content with their education at this institution. More probably, many students view their education as a means toward future expectations, a ritual to be performed and overlook the quality of their daily classroom situation. Other students have become complacent in the approach to their education.

It is our position that each student must assess a personal definition of education and determine whether the University of Nebraska facilitates or stifles growth within the range of that conception of education.

Also the student should seriously ask himself if any intellectual frustration isn't due to his failure to make use of those opportunities available.

A learning person must create a deliberate and conscious environment conducive to inquiry. He must firmly believe that to be drained of his self-awareness and self-determination is an insult to his integrity and necessitates his living in a world constructed by another person's answers.

Dear editor:

*"It was hoped that the World in Revolution Conference would be rescheduled by the Union Program Council or the Nebraska Union Board to a later, more politically favorable date."*

The editor of the *Daily Nebraskan* said that in an editorial Monday, January 24. How can the editor justify delaying a discussion of important controversial matters until a "more politically favorable date"? The freedom to discuss controversial subjects is not dependent on "a more politically favorable date." Freedom is a past, present and future phenomenon. The promise of freedom in the future is not freedom in the present. Being politically expedient in hopes of keeping financial support is not free. It is an act of intellectual prostitution. Freedom is non-negotiable. It is not to be bargained with for the survival of the University newspaper or even the University itself.

Ironically, to compromise away freedom to preserve the University is to destroy the University. Freedom is sacred to this community. The editor's willingness to delay free expression is reprehensible and heinous. The editor's willingness to let freedom become a rationalization for the university budget is unjust and deserving of censure. The expediency that the editorial is about will kill the freedom which is sacred to the University community's existence.

To compromise away the freedom of others leads to the end of the freedom of the compromisers. To negotiate away the non-negotiable is agonized self-destruction. Suicide is not painless.

I'm sorry for the editor's honest pathetic qualities, I am also angry about his lack of courage to resist coercion and intimidation. The editor may be successful, but for what?

Ron Kurtenbach

Dear editor:

As a concerned student and a member

of the ASUN Senate for two years I found the lead editorial of Monday's *Daily Nebraskan* absurd. The editorial dealt with the World in Revolution Conference and its effect on LB 1271, slated for committee hearing that afternoon.

The thrust of the editorial, signed by editor Barry Pilger, was that "controversial topics certainly deserve discussion anywhere, especially in the academic community. But at a time when the University of Nebraska is under fire by members of the Nebraska Legislature, the desirability of the proposed conference is questionable." I disagree completely with that statement.

The first question that occurred to me was, "Does the editor really think that postponing the conference to a "later, more politically favorable date" would change the fate of LB 1271?" It seems to me that if a senator wanted to shaft the University it wouldn't make any difference to him when the conference ended up being held.

The only thing we've got going for us at the Legislature is honesty and reliance on the good sense of the state senators. As a result of Terry Carpenter's kill-the-Rag bill last spring, all state senators now receive the *Nebraskan* at their offices. Presumably all have by now read the editorial in question. I wonder how they feel about us now. I wonder if they appreciate the editor's attitude. I wonder if they look forward to being slickered by some fast-talking college editor.

I think that if we tell the Legislature exactly what we have planned, they will consider us much more highly.

This brings me to another point of the editorial, the question of whether the conference should go on at all. I voted for appropriations for the conference in ASUN Senate last fall. I was one of several senators, in fact, that managed to save most of the Conference's budget after it had been slashed by the ASUN

executives. The conference budget was cut for many of the same politically expedient reasons that the editor set forth in the editorial. I opposed expediency then and I am compelled to do so now. It is my firm position, and I believe Wednesday's Senate meeting will confirm, that the World in Revolution Conference will go on, exactly as its committee planned it.

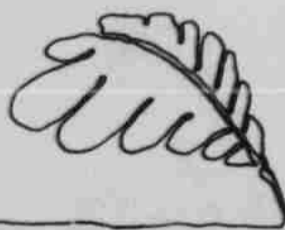
There's more here at stake than the continuation of student fees or what the Legislature will do. There are basic freedoms involved here. The real issue is not expediency, it is whether the democratically elected senate of the students will be allowed to invite whatever speakers it sees fit to come to this campus, after fulfilling all existing University requirements.

I see *World in Revolution* as a symbol. If we support that conference, we will have salvaged a scrap of our freedoms. If we back down now, a disappointing year in student government will have been capped with a final, killing humiliation.

Fortunately there are many people in ASUN who are ready to defend the students' interests. Fortunately there are good, fair-minded state senators, most likely a majority of them, who realize that State Senator Gerald Stromer's LB 1271 is a monstrosity and will laugh it out of the chamber. Fortunately there are enough people in and out of student government that put the interest of the student body ahead of their own personal interests to counterbalance the effect of Monday's depressing editorial.

We should resolve today that the *World in Revolution* Conference will go on, and communicate that reality in a respectful, honest way to the legislature. Even if the worst happens, we can at least say that for once this year, when the chips were down, student leaders thought about the students first and about themselves second.

Roy Baldwin



## to the editor