

In memoriam. . .

A friend and companion of the UNL academic community passed away late Thursday afternoon. The Anti-War Demonstration died after collapsing suddenly around 2 p.m. It faltered initially. Then it wandered painfully toward its final resting place—the Terminal Building, at Tenth and Zero Streets in Lincoln.

Those close to the deceased (approximately 100) were heard to offer many opposing comments regarding the event.

Relatives of the deceased were saddened, but the work of the Peace Movement, the Revolution and the End the Vietnam War Organization will proceed without interruption. The deceased's political rivals were seen celebrating the death by planning counter services. They include the Young Americans for Freedom and the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The Demonstration reached the peak of its career several years ago in several cities around the nation as a symbolic protest against American foreign policy. After that time it was only slightly successful in attaining its goal—world peace.

Although outmoded in many ways, the Demonstration hung on. It fought for recognition as an impetus for social change.

As the seventies began, another method of initiating social change became more popular than the Demonstration. First cousin, to the deceased, the Political Campaign, struggled and emerged the victor in the contest for effectiveness in changing the American Way.

In retrospect and respect one may ask if the death of the Anti-War Demonstration will have any effect on society at all. It probably will.

In death the Demonstration gives way to the potential of the Political Campaign. The possibilities for change in society are as limitless as the candidates the Campaign supports.

Instead of mourning the death of the Demonstration, citizens should encourage the power of the Political Campaign in the months to come. After all, the Demonstration would have wanted it that way.

Barry Pilger



Note: I am not feeling wacky or satirical. The following column is written with the most serious intentions in mind. It is a proposal not generally accepted around the country. I hope someday it will be.

It has become vogue in America, within the last four or five years, to speak of the police in derogatory terms. "Pig" is a word that has become almost synonymous with "police," particularly in the rhetoric of the most oppressed groups. And I agree that the derogatory connotations are well-implicated in most cases.

The situation, however, has grown to such proportions that it is no longer the single policeman who is the pig. The entire structure of law enforcement in the United States is at fault. I think there are a few individual policemen who are outright bastards. But for the most part I think they're just guys doing their job, and it's a tough one.

Much of the problem lies in the dehumanization of the American policeman. He no longer is the cop on the corner. He no longer is a person who knows everyone's first name. He no longer is someone who jokes with the townspeople and tousles kids' hair. The American policeman, instead, has become an impersonal individual in a uniform that keeps him apart from the populace.

And most of us are content to wallow in our own misery, shout "pig" and sympathize with the people who get their guts blown out in ghetto raids. We should, instead, be making positive suggestions to right a very wrong situation.

The animosity most of us feel toward policemen could be eased considerably if

an effort were made to make the policeman more like the people he is policing. Some very minor things, it seems to me, are involved in easing the pressures between the community and its police. Those things can start with redefining the police role, which, it seems, has become distorted through time.

Ideally, a policeman should be the individual who a community chooses to protect their interests. The community should hire police to enforce a number of rules which that community has predetermined are for the public good. Through time, however, the policeman has begun to assert more and more pressure on the public—he has, in fact, controlled the public. Originally it was the other way around.

And because so few people have the experience of acting as a rule-enforcing person, they don't understand that the policeman is doing a job. So the police get pushier, the people get more abusive, the police push harder and we end up with the terrible situation of American life today.

So we should redefine the police role so that he is again a friend rather than an enemy.

Pressure would be considerably eased if the members of the police department were simply allowed to look a little more like the people they "protect." The newspapers periodically have stories of policemen losing their jobs or being reprimanded because of hair or sideburns that are too long for force regulations. That prevents an officer, in many cases, from becoming more like the people he patrols.

And police uniforms are an equally

absurd and unnecessary source of friction. You can not likely mistake a policeman for someone else in society—not many people dress that way.

So, get them out of conspicuous uniforms and into something of a less military nature. A lower-key uniform with, perhaps, a small badge and name-plate would suffice. Let them grow their hair if they want to. I don't think it can hurt much, if any.

And pull some of them off motorcycles and out of patrol cars. Let them become the cop on the corner again. That's one thing that was better about the "Good Old Days." Let the police become part of the community again instead of keeping them at an antagonistic, chilling distance.

The situation in Lincoln is eased a little bit by a program that has been conducted in local junior high schools this year. Officer Rollie Weisser has presented programs to the kids, and generally allowed the kids to get to know him. The program is a good one. It should be carried into the larger community and some mutual respect might be the result.

But for the most part the situation across the country is one that can only end badly. If we can change the situation so the police are allowed to act like brothers—and I think many of them would welcome the chance—I think they'd be treated like brothers. Not like pigs.

The authorities, if they're concerned, should try something to eliminate the antagonism that exists between the police and the people. Maybe the neighborhood police idea would work. I hope things can't get much worse. I hope there's still time for things to get better.

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