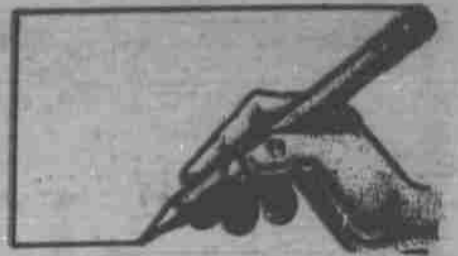


opinion



Sunday's news perplexing, amusing

This weekend's news offers some head-shaking double takes.

A report datelined Washington tells us that Americans are making progress in developing solar energy—more than 250 companies in America are experimenting in solar development. Their sales are expected to top \$1 billion by 1985. Good for their balance sheets. Good for Americans, who are making progress in the time-limited battle against depleting resources. Or are we? Another story predicts that big cars will dominate the auto industry's list of best-selling 1976 models. Still another Sunday story gives us Arabs' reactions to this spendthrift attitude. They're taking their summer vacations in Bombay this year.

There's more.

Two headlines in the Sunday Journal and Star, "Slammer is Human Warehouse Full of Utter Misery", and "City Jail is No Place for People," would seem to carry a clear message—jails are un-

fit for humans—among other living things. But another headline not far away asks "Why Does He Want to Die?", when Gary Gilmore in Utah State Prison says he would prefer a firing squad to spending the rest of his life in prison.

On a lighter note, we get this from Mamie Eisenhower on the occasion of her eightieth birthday. "May she (Rosalynn Carter) always provide a home for her husband." During eight years in the White House "I let Ike run the country, and I ran the home," Mamie reminisced. She goes on to say that the presidency was Ike's business; her's was the children and the household. The fondness most of us have for Mamie shouldn't prevent us from reminding her that times and First Lady's have changed. From what we've seen of Rosalynn on the campaign trail we can be assured or resigned to the fact that she will make the presidency for the next four years part of her business, also.

letters

Give us a chance

It is fascinating how one prefix in the English language can raise so many eyebrows, especially when it comes to politics. I am referring to the prefix "anti" which I used to help formulate an organization to examine President-elect Carter's campaign statements and the planks in the Democratic platform. Among those eyebrows raised were those belonging to L. Kent Wolgamott, a columnist for the *Daily Nebraskan* (Friday, Nov. 12). I have to admire Wolgamott and others who share his beliefs for one thing; all of you seem to have a well-adjusted vocabulary of adjectives. Wolgamott also possesses the ability to read only what he wants to read. Nowhere did I mention our group was out to resist changes, rather the implementation of those changes.

The mere concept of full employment (based on our capitalist economy) is very highly impossible to achieve, even if it would nullify a cut in the welfare rolls and increase the tax base. If the U.S. were to obtain full employment under Carter and the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, I question its ability to last. With everyone working, the inventories across the U.S. would be bulging, which would lead to a mass worker lay-off to help reduce the build-up.

To avoid this, we could slow our economic growth by reducing production, but this leads to lay-offs also, (witness the automobile industry a couple of years ago.) So the government must provide these laid-off workers with jobs to maintain full employment (Wolgamott's last resort). But how will they finance this public jobs program? None other than by an increase in the welfare program, which is financed by our tax system. I seriously question Carter's ability to give the middle-American a tax break, as he stated in his campaign speeches. I have nothing against full employment, but plainly speaking, it is nearly impossible to do and still maintain a capitalist society as we know it today. If our ultimate goal is full employment then I propose this country go the full route of nationalizing our industries, having a national health program a standardized education system and all the other elements of a complete socialist society. With the profit motive now eliminated and everyone on the same social level, we can relax for awhile. I might as well drop out of school, since a job would be assured for me anyway.

Wolgamott, I don't quite understand your need to categorize blacks, the lower-income persons and the less educated as you did. Why did you single out blacks? Aren't some blacks in the country of low income and without a chance to further their educations? Why did you not mention the American Indian or the Mexican-Americans or any other of the minorities in this country who have been "virtually ignored" and "vetoed to death?" Have you forgotten about the Civil Rights Movement? Or the many unemployment benefits now established by most businesses in the country? Or that institutions across the U.S. have programs to help minority students and others with lower incomes to further their education? Hmmm . . .

It is nice to say that national health insurance will "reduce profiteering in the medical profession" and that it will "allow our people to get proper health care." But I don't remember reading in Wolgamott's column how it will reduce profiteering or ensure that each person is taken care of. For that matter, what is profiteering in the medical profession? Are you referring to the present government-backed Medicare and Medicaid programs? And how will this national health insurance be financed? Again I refer to Carter's statement about giving the middle-American a tax break. So the Humphrey-Hawkins bill will "clean up the squalor of our cities" also? But how?

I have noticed that more and more persons in Sweden and England want to leave their country to escape tax burdens. But why? They have national health and other comparable socialistic programs. Shouldn't they be content? However, I must concede that England has a workable health program because it gives citizens an option of either private practice or the national program. Perhaps if the U.S. could work out something like that . . .

I resent Wolgamott's accusations that our proposed organization doesn't know the Democratic platform, that we are out to resist any social change and especially his attempt to associate our proposed organization with McCarthyism. That was a blow; in fact, it was a double barbit.

As I said before, I have no perfect solution to all those problems. But I hope to answer the questions I asked above through my proposed organization. Then maybe some solution can be realized and molded into our present way of life. I only ask that you give our organization a chance before you condemn it.

Possibly in exile,
Jim Johnson



Environmental controls healthy; they're also good for economy

By Nicholas Von Hoffman

In the waning days of the late political campaign the accidental President found himself in the Pacific Northwest telling the aircraft workers that, thanks to the administration's environmental noise standards, the airline industry will have to scrap its older jets, buy new silent swifties and thereby more jobs will be created for people in that region of the country. It was a strange statement

sidewise

by the head of an administration which had opposed environmental protections on the grounds that they cost jobs and slow down the economy.

Two strip mining bills were vetoed by Ford on those grounds. As with the specifics of noise abatement and airplanes, it should have been obvious that, if strip mining is prohibited, deep tunneling which needs more new machinery and more manpower will have to be used.

If the airlines must scrap half their jets and the coal industry isn't allowed to use the cheapest technology available to it, airplanes are going to cost more and so is coal and electricity and everything else made from coal. But raising the prices doesn't axiomatically cost jobs. Nor does it cause inflation.

Inflation is when all the prices rise, when the price level rises. Prices for individual products rise for all kinds of reasons such as improved quality, temporary shortages, strikes by workers making the same thing in competitive shops and on and on.

Forgotten benefits

Instead of howling at "the bird and bunny crowd," or railing at "environmental puritanism" as this month's *Fortune* does, it might help to calculate the benefits as well as the costs. Unhappily, the traditional bookkeeping of the Western World is only set up to figure costs.

"Eighty-one industrial plants employing 18,000 people have been forced closed," *Fortune* tells us, but makes no estimate of how many jobs mandatory environmental standards have created. When the advocates of pig-say and green-scum drinking water weep about the costs, they don't explain that those so-called costs constitute the paychecks of the workers in the new industries created by environmental ties.

... the cumulative costs of pollution abatement could lie in the trillion dollar range by the middle of the Eighties—comparable to the outlays for defense or education. Unthinkable that we should spend that kind of money to satisfy the Ferdinand the Bull complexes of people who won't settle for Airwick but want the sweet zephyrs the poets once sniffed. "The health-at-any-price

view," sneers *Fortune*, which has no objection to defense at any price. Yet we have every reason to believe that our toxic environment takes far more American lives every year than the Russians do.

Environment, war economics similar

The economic effects of spending money on war material and munitions and spending it on preserving the environment are quite similar. The social and political consequences are not, although both kinds of expenditures do create employment. You'll also recall that toward the end, Ford and Dole were both flitting about the country explaining to war workers what a Democratic cut in the Pentagon's allowance would mean in terms of jobs, not in terms of national security.

The Democrats aren't likely to reduce arms expenditures, but as long as both parties are committed to achieving and regulating prosperity through government spending, it's very important that arms not be allowed to be the only or the most important form that spending can take.

Sums comparable to those wasted in the Pentagon are being wasted in education and medicine and, although non-military spending makes no difference in narrowly economic terms, the pluses should be self-evident. The good it will do aside, it's very important that billions for water treatment plants and other non-war objectives remain popular and respectable.

Favored few

Even so, the economy and sanity would be better served if our environmental efforts were carried out less wastefully and less harmfully. Most environmental regulation favors currently existing large corporations if for no other reason than they have the dollar volume to handle the paper work and red tape. Moreover, environmental regulation can raise the start-up costs of going into business, thereby discouraging new competition for older, established giants.

The pro-pig sty crowd at *Fortune* and elsewhere have a point when they bring up these kinds of objections. They also make sense when they say that the same environmental objectives can be reached, not by regulation and the clanking bureaucracy that implies, but by some sort of use tax. Companies that pollute are charged or taxed for the costs of undoing their mess. Companies that don't pollute, don't pay. It's not much different than a city government saying to a factory, "We charge so much per pound to haul your garbage off. Or you can hire a scavenger to take care of the mess yourself, or you can develop a process in your factory so that you don't have any garbage."

Standard regulatory structures and procedures can't be applied to problems like the environment. We have to learn how to regulate without so many pernicious side effects. We have to because there is a bit of Ferdinand in most of us. Besides, we need the jobs.

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