

opinion/editorial

Harvard of Plains will not be easy goal

We hope the regents' plan to make the university the Harvard of the Plains succeeds. It would be nice if NU were known for being an academic institution and not a football factory.

The 12-point plan which includes increasing research, strengthening graduate programs, maintaining undergraduate excellence, seeking more federal grants, increasing the number of women and minorities employed by the university and carefully reviewing business and administrative operations is a program this university desperately needs.

We hope the regents can convince the Legislature to give the university the extra money such a plan requires and persuade administrative heads to work for such goals. NU should concentrate on excelling in undergraduate programs rather than just maintaining the current programs. This would uplift the total quality of the university. An improved undergraduate program would give NU's grad schools more qualified students and bring in needed undergraduates in view of predicted enrollment decline.

Even so, in this age of lid bills, the dream to make NU a dynamic academic institution will not be easy to achieve.



'Arab activists' mind-boggling rhetoric deserves ridicule'

By Bruce Nelson

Monday, Dec. 4, I read with both amusement and consternation the guest opinion column written by the Arab Students in Nebraska. The article, I assume, was about the "myth of Palestine," but it was so poorly written and badly argued that I might have missed this point.

The writing was an excellent example of "chaos compounded by confusion." Not only were several words and names spelled wrong (puring for pouring, atrocities for atrocities, Belfore for Balfour, and Ben Gourion for Ben-Gurion), but the syntax was mind-boggling.

Errors common

"We are even 4.5 million while the Israelis are 3.5 million (or so they claimed) because it's not a lost cause (the liberation of Palestine)." Here is another example: "The people in Egypt will not believe him

OASN writers is their attempt to simplify the Palestinian question into some sort of good-guy versus bad-guy dichotomy. They imply that "all Arabs" are this or that, whereas in actuality many Arabs are as divided over the problem in the Middle East as are Americans. (Even the infamous PLO has within it serious dissensions.)

Their gross simplifications are not only evident in their history of Palestine (which reads like something from the junior edition of the *World Book Encyclopedia*), but also in the mindless rhetoric they continually evoke.

Kind of dummy

The members of the OASN would profit

from a reading of George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language," where he writes, "When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases—bestial atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder—one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy. . . . The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself."

Deserves ridicule

The objections, however sarcastic, I've raised here are justified. Any writing and

thinking that poorly presented deserves all the ridicule others can muster.

Nevertheless, none of this is meant to deny that problems exist in the Mid-East nor that there have been wrongs committed there by all interests. Actually, I believe the members of the OASN could generate a good deal of sympathy for their position if they were less dogmatic and more sensitive not only to the use of the English language, but also to the complex and confusing nature of human conflicts. To the extent that they violate these suggestions with naive, uninformed, and belligerent propaganda, they deserve to be ignored.

Editor's note: The author is a UNL graduate student in history.

guest opinion

(Sadat) anymore just like on Jan. 15, 1977 when the masses in Cairo destroyed everything." What's-that-ya-say—Destroyed? Lovely. That these errors occurred in almost every paragraph was entertaining, but not nearly as amusing as the knowledge that the piece was written collectively. (An example of the awesomeness of Arabs working together perhaps?)

I suppose writing well is difficult to master for revolutionaries who are so busy being "committed." But I did believe that thinking might well be useful for even the most committed activist. Alas, the OASN editorial revealed little of this trait either.

Fascism defined

They are quite taken, for instance, with the word fascist. Not only do they describe Hitler as a fascist (an enlightening point I'm sure for many), but speak of "the fascist British army," "an exclusive fascist state in Palestine," the fascists in Israel, and more generally, fascism in Iran, Latin America and Africa. It must be good news to many besides myself that fascism has now been so clearly defined.

I was also happy to see the OASN properly rebuke Jews for complaining about their massacre during World War II. The OASN rightly points out that many others also died in concentration camps "but the Jews made a big fuss about it." It's difficult to know what to say in the face of this ghastly violation of good taste. Indeed! How dare the Jews complain of such things—Amy Vanderbilt, I'm sure, is displeased.

Major sin

Seriously, though, the major sin of the

The *Daily Nebraskan's* last issue of the semester is Friday. Because of the time element we will not print letters or guest opinions on controversial subjects after Wednesday. However, we will run replies to opinions or non-controversial letters after Wednesday as time and space permits. The deadline for accepting letters is Thursday at noon.

The *Daily Nebraskan* will begin publishing for next semester on Jan. 15.

Michael Gibson rightly notes in his Dec. 4 column that recent UNL administrative advocacy and evaluation of different teaching methods amounts to a smokescreen which obscures the central question of who is and who is not an effective teacher.

The university gives student consumers the illusion of having input into their education, but the university certainly doesn't desire student consumerism. If the university did, it would fund published student evaluations, would mandate faculty participation in such evaluation and would tenure and promote on the basis of these evaluations.

By its current actions, however, the university indicates that teaching effectiveness in reality constitutes its priority. Surveys of teaching methods are meant only as a distracting illusion aimed at both students and faculty members dissatisfied with the results of current hiring, tenure, promotions and "merit" salary policies. One might suspect that in surveying teaching methods the university may be gathering specious data to justify lectures to larger classes.

If teaching undergraduates were actually

important to the university, Stephen Sample, executive vice-president for academic affairs and dean of the graduate college, would not have attempted this past summer to force revised tenure and promotion policies down the throats of UNL's faculty.

The proposed changes included the following language: "The rank of professor is among the highest honors the university can bestow on a faculty member, and should be granted only to faculty who have earned national and international reputation for being an effective teacher. Fortunately, it was discovered that the proposed changes were illegal; but they do indicate clearly the mind-set of the UNL administration—publish or perish.

If the university were concerned with quality undergraduate teaching, President Ronald Roskens would not make public speeches which define his highest priorities for UNL as increasing teaching loads, expanding graduate programs, encouraging grantsmanship and intensifying "research" while mentioning improving undergraduate education only in passing.

If undergraduate teaching were the university's top priority, departments that received so-called Bereuter funds to improve undergraduate teaching would not have used this money to hire temporary, visiting, emergency instructors who later lost their positions.

If undergraduate teaching were a genuine concern at UNL, the English department, for instance, would not have experienced a 10 percent budget reduction for 1978-79. This reduction necessitated increasing class sizes, diminishing course variety, and leaving several hundred students without needed classes in which to enroll during the fall semester. More-

over, the effects of this budget reduction were at least in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the legislation funding the university for 1978-79.

If university administrators were concerned with the quality of undergraduate education, they would not pay instructors holding M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s \$1,000 to \$2,500 less than the Lincoln Public Schools pay beginning teachers with B.A.'s.

Increased class sizes, expanded graduate programs, emphasis on esoteric research and publications read by a handful of scholars, and grantsmanship have several effects—all of them usually detrimental to the undergraduate education most Nebraska taxpayers believe they are supporting.

First, increasing class sizes translates into less instructor attention paid to each individual student's work.

Second, expanded graduate programs (in a period when new Ph.D.'s draw unemployment or find jobs driving taxis, selling insurance, working construction, etc.) not only waste taxpayer money and graduate student lives, but also diminish senior faculty contact with undergraduate students.

Third, emphasis on research and publication as the only criteria, or even the major criteria, for tenure, promotion, and merit salary increases relays a single message to all younger faculty members. If you want job security or a job at all, you should spend as much time as possible in the library, the laboratory and at conferences and devote as little time as necessary to undergraduate student needs.

Fourth, hustling government and private grants is time consuming, especially for younger teachers who haven't the neces-

Continued on Page 5

letters