

Editorial

Roots of truckers' strike found in 'unfair legislation'

Fact one: Congress passed the gas tax bill in the waning hours of its lame duck session in December. Fact two: one fatality, 66 injuries, 95 arrests and damage to 1,700 trucks occurred as the results of a strike by truckers against that bill.

The relationship between these two facts is delicate. It may or may not be described as a relationship of cause and effect. But it is a relationship that needs to be considered when one observes the goings-on in Washington.

To Congress, the bill was a piece of legislation, a piece of paper in a pile of papers. It was either supported or condemned by a "yes" or "no" in a vote.

But for the truckers, who make their living by transporting goods around the country by way of the interstate system, that piece of legislation obviously has vast implications. So vast, in fact, that some of them have resorted to extreme means to prevent its implementation.

Yvonne Kern, secretary of the Nebraska Chapter of the Independent Truckers Association and wife of the chapter's president, said at an Omaha press conference that her husband pays \$6,000 a year for state and federal licenses, permits and fees to keep his truck on the road. If he is forced to pay the new user and excise fees that will go into effect as a result of the new law, she said that amount will increase to \$9,200. In a nutshell, that is cause and effect.

No one would approve of the violence that has resulted from the Independent Truckers Association's strike against the law. Michael Parkhurst, the national president of the organization, called the violence the work of "a small group of wacko criminals" who do not represent the group as a whole.

The violence cannot be justified, but no one would deny the existence of frustration in the hearts of people who have seen their livelihood threatened by the passage of legislation over which they had little or no control.

And no one would deny the fury aroused in the striking truckers by the fact that many other truckers refused to support their fight against the legislation that they consider unfair.

It is easy to dismiss the strike as unimportant to anyone not involved with the trucking industry. But everyone is affected. According to United Press International, the price for trucking lettuce across the country is 14 cents a head. That may be the price paid, but the costs paid by independent truckers come to 16 cents a head.

And if the increase in fees takes place, the costs will jump even higher, boosting the price of those California oranges we dig our fingernails into every day. There is a long chain of occurrences that reaches link by link from Washington to you and me, a chain of which we need to be conscious.

Culture mix fights racism

Our country has a problem with racism. Racism did not go away with the civil rights marches of the 1960s, the Voting Rights Act, or the busing of students from one school to another so they could learn how the other half lives.

Rather, it exists as a lingering cancer inside our country. Racism is based on the idea that some people, because of their skin color or ethnic background, are not as good as others. We pride ourselves on our

democracy and on everyone's ability to participate in the political and economic processes, yet we have to acknowledge that's just not true.

Today, racism is found most often in a more subtle and covert form, as opposed to the old days of segregated schools and lunch counters. Yet the result is still a lack of opportunities for those not of the majority "color." No reasonable person can justify the black teenagers' present 60 percent unemployment rate. Thus, our society continues to be racist and our goal of a truly integrated society stays just that much out of reach.

Moving the Culture Center from its present 16th Street location to Terrace Hall would be a large step in a positive direction. What better way to integrate different ideas, backgrounds, and cultures than to place them in the same neighborhood? Unfortunately, a spirited fight evolved to keep the student-funded Culture Center out of the neighborhood.

One can't help but notice that most of the litany of complaints about the move have sounded rather weak. For one, there was the initial complaint that neighborhood residents had not heard about the proposed move, and here it was being foisted upon them. However, I can remember back in October when I read about the proposed move in this paper, and thought to myself how positive the move would be. Secondly, the neighborhood residents, noting the difference in function be-

tween their Greek houses and the Culture Center, were concerned about all-night parties taking place.

Parties at the Culture Center are held only on weekends, and then certainly not all night. The center is also an adjunct to the Nebraska Union, and as such, has certain hours to follow.

There has also been the hushed talk about security, for example, the increased possibility of rapes in the area. This talk infers that the Culture Center's present location keeps this possibility low. Female concern for security is always understandable. But this blatantly prejudiced attitude that the people who primarily use the Culture Center (blacks, chicanos, native americans) are more likely to jump out of the bushes is false. Every reported first-, second- and third degree rape on campus this past semester (and there weren't that many) had a white suspect.

One also cannot help but notice the irony in Regent Schwartzkopf's proposal that the Culture Center move into the old Whittier Junior High on 22nd and Vine streets. First this would totally defeat bringing the Culture Center more into the campus mainstream. Second, Regent Schwartzkopf, being as he is a Lincoln Public Schools employee, should remember what Whittier was thought of as for so long: the school for the poor, the blacks, the Indians. Thus, in some people's minds, moving the Culture Center to Whittier would not be much of a move.

It is clear that those opposing the move should reach deep within themselves and investigate their motives. In fact, one alumnus of a fraternity in the area was so misinformed that he reportedly said that members of his fraternity had to pay for their house, and he didn't want them to have to pay for someone else's. The Culture Center is not a state-funded fraternity nor is it a student-fee supported sorority, as some may think. It is everyone's Culture Center, working to preserve important cultures that otherwise would be lost under the overpowering majority's. The chance to have different cultures meet and associate is an excellent reason to move the Culture Center to Terrace Hall. The move gives us an irresistible chance to strike a blow against racism on our campus.



Another example of the chain's existence is the recent information in which we read that Congress is considering strengthening immigration regulations, while at the same time we read about the riots that erupted in Miami, a city that is 58 percent Hispanic. Several stories may even appear on the same page of a newspaper, and we need to connect them in our minds.

The strike ended after 11 days, and the Independent Truckers now have a piece of paper signed by 35 members of Congress who claim that they will do their best to

remedy the problem. Perhaps a committee will be formed to look into the situation. Perhaps the truckers' lobbyists will increase their activity. Perhaps some more legislation will be passed.

Still, it is important to keep in mind the slender thread that runs between the passing of papers, the raising of hands and the living of lives. The thread is easy to forget but nonetheless it serves as the foundation for the system of government under which we live.

David Thompson

Letters

Molloy represented select interests

It is distressing to note that after eight years of experience, the Student Advisory Board of the College of Business Administration has not poured its enormous resources into a more profitable enterprise than B-Week. The promoters of this extravagant event seem to have forgotten that they represent not a school for business people similar to a training school for mechanics or secretaries, but a university for higher learning.

As representatives of the university they should not have chosen John T. Molloy, author of "Dress for Success," as the key-

note speaker of B-Week. Molloy twists the truism, "It's not what you know, it's who you know" into "It's not what you know, it's what you wear."

The advisory board should have known better than to promote such anti-intellectual thought. Board advisors and CBA faculty should not support views so contrary to their own interests. Next year I hope they will bring a speaker (perhaps a leading economist?) who will tell us how to think, rather than dress, for success.

Ben Knoll
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ASUN elections an ineffective mockery

Scott Johnson's letter (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 10), contends that, contrary to Mike Frost's urgings, we can benefit ourselves by voting in the upcoming ASUN election. The core of his argument appears to be his statement: "According to Frost's theory . . . a change could only be for the better."

It does not seem to me, upon re-reading Frost's column, that he ever denies this. He claims, rather, that no change will come from the election. A study of the ASUN election process strongly supports this claim.

Upon examining the results of the past three ASUN elections, I found an extremely large correlation between the amount of money spent by a party on the campaign and the amount of the vote received by the party's presidential candidate. One might expect to find such a correlation; however, the degree was surprising. Since the amount of money a party can spend is directly tied to the number of candidates it has, it is not astonishing that large parties invariably win. A small party, regardless of the high quality of its ideas, has little or no

chance of getting its candidates in office.

Large parties, unfortunately, do not tend to produce change. Their platforms must be satisfactory to all their members, ensuring that only the blandest and least controversial proposals are brought forth. Too, most such parties are led by ASUN incumbents who have a greater desire to hold office than to improve conditions at this university. The result: the same tired, ineffective ideas and meaningless promises are dragged out every spring, thrown about for the delight of the voters, and taken back to ASUN after the election.

It is useless, then, to attempt to elect a group of people with innovative ideas and plans. Attempts to induce the ASUN Electoral Commission and the Senate to change the regulations to introduce a measure of competition and a hope of victory for small parties have proven equally futile. Frost has suggested the only answer available to us; to refuse to vote.

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