

# Editorial

## Reagan budget would destroy small farmers

Steadily, ever-increasingly, small family farmers are being forced off the land — in the greatest numbers since the dust-bowl years of the Depression. The agricultural economy has reached the status of a legitimate crisis.

Farmers can't break even. They miss loan payments. Rural banks collapse. Bigger banks take them over. Some collapse and aren't resold. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation collects "bad" loans. More farmers go under. More corporations buy the land. A way of life is being plowed under.

If President Reagan's budget should pass, the small farmer will go under much sooner. Underneath a veil of compassion for small farmers, this administration would like to let the visible hand of Adam Smith work its magic, wiping out family farms.

Even with price supports, easy credit and extended loans, the small farmer is going under.

Without federal support, the small farmers who aren't breaking even will fold even sooner, speeding the industrialization of rural America, putting the land into corporate hands.

Reagan's program would pare away about half of federal agriculture programs over the next five years, from \$7 billion to \$39 billion. According to wire service reports, about 15 percent of the United States' commercial farmers with incomes of \$40,000 or more might lose their farms without more federal help. Reagan maintains the market economy will set an equitable price for farmers by itself. If farmers are going broke now, with help, there will be many more with less federal support.

Admittedly, price supports and loans are only temporary solutions to the farm problem — but the government has been operating as if those were permanent solutions to small farm woes. The Farmer's Home Administration and a number of other support programs for farmers have been used since the end of the Depression.

The government needs a new approach to the farm economy. Alex McCalla, a University of California economist, said in Sunday's Omaha World-Herald, "If we content to let the trends in farm size and production concentration continue until the vast majority of output is produced by 200,000 large-scale farms, then let's be up front about it and quit talking about millions of family farms."

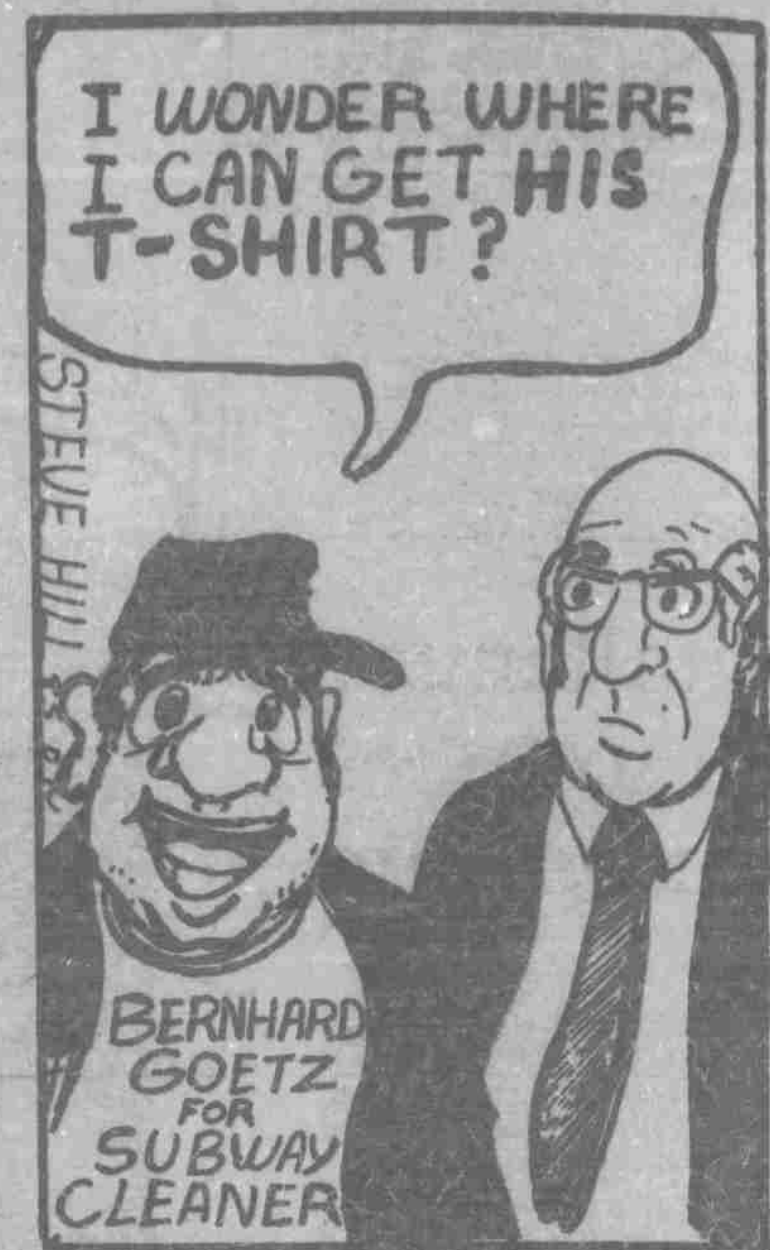
McCalla said that right now large corporate farms would be the most efficient way to satisfy the country's hunger at the lowest cost to consumers.

"... a goal of 'preserving the family farm' clearly has little meaning unless we are much more explicit about our structural and distributional goals," he said. In other words, the government should either let the economy take its course or take some drastic action.

A long term, or for that matter short term, price subsidy or loan program is not going to solve the family farmer's problems.

The deficit, which makes our produce expensive to foreign buyers, needs to be trimmed. Surpluses must be eliminated. Supply of produce must go down in order for the price to come up. Long term adjustments in the economy are needed. In the meantime, the government must maintain current farm programs if the family farm is to be saved.

If the current conservative fashion prevails, small farms probably won't be spared. In the administration's eyes, a more efficient economy is more important than the suffering of small farmers.



## Capitalists exploit Goetz Innocent verdict reflects frustration of society

Two weeks ago, Bernhard Goetz was on trial for attempted murder after four punks made his day on the subway. Today, you can buy Bernhard Goetz T-shirts and at least three different books telling the subway vigilante's story.

Shoot a couple of black kids, and you're a hero.



It's not merchants capitalizing on Goetz's crime that bothers me — it's normal, healthy capitalism to sell what people will buy. The fact that people want to buy such junk comes closer to the root of this perversion — the Greatest American Hero is a vigilante. I liked it better when he wore a cape and couldn't fly straight.

Do you remember when the Greatest American Hero stood for truth, justice and the American Way? When crime fighters were satisfied with preventing crime and apprehending criminals?

### Todd Knobel

Ever since the United States and the Soviet Union acquired the ability to produce nuclear weapons, the nuclear problem has continued to grow — climaxing in our present policy of Mutually Assured Destruction. This policy is based upon the fear of retaliation. Should one side fire its nuclear weapons, its final position will not be enhanced because those fired upon will retaliate by launching their nuclear weapons. In the end, both nations will have

When the good guys didn't shoot the bad guys in the back when they had them on the run?

Superman never said, "Gosh, Lois, I wish I would have killed them all."

Things are different, now. As much of the media has claimed and as Bernhard Goetz's "Family Feud-like" like trial proved, we are a frustrated society, fed up with crime and the failure of our criminal justice system. We've become racist and bloodthirsty.

"Self defense! That's the number one answer! Survey said, 99!" Kiss the foreman, Richard.

Who won when Goetz's innocent verdict came down? Goetz and his lawyer. And the guys who sell T-shirts. The rest of us lost. But we're happy about it.

We buy the rationalization for Goetz's crime that his act was a symbolic blow for the masses huddled against crime. We've made that rationalization into a justification, so much so that we could sympathize with Goetz when he said he wished he would have had enough bullets to kill all of them.

And what if he had? Hundreds of Huck Finns would tell hundreds of

Aunt Sallys in hundreds of homes across America, "Nobody got hurt. Just a couple of n-----."

Our society's racism and bloodlust lends a new perspective to the old comparisons between the United States and the decaying Roman Empire. Once the link was tenuously based on sodomy and venereal disease. Now, it can be extended to include each society's object of hero worship — the Romans' inbred slobbering perverts and our gunslinging Goetz.

The vigilante's act was no shining symbolic heroism, as we seem so desperate to see it. It gives us no hope for a better future; on the contrary, it lengthens the shadow of the past. Goetz's elevation to hero status means we have grasped violence as the answer to our troubles: we'll respond to killing with more killing. Instead of searching for and fighting against the causes of crime, we'll make scapegoats. Instead of correcting our system of justice, we'll abandon that principle for a quick fix of lead.

And why not? It's easy, it's popular and it sells T-shirts.

## 'Star Wars' offers chance for survival

One concept that higher education tries to teach people is that complex problems cannot be solved by simple solutions. The nuclear weapons problem is a case in point.



Ever since the United States and the Soviet Union acquired the ability to produce nuclear weapons, the nuclear problem has continued to grow — climaxing in our present policy of Mutually Assured Destruction. This policy is based upon the fear of retaliation. Should one side fire its nuclear weapons, its final position will not be enhanced because those fired upon will retaliate by launching their nuclear weapons. In the end, both nations will have

been destroyed. Perhaps this policy is best described by its acronym — MAD.

One of the inherent flaws of this policy of MAD is that it gives the president of this nation little latitude in the event of nuclear missiles being launched toward the United States. One option the president has is to surrender and allow incomprehensible damage to occur to our nation. The other option is to launch our missiles in retaliation and thereby proceed to destroy the world.

It should be noted that the possibility of a nuclear missile being launched increases as smaller unstable nations acquire nuclear capability.

Clearly, an alternative is needed. Eugene V. Rostow, former director of the Arms Control Disarmament Agency, says present arms negotiations often lead to an agreement to allow more weapons. The

nuclear freeze idea also provides no solution, as it fails to even relate to the problems of the policy of MAD.

For the first time since the beginning of the arms race, a potential alternative, based on a defense against ballistic missiles, is emerging. This concept, commonly referred to as Star Wars or the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), would employ energy beam weapons in outer space. After a nuclear missile is launched, the beam, traveling at or near the speed of light, would be able to strike down the missile in flight.

As Ben Bova, president of the National Space Institute said, "The real importance of President Reagan's Star Wars concept is that it opens the possibility of a shift away from MAD toward a policy of assured survival."

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Tuesdays and Fridays in the summer sessions, except during vacations.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1783 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, call Chris Choate 472-5768.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68598-0448. Second class postage paid at Lincoln, NE 68510.

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