

Editorial

Is it justice, or is it murder?

The death sentence — it's a legal way for society to put out a contract on a deviant's life. And, according to a recent Media General-Associated Press Poll, many members of American society justify putting out that contract because of its deterrence value.

Thirty-one percent of the people polled said they believed the main justification for the death penalty was to "deter others," a Feb. 1 Omaha World-Herald story said. Another 42 percent said it was to keep the murderer from doing it again.

A mere 12 percent justified the death penalty as punishment, and 10 percent gave other reasons or didn't answer.

The results of the poll are interesting in themselves: Two common justifications for the death penalty — vengeance and cost efficiency — were not mentioned. Those polled seem more interested in public safety than taking an eye for an eye — they want protection. What are more interesting are the implications of some of the information in the rest of the article.

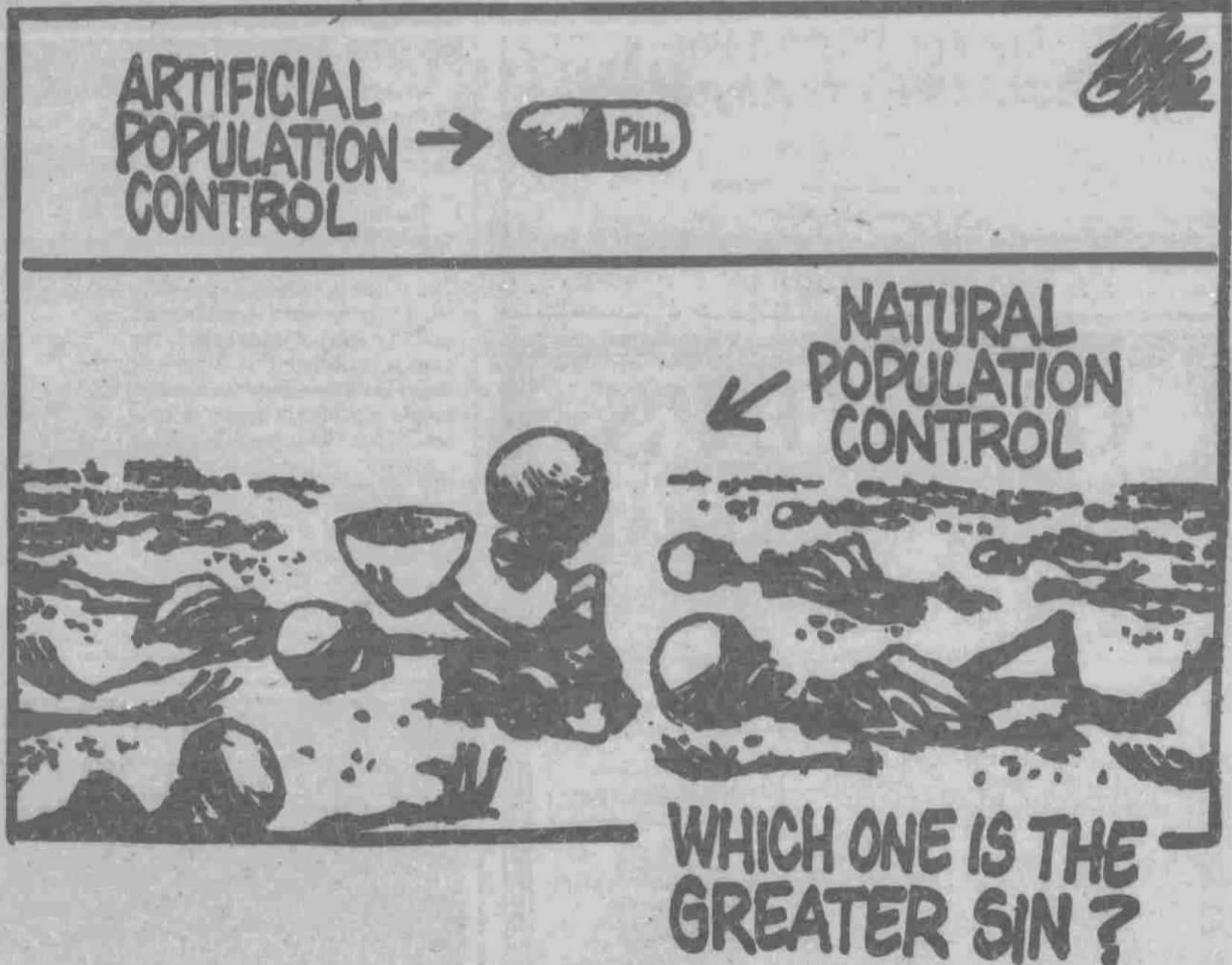
Two experts on the death penalty — one proponent and one opponent — were quoted as saying there is no evidence that the death penalty actually deters crime.

Ernest Van der Haag, a professor at Fordham University, said in the article that, since it hasn't been proven that the death penalty isn't a deterrent, we should continue to use it, just in case it is.

Van der Haag's argument can be turned against him and other proponents of the death penalty, since it also has not been proven to be a deterrent. Perhaps we should discontinue using it, just in case it doesn't deter crime — or just discontinue it completely.

We think the burden of proof in this case lies with the proponents of capital punishment. Killing someone is a serious thing, and not something to be done for political reasons, vengeance, to save money or as a placebo to placate a public disturbed by crime and the problems of its criminal justice system.

That burden of proof requires that proponents of the death penalty demonstrate that it has more positive than negative effects, that it is indeed a deterrent, that it can be administered fairly — in short, they must justify taking human lives. Today, they can't. And until there's no doubt, we shouldn't put out any more contracts.



Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1985 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Chris Welsch, editor in chief; Chris Burbach, editorial page editor; Michèle Thuman, news editor; Vicki Ruhga, copy desk chief and editorial writer; and Kelly Mangan, assistant advertising manager.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student editors.

Daily Nebraskan

EDITOR	Chris Welsch, 472-1766
GENERAL MANAGER	Daniel Shattil
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Katherine Policky
ADVERTISING MANAGER	Tom Byrne
ASSISTANT	
ADVERTISING MANAGER	Kelly Mangan
CIRCULATION MANAGER	Steve Meyer
NEWS EDITOR	Michèle Thuman
CAMPUS EDITOR	Lauri Hoppie
WIRE EDITOR	Judi Nygren
COPY DESK CHIEF	Vicki Ruhga
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR	Christopher Burbach
SPORTS EDITOR	Ward W. Triplett III
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT	
EDITOR	Stacie Thomas
NIGHT NEWS EDITORS	Julie Jordan Hendricks
	Ad Hudler
	Gah Y. Husey
	Steve Hill
GRAPHICS EDITOR	
ASSISTANT	
GRAPHICS EDITOR	Tony Schappeugh
PHOTO CHIEF	Joel Sartore
ASSISTANT PHOTO CHIEF	Mark Davis
PUBLICATIONS BOARD	
CHAIRPERSON	Chris Choate 472-8788
PROFESSIONAL ADVISER	Don Walton, 473-7301

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-090) 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 472-1763 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 472-8788.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second class postage paid at Lincoln, NE 68510.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1985 DAILY NEBRASKAN

Poverty crosses Atlantic

The famine in Ethiopia and the rest of Africa has been the focus of much worldwide attention. As the populations of the continent continue to starve, energy is being expended to provide food, raise money and send in medical assistance to address the crisis. However, in the midst of all of this global benevolence some basic misconceptions can be seen.



Matthew Stelly

The first is what an "African" really is. Most of us contend that because black people in America were born here, and because we use names like "Afro-American," "Negro American" and so on, they have somehow become less African. Others contend that we are less African because of our pigmentation. I beg to differ with such sectarian notions.

Black people in America are Africans. This basic fact, which so many of us overlook, leads to the kind of apathy and

disillusionment cited by one sister in a recent Daily Nebraskan article. We become apathetic and disillusioned because we think we are first and foremost Americans. And because of this, we reject our basic roots and opt instead for struggles toward civil rights, equality and cultural centers. In all of this, we are met at each crossroads with rejection because we are turning our backs on what we essentially are. As Malcolm X once said, you cannot hate the root of a tree and not hate the tree itself. Because our roots are African, this makes us African. Even though we are born here, we still carry the seeds of our forefathers and our ancestors. And because we are Africans in America, we should have as our first commitment the defense and development of African people, just as Europeans have as their central concern the development of Europeans wherever they are in the world.

This leads us to the second point. If we are Africans, our central focus should be on our own back yard. We sit around raising money for and giving support to Africans on the continent some 5,000

miles away, and we have 40,000 Africans starving right over the hill in North Omaha!

In one area of Lincoln, African women are heads of households in more than half of the homes. The African median income in that same area is a scant \$7,000 a year. Majority population members boast a median earnings of some \$21,000.

As an African people, we are confronted with the chance and channels of working to assist our brothers and sisters abroad. But, as the age-old adage connotes, we must first "cast down our buckets where we are at." It is ridiculous to talk of assisting our starving brothers and sisters on the continent when our people here are still struggling to come into political existence.

We are an African people. Ethiopia's problem is unfortunate, and we should be concerned about it and should place it among our priorities. However, consider this: America is the richest and greatest nation in the entire world, and yet Africans here still struggle for human rights.

Now tell me: where is the real poverty?

Letters

Student denounces alumni association

Student fees. They seem to climb higher and higher without a definite end in sight. With this thought in mind, I would like to propose the trimming of waste, namely ineffectual student-based and orientated committees. The first such organization that comes to mind is Student Alumni Association, whose meeting place is paid for by student fees.

SAA is one of the toughest organizations to get into. Too bad the applicants don't put as much time into the programs as they do their applications and interviews. Too bad the members don't put as much thought into their programs as they do their selection process.

Speaking of programs, what does SAA do? Oh, yes. They give tours to high school students and try to get them to come to UNL, of course they are wearing double-breasted suits and new fashionable dresses. Plenty of people in residence halls have double-breasted suits and fashionable dresses, but are they on SAA? And now that the university Ambassadors Program is going to take over the tours and student recruiting all they will have left is their

Student Survival Kits. I wish I could make my own survival kit!

Do any alumni even know the SAA exists? Are any alumni involved in program planning or execution? Are there any alumni at their meetings? Does anyone on SAA even know any alumni? Maybe an older brother or sister who was or is on SAA.

To ask one more question, does UNL really need or want SAA? My student fees don't.

Bruce T. Lear
freshman
pre-law

Financial aid cuts would harm UNL

In light of President Reagan's elitist proposals regarding cuts in federal student aid, we would like to have the student body, the administration and the NU Board of Regents recognize the far-reaching effects of these proposals if enacted.

The most obvious consequence will be a dramatic decrease in enrollment at UNL. When 12,000 of the 25,000, or one of two students, depend on financial aid, a massive portion of our student body will be directly affected and left to find other

means of securing educations.

A decrease in enrollment in turn leads to large-scale reductions in revenues, which affects all aspects of this university. This includes course variety, professors' salaries, student activities and university research. Money simply would not be available. If the money isn't available, how can UNL hope to remain a quality institution?

On a larger scale, as our country's technology becomes more advanced, the need for a specialized labor force becomes vital, as does the need to educate that labor force.

We see these proposals as a step that will further separate classes, the "haves and the have nots" of this country. This is supposed to be the "Land of Opportunity" for everyone. Why then, do the educations of so many depend upon the politics of so few?

Sheila Stratton
junior
social work
Dorothy Pritchard
sophomore
news-editorial
Jerry Roethig
sophomore
psychology