

As We See It

Two Ways Of Looking At Voting Age Bill's Defeat

There are two ways to look at the House of Representative's rejection of the constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to 18. Both are valid.

Viewpoint Number 1 shows that there was a lot of behind-the-scenes politicking going on—with that aimed against the bill being a lot more effective than the lobbying for the bill. It shows that, in one way or another, about a dozen legislators were convinced to switch their votes, thus preventing changing the 74 vote score—which gave the amendment its needed two-thirds majority on second reading Tuesday—to a not-quite enough total of 63 votes on its final reading.

From this viewpoint it seems that maybe there were a lot of irrational arguments listened to and much political—nasty word, "political"—pressure put on those representatives to change horses mid-stream.

And this viewpoint is the one a lot of people are going to have. It will make many of them angry and bitter over the defeat.

But a lot of good it does to be bitter—in this case, anyway.

A better viewpoint is from the Number 2 position.

This viewpoint shows that the amendment failed to pass not only because a dozen or so legislators changed sides overnight, but also because they had a lot of com-

pany in opposing it—the company of around 50 representatives who either voted against the bill, abstained during the voting or conveniently left the chamber to smoke a cigarette while the roll call was going on.

And it is not all these men who can be blamed for irrationality or dirty politics, because many of them voted against the bill the first time and strongly feel that there are legitimate arguments for keeping the vote in the hands of those 21 and over.

In many cases, though, these legislators who opposed the bill did so not so much on the basis of arguments against the amendment, as on the basis of a lack of arguments in favor of it.

As one young representative explained to a UNC student lobbying for the amendment, "I just haven't seen any overwhelming reason why the voting age should be lowered to 18."

Another representative stood on the floor to tell his colleagues that there obviously had not been a "mandate from the people" for the proposed constitutional change.

And since Viewpoint No. 1 leads persons to merely sit around and gripe about the situation, it is logical that only by taking Viewpoint No. 2 can discontent with the present 21-year-old voting age and the amendment's defeat be translated into something tangible.

And the way to do this is to show the legislators—and the North Carolina community as a whole—that there are more arguments for lowering the voting age than for keeping it where it is. That youth believes there are these arguments is of really no significance, because before the reasons for granting suffrage at 18 can mean anything—except theoretically, which doesn't count at the polls—they must be articulately presented.

Already there are many who have heard these arguments and have listened attentively to them—the 63 representatives who voted for the bill Wednesday, for example.

But to get a constitutional amendment is going to require a majority vote of the state, too.

So, look on the bright side: now there are two more years in which to snow the entire state into making 18 the voting age—and snowing the entire state is exactly what's going to be needed.

Passable Failure

The passage of the pass-fail proposal marks a badly-needed step toward University progress.

With its introduction into the University curriculum, students will feel able to better broaden their realm of knowledge without running the risk of receiving poor grades for their efforts.

Many is the time in the past when a student has had genuine concern in a certain field or subject, but has felt that to take a course in it might jeopardize his quality point average.

But with the present "two year experiment," hopefully, students will take on that philosophy or language course which they are interested in but at the same time apprehensive of.

It is also a good point in the idea that the student within a couple of weeks of classes starting be allowed to choose from any non-required course in his schedule that course he wants to go onto the pass-fail basis.

The only thing which bothers us is the timing of the administration's passage of the proposal.

Fall pre-registration is already over.

For next semester, then, the pass-fail system could be less than the success possible, because those wary of courses probably didn't pre-register for them since they had no way of knowing they could be put under a pass-fail basis.

In light of this, it seems that to make the new idea as meaningful as possible, students should have time to get into courses they'd like to take. Therefore, as much as we hate it, an extension of drop-add days in the fall would be in order.

Thanks To Gen. Hershey

It is with real relief that we note how General Lewis B. Hershey said Wednesday he is discontinuing the college qualifications test.

What with all the worry and consternation about the draft going on now, it sure is nice to know that no one has to sweat about doing well on the test anymore to avoid induction.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Personally Speaking

Social Deviants Not Cancerous

In the April 25th issue of the DTH, there appeared a letter, signed by K. L. Leininger, in support of retaining the death penalty in North Carolina—and attacking a recent DTH editorial on the subject.

There are two arguments made by that writer that seem to almost cry out for rebuttal. This is particularly so since Leininger seems willing to assume the probable accuracy of one of the main arguments of contemporary foes of the death penalty: that the deterrent effect of capital punishment is nil. Having done this, however, he reverts to justifying capital punishment on grounds that seem even more simplistic and fallacious than is the deterrent argument.

The first of these arguments he derives from an analogy to medical practice which he develops into what one might best describe as an "efficiency

in removal" argument as applied to dangerous elements in society. But the road he takes here is a rather torturous one. He begins by drawing a somewhat simplified analogy to the problem of a surgeon "unsympathetically" removing a cancer. Clearly, those people to whom the death penalty has been meted out are to be considered "social cancers". He doesn't consider that there may be many differing definitions as to what constitutes such a "cancer", with few of them even being as precise as the medical definition of that medical term. The fact that there are some twenty odd different offenses that legally merit the death penalty within the U.S., and that there is wide variation from state to state as to which are therein included, does not seem to alter his analogy for him. One might respond here that not all physiological

cancers are surgically removed either, especially where there is promise of a cure through less drastic means.

Leininger goes on to note that most cancers do not merit sympathy; that, awarded sympathy, they will proceed to destroy its source unalterably; that the cancers in society are "clearly not the product of the failures of society in broad terms"; and, that society's only possible failure here is "to allow its cancer to grow and spread."

In response to this analogy, one might make the rather low-level observation that physiological cancers are qualitatively different from what one might call "social cancers". The latter involve people, who, being humans, are on the whole at least capable of being sympathized with. On the other hand, we do not often think of sympathizing with the tooth that we have just had pulled, not, I might submit, with the physiological cancer that has just been removed from our body. People deserve at least the possibility of sympathetic behavior toward them simply because they are people. If I were simply to reduce my understanding of Mr. Leininger to a description of his organic, or cellular, make-up, perhaps then he, too, would not merit sympathy in any course of his behavior.

Secondly, one need not equate granting sympathy with a situation, or to those involved in it, with necessarily providing resources for its continuation or promotion. To ask that society punish its criminals in these categories with some penalty less than the capital one is not the same as saying that it should return those people to society in the same condition in which they were taken from it so that they might prey upon us again. There are several alternative punishments that could be used that would not return Mr. Leininger's "cancer" back into the streets. One might at least ask that we give some decided and meaningful consideration to such alternatives. The extent to which these fail is evidence only that we have not taken the necessary precautions to insure their success. And, this is where the "efficiency" element seems to enter Leininger's argument.

Surely, in a trivial sense, it is more "efficient" to execute a criminal than to provide elaborate means of insuring that he will not again threaten society's members if left to remain alive. Yet, even if we do not consider the moral implication of this kind of "dollars and cents" reasoning, in a more important way, capital punishment is inefficient. For it destroys one of the most important sources of information about the kind of factors that cause a person to commit such very serious crimes. Indeed, it is largely on these grounds that such penologists as Warden Jack Johnson of Cook County Jail and the former warden of San Quentin have both opposed the death penalty.

Of course, if one is convinced, as Leininger seems to be, that "most deviants" are cancers and at the same time "clearly not the product of the failures of society", then I suspect that one is left with only innate personality characteristics to study in these individuals, if even that. But, then, that view seems to go against the grain of most of our know-

ledge about social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and politics, not to mention psychology in general. Usually we find that the environment an individual lives in has much to do with conditioning that person's attitudes, values, and behavior. And, often we find that environmental factors are as helpful in understanding "deviant" behavior as they are in dealing with the more conforming varieties of behavior. This finding seems also to be true of many medical phenomena as well. Thus, it might seem that the analogy Leininger draws would not even support his conclusions on his point even if they were restricted solely to purely medical or physiological phenomena. Indeed, with such a view, it is puzzling why he is studying public health, since many of the problems in that area might also be seen as social cancers.

What is left then of Mr. Leininger's arguments? I suspect all that is left is his second line of reasoning which is contained largely in his statement that "I for one fail to be haunted by the 'ghoulishness' of Richard Speck's sentencing, just as I'm sure the editor fails to be haunted by his kind of deed to humanity." Now, it is not at all clear that the latter assertion is true. But, even if it were, we still would not have gotten to the core point that needs to be made: the failure of both individuals (or any of us) to be haunted by both situations. Here, Mr. Leininger falls short of what we would ask of him, both as a humane individual and as a concerned member of society. One cannot hide the tragedy of the one situation behind the viciousness of the other. Indeed, perhaps if more people were haunted both by the conditions that lead to the commission of such a crime and by those under which society takes it upon itself to justify a legalized "return in kind", then maybe we could make some headway in solving the problems involved in removing both situations from the context of humane, social life. If one removes the element of ignorant unconcern for the relatedness of both of these problems, then all one is left with which to defend capital punishment is the primordial sense of vengeance that has always undergirded this barbaric practice. And, it would seem that any rational "progressive" would reject that form of irrationality as a valid basis for argument.

In conclusion, let me say that there are many significant arguments against capital punishment that I have not mentioned because they were not specifically relevant to Leininger's position. However, fallacious reasoning, inappropriate analogies, deadening apathy, and the irrationality that masquerades as "tough-minded realism" have all served to keep the death penalty in existence long after most of its antiquated cousins have been relegated to museums and historical graveyards. Similarly, they also underlie the perpetuation of conditions leading to the "social cancers" Leininger deplors. It is my feeling that the Leininger letter serves only to illustrate some of these very characteristics.

(Editor's note: Personally Speaking is Open For GUEST COLUMNS AND LONG LETTERS. GUEST COLUMNS SHOULD BE TYPED AND SIGNED. —Sunday's column was written by Chuck Schunior.)

As Soon As We Get All The Boys' Dorms Separated From All The Girls' Dorms, We'll Build A Barbed Wire Fence Around Each Of Them.



In The Mail

Japanese Women Oppose Vietnam

To The Editor:

Some of us in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom have received copies of an appeal from Japanese women, urging an end to the Vietnamese war. The letter comes from various organizations in Japan including the Federation of Women's Organizations, the Japanese Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Japanese Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Here it is:

Yes, we have come through the same ordeal.

We sent our sons and husbands to war, To fight communism and defend our land,

To liberate Asia. . . so we were told. We did not know, we refused to believe our arms were killing innocent babes. Nor did it ever occur to our minds that we were hardening people's hearts against us,

There, in the lands which we were to save.

We tried so hard to convince ourselves that we lost our boys for a noble cause.

Is it true that their deaths were useless?

No!

If we can tell other mothers that their deaths were useless,

If we can spare other women the tears we have shed,

Then, we can say with deep conviction, and with relief, "Their deaths have served the cause of humanity."

Now, in Vietnam we see the tragedy being repeated.

You send your sons and husbands to war,

To kill and be killed so far away from home,

To safeguard Free Asia. . . so you are told.

We appeal to you, we want you to remember

You have the right to ask whether Freedom can be preached with napalms and gasses.

You aren't forbidden to reason why you pay so much to create enemies,

To support a government unpopular with the people.

You are citizens entitled to demand: Is all this really worth the sacrifice? So!

You have power to let your dear ones come back to you.

You have power for building a homeland of the free.

How we yearn to hear you say, for the whole world to hear, "Peace, not war, will save our democracy."

Many of us have written our representatives in Congress and the President including the points made here.

Sincerely,
Charlotte Adams

Probably Not

To The Editor:

I have read with interest the editorial

that appeared in The Daily Tar Heel concerning students interest in labor disputes concerning the textile mill workers and mill management.

I wonder how much business experience the writer has had and what outside income he has earned in the business world.

Does he have any concept regarding the effect the textile industry has on the Nation as well as the South and how much money this industry has spent on education through scholarships?

Why doesn't the writer investigate the importation of cloth and yarn equivalent to 1,450,000 bales of cotton and affecting 200,000 textile jobs?

It is my opinion he was just looking for something to write about and he picked a subject he doesn't know anything about or attempted to find out.

Very truly yours,
John O. Baker
Class of '49
B. S. in Commerce

Shape Up, Bob

To The Editor:

I recently noticed an article appearing in a Greensboro newspaper describing a movement lead by a UNC graduate to organize college students in an effort to promote public sentiment against the war in Viet Nam.

This article refers to a letter written by student body presidents of about 100 colleges and universities to President Johnson although I believe it was really Dean Rusk) expressing opposition to the government policy in Viet Nam on behalf of the majority of the student body. As I recall the president of the student body at UNC was one of those writing such a letter. If the president of the student body or anyone else purporting to act as an official representative of the UNC student body in voicing an opinion on this issue seeks to represent the majority of the student body as opposing the Viet Nam war, then he is doing the University a grave injustice.

When I graduated from UNC in Jan. 1966, the vast majority of the students openly voicing opposition to the war were the society rejects or campus beatniks. This fact was evidenced by overwhelming student reaction against these "peace movements" in Y - Court debates. I seriously doubt that the majority of the student body has come over to the "peace movement" side during the year since I graduated.

Therefore, I feel that it is the duty of the student body officials responsible for this misrepresentation of general student feelings to correct their error and in the future to refrain from stating that their personal opinions reflect those of the whole student body as well when the facts simply aren't so.

Joseph M. Brantley III
Class of 1965