

Clinton's proposed national health security card, which would have had a magnetic strip containing the card holder's medical history and other relevant information. "The problem," said an ACLU official, "is that the databases are enticing. People want to use them for other purposes." What ominous other purposes? "Seeking deadbeat dads, university graduates who welshed on their student loans, and illegal immigrants," Etzioni says. "But these people violated the law, and the public is . . . fully entitled to find them and help ensure that they will make amends."

- The ACLU has argued that a New York City teacher's right to free speech was being violated because he was suspended pending hearings. The reason for the suspension? The teacher, a leader of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, whose slogan is "sex after eight is too late," openly advocates having sex with young boys. "Unless you believe that the only value we care about is free speech," Etzioni notes, "we are entitled to wonder whether parents should be expected

to leave their children with an advocate of pedophilia."

Individual liberties must be protected, but too often today, concludes Etzioni, the ACLU "trivializes rights and adds to litigiousness."

An Enemy of the People?

"The Infernal Senate" by Tom Geoghegan, in *The New Republic* (Nov. 21, 1994), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Rotten borough n. An election district having only a few voters but the same voting power as other, more populous districts.

Even when the Democrats controlled the Senate, which was only yesterday, they could not seem to pass liberal measures to help working people, the cities, minorities, and the poor, complains Geoghegan, author of *Which Side Are You On: Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (1991). And he thinks he knows why: "We have a Louisiana Purchase of rotten boroughs," and the sparsely populated states—a majority of them in the West—rule the roost.

Half of the nation's 100 senators together represent only 16 percent of the American people. And with a Senate filibuster much easier to employ today than it was only a few years ago, a "supermajority" of 60 votes is more often required to get a bill passed. Consequently, even senators who represent an overwhelming majority of all Americans, Geoghegan points out, can be powerless to get a bill through the Senate.

For many years, he argues, the Senate was able to serve the broad public interest, despite the unequal representation of population. There were strong, well-organized "factions"—first, small farmers,



Thousands of ACLU members quit the organization after it defended the right of Nazis to hold a rally in heavily-Jewish Skokie, Illinois, in 1978.

and later, unions—that could sway the Senate to act in behalf of “the middle class, the wage earners, and the small farmers.” But these forces no longer exist. The result: gridlock.

The time for something like majority rule in the Senate is long overdue, Geoghegan ar-

gues. He favors a graduated system under which the most populous states would get five senators and others would get four, three, two, or one, depending on their size. It is the only way, he believes, to break the strangle hold of the rotten boroughs.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Don't Fool with NATO

“NATO: Use Only in Moderation” by Daniel N. Nelson, in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Nov.–Dec. 1994), 6042 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Now that the Soviet threat has disappeared, the United States and other countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) seem bent on expanding its membership to include Eastern European nations. Nelson, who directs the graduate programs in international studies at Old Dominion University, contends that the allies are taking NATO down “the wrong path.”

There is a need for collective security, he says. Western Europeans fear that disorder in the East may spill over onto them, while Central and Eastern Europeans feel vulnerable because they do not have superpower guarantees or a regional security arrangement. But the security threats that Europe now faces, such as political terrorism, international organized crime, and plutonium smuggling, can seldom be successfully met by using military force, he says: “NATO’s role—the strictly military defense of the North Atlantic democracies—is substantively different and decisively separate from the wide range of potential disruptions of life in the Vancouver-to-Vladivostok hemisphere.”

So far, NATO’s steps toward expansion have been hesitant. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), offered to Eastern Europe in lieu of NATO membership after the 1991 NATO summit, “has no power, no budget, and no agenda,” Nelson notes. And the Partnerships for Peace, unveiled at a NATO ministerial meeting in the fall of 1993, “may do more harm than

good,” as the Eastern states vie to mount “earlier, larger, and more sophisticated military exercises” so as to be the first to enter NATO.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, he asserts, the Clinton administration “has begun to make the terrible mistake of once again drawing lines in Europe. Rather than seeing security as indivisible and collective, it appears that the United States will offer guarantees to those it finds most compatible, not to those whose peace and prosperity are endangered.”

Common defense and collective security should not be confused, Nelson argues. “In other words, let NATO be NATO rather than let it metamorphose into a large, indistinct organization with blurred roles, ends, and means. NATO’s focus should remain West European and North American, with members among whom interstate conflicts are no longer plausible.”

To counter the “more diffuse” threats facing Europe, Nelson says, “NATO needs the help of a vibrant companion organization—one with universal membership, with confidence building, early warning, and conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as observer and peacekeeping missions—all duties aimed at reducing the chance that threats will multiply or intensify beyond capacities to constrain them. These are roles for a fully institutionalized, politically sophisticated collective security organization, not a power-projecting military alliance.”

Combining the existing Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the recently added NATO appendages (NACC and the Partnerships for Peace), Nelson suggests, would be a good start at bringing the needed organization into being.