

Editorials

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Behind the Bomber

Patrolman Larry Minard was the victim not only of one cold-blooded murderer.

He also was the victim of many thoughtless people who have allowed hatred of the police to become a national syndrome.

The murderer placed the bomb and lured the policemen to the vacant building on Ohio Street.

But in the background were the ones who encouraged, by their statements or by their acquiescent silence, the notion that the police are enemies to be slaughtered.

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Threats against the police cannot help but encourage the violent-minded to turn rhetoric into action and mount a real war against the police. Ideas have consequences, and those who help to give currency to dangerous ideas should share in the responsibility when the consequences are bloody and evil.

Until the bomber is caught, the life of every man on the force will be in jeopardy. Every emergency call answered, every dark building checked will hold the threat of death or dismemberment.

The menace is heightened by the fact that the bomb that killed Patrolman Minard was the second of a kind. In June a bomber damaged the police assembly building at Forty-eighth Street and Ames Avenue, in an apparent attempt to kill or maim.

Under these circumstances, there is no need to exhort the police to exert themselves in their search for the killer or killers. They have the strongest possible motivation.

There is a need, however, to strengthen the laws applying to bombing.

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As we noted at the time of the police assembly building incident, the penalties in existing law are not commensurate with the seriousness of the crime. The statutes were written before the era of widespread bombings.

President Nixon has asked Congress to enact the death penalty for certain categories of death caused by bombing. The Legislature should consider such enactment for Nebraska.