

In Our Opinion...

Not A Dream Come True, But A Political Reality

During the heated battle to get the Speaker Ban Law repealed or amended — the Britt Commission hearings and the special session of the state legislature — in 1965, most of the state's large editorial voices supported the University. Not so with Charlotte's editorial voice of the air WBT and WBTW.

Similarly, in the students' fight that reached its culmination last year, WBT was one of the few large communications media that upheld the Gag Law.

On issues ranging from stimulant drugs to protest marches we have heard the station paint bleak pictures of what goes on "up there in Chapel Hill."

Therefore, it was quite refreshing to learn of an editorial on "The University Trustees" which the station aired Dec. 29. Before the Hodges commission completed its report and recommendations, we wrote an editorial speculating about what changes would be recommended and why these changes would be in order. The Hodges commission didn't do as much as many of us had hoped it would, but there was, no doubt, sound reasoning behind the limited changes. We would like to share WBT's ideas on the matter.

For many years the desirability of reducing the size of the unwieldy board of trustees of the University of North Carolina has been debated in the General Assembly and out, but nothing has been done about it.

Now the Governor's study commission has brought out a recommendation that the number of trustees be reduced from a hundred and seven to twenty-four. Even this number is really too large to act decisively and quickly. Since most states get along with ten or twelve member boards of trustees, the size of the North Carolina board could well be further reduced.

The chairman of the study commission, former Governor Luther Hedges, being a political realist, has probably influenced the group to recommend only what it thinks

can be obtained from the General Assembly.

It should be noted also that in very few other states do the legislatures elect members of the University board of trustees. They are usually appointed by the Governor and approved by the State Senate.

It is well known that the enormous North Carolina board seldom meets with a majority present. Most of the actual work is done by the executive committee of ten members—about the size of whole boards of trustees in other states. This leaves the other ninety-seven members holding more or less honorary positions.

The chief value of the average trusteeship, therefore, seems to be personal prestige, plus such fringe benefits as access to the choicest stadium seats for football games and a chance to rub elbows with top people of the state at University functions.

It is easy to see why an outside board of trustees enjoying such fringe benefits (quaintly called courtesies by the commission) with few duties and practically no responsibilities should be a politician's dream as a source of patronage. For that reason, when vacancies on the board are to be filled, the General Assembly becomes the scene of an undignified scramble of vote-trading.

The Commission sensed that the legislators would not willingly give up those plums. So it merely transferred the "courtesies" to an unpaid board of advisors as large as the present board of trustees. The duties of these "advisors", if any, are not clear, but when the patronage plums are passed out, they will do as well as full fledged trustees.

From the standpoint of business efficiency, we think the Commission's report leaves much to be desired. But from the angle of how much the General Assembly is likely to approve, it is clearly the work of a group that knows North Carolina politics. Therefore, all things considered, the Commission's recommendations ought to be approved by the Legislators.

Royally Mixed-Up Affair

There's an old song about a man who ventured into the strange world of romantic entanglements and joined in holy matrimony with the fair maiden he knew was meant for him.

Everything went fine for him for a while, then the marriage went on the rocks, and he and his wife were separated. This separation came at about the time of his grandmother's death. His grandfather, being a spry old goat not willing to succumb to old age and widowhood, proceeded to marry the grandson and former husband's estranged wife.

This made the two-time bride the step-mother of the grandson's father, and, thus, the title of the song: "I'm My Own Grandpa."

And this fellow figured he had problems. He only knew the half of it. Had he been of British royal blood he really would have been in for it. Witness the predicament of Queen Elizabeth II.

It seems that her first cousin, the Earl of Harewood, is being divorced by his wife on grounds of adultery with his secretary, Australian divorcee Patricia Tuckwell. Harewood has expressed his desire to marry Miss Tuckwell — who bore his child two-and-a-half years ago — as soon as he is legally free.

Under the Royal Marriages Act of 1772, however, all members of the royal family descended from

King George II must have the monarch's permission to marry.

And the Church of England — of which the queen is temporal head and "defender of the Faith" — is opposed to remarriage of anyone whose partner is still living.

So the queen is in a frenzy. Meanwhile, London newspapers are calling for Parliament to repeal George III's royal marriage law, saying George passed the law because he was furious at secret marriages made by his brothers, the dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, to commoners.

Ironic that the queen should be in the embarrassing showdown with the church over a marriage law instituted by old George, who was noted for his ability to consume mistresses in a quantity surpassed only by his diet of alcohol.

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74 Years of Editorial Freedom

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"An Epicurean Delight After Those 15-Cent Burgers!"



John Greenbacker

The Tragedy Ends

When Jack Ruby died in Dallas last Tuesday, a broken and misunderstood man, the spectre of his image emerged from Parkland Hospital to torment all those who would record the history of this nation in future years.

His death seemed to be decreed by a grand design of classical tragedy that would truly have been worthy of Sophocles or Shakespeare. A vibrant president is slain by a madman, who in turn is slain in revenge by one destined to go mad before his death.

When friends and relatives drew back from Ruby's bedside to meet the questions of reporters, they drew a pathetic picture of what they had seen:

"He died peacefully," sister Eva Grant replied.

"He looked like he was 80 years old," Chicago lawyer Elwood Gertz said. Ruby was 55.

"Jack saw himself as a kind of instrument," Gertz continued. "He did not have the delusion that God told him to do it, or that he was the instrument of any people, but it happened without his conscious will."

In his final days, the tough, Chicago-born strip joint owner was tormented by guilt-ridden hallucinations. He claimed he killed assassin Lee Harvey Oswald to prove to the nation that "Jews have guts," and he added visions that his act

had caused the persecution of thousands of Jews by policemen in the Dallas jail.

When Ruby's brother Earl told the dying man that his visions were not true, Ruby replied, "Don't tell me! I hear them screaming from the basement every night."

Ruby denied to the end that he was part of a conspiracy to silence Oswald, but there are many who still refuse to believe him.

For as long as this nation exists, there will continue to be those who will interpret this grim series of misfortune as part of a master plot conceived by America's enemies.

Others will view the sequence with profound sadness, knowing that in a supposedly modern and enlightened era, hatred, instability and black passion are still capable of soiling the garments of the mighty.

And, certainly, history has taught something to American justice. It has shown that simple carelessness on the part of the nation's guardians allowed embittered insanity to strike its blow of injustice that destroyed the assassin, denied the avenger his rights, turned a trial into a circus, and led to yet another early death.

Alone in his jail cell three years after the crime had been committed, and gravely ill from cancer, Ruby begged for help. His jailers denied him and said he was just

"hamming it up."

With this stark epitaph, the American people should mark Jack Ruby's passing with a prayer.

If events such as these should ever again confront the American people, may God grant us the power to maintain our composure and minister to the dictates of the democratic process we claim to hold so dear.

Love Will Find All Who Seek

Love is an easy thing for young people to understand because they want it so damned badly.

The search for wonderful love is filled with despair, and coupled with the insecurity of the growing years, it can destroy through disillusionment the strongest, most basic foundations of direction.

The search for love, especially when you think you have found it only to be futilely turned away, can tear up a young person more than any other single type of involvement. Concerns over the future, over school or direction grow dim when shown in the same light as love.

Upon graduation from high school, there is a preponderance of serious relationships between graduating seniors. Subconsciously realizing their inability to retain the past through family or school, the entering college freshman is often seen entering school the next fall sporting an 8" x 16" portrait of his sweet little honey.

Some of these relationships develop beyond the mere groping of security in sight of the uncertain years at college. We all know friends who make "childhood romances" come true.

Most, however, do not survive the tumult of the searching years.

The power of the identity crisis during these years leaves one wondering whether love will ever be compatible with the tragic sense of life which pervades the insecurity of the younger years.

Yet, because you have experienced it at least once, and more likely two or three times during these frustrating years, you cannot help but know, deep inside, that someday, somewhere love's hand will reach through the mist and touch, tenderly, the soft heart which yearns to glow.

Peter Harris

Hardly Hamburgers

Below, young faces
Surge forward
For the tasteless
(cardboard.

Glow - orange sham,
Purple nourishment
Within bellies, canned
Cement.

Above, from a black iron stack
Fugitive grey grease puffs, the seepage
Slink up and dribble back,
Splating the roof; low and creeping

Saliva of a tubercular giant,
Mixed in green plasmas of snot,
Spat upon a hill of ants.

—John Greenbacker

Viet Nam War Has Effect On Teenager

FROM THE CHERAW (S.C.) CHRONICLE

What does war do to people? Different things to different ones, no doubt, depending upon their psychological and personality makeup.

But experiences on the battle field do cause serious dislocations and maladjustments in many soldiers, and little wonder. There was a most moving article in a daily newspaper recently about what combat in South Vietnam had done to one 18-year-old youth.

The reporter spoke of the boy's hardened eyes, his sense of inner tension, his doubts and concern. This particular youth sometimes wondered if he were "going nuts." He told of one experience in which he fired a rocket into a house from which sniper fire was believed to have originated. The house blew up and the soldier later learned that a two-year-old child was inside. When the distraught Vietnamese mother came running toward them with agony in her eyes, the young American just laughed at her.

"What's wrong with me?" the soldier later wondered. "Am I going nuts or something? I'd just as soon kill these people as look at them." Consciously he felt no remorse or sympathy for the baby he had just killed or the mourning mother.

The boy's questions, however, belied his feelings. He was obviously deeply disturbed and agitated by such experiences. He had not been raised to kill. What it will do to him, however, and how he will react and readjust when he returns home, if he does, is an uncertainty.

This particular soldier felt that he had changed. He is no longer the undisciplined young punk who got drunk on Saturday nights; the teen-age dropout who stole hub caps.

What does he want to do when he gets home? He wants to marry the hometown girl, go to college, maybe become an architect, and build a house and start on a family. He wants to "be like my dad, who knows everybody at home and has respect."

How does one square these normal goals with the young man's self-confessed new-found irreverence for life? Can a sensitive youngster overcome the ambivalence and ambiguity that combat thrusts upon him? Can he make the readjustment in civilian life so that his aspirations can be realized?

It is an old dilemma, faced by generations of youths in almost every country in the world. Some manage to make it, some don't. Some are so scarred that they are like dogs in the K-Nine Corps who cannot become rehabilitated. Some return home to continue their killing. Most, however, do not.

It is a terrible thing that the older generation puts these kids through. The politicians and the statesmen and the industrialists and the generals . . . they all have reasons and answers and self-justification. They always have had. The reasons and explanations seem to make sense, too, until one listens to what one sensitive American boy says about life at the battle front. Then all the logic and sophistication and rational explanations seem to fade away and one is left only with an awful realization that none of it makes sense; that war is the worst and most indecent expression of man's inhumanity to man.

Do our soldiers know what they're fighting for? Do most of us at home understand? Again, some do, some don't, and others just think they do. Are we fighting for Vietnamese independence? Independence from what and from whom? Are we fighting for personal freedom for the people of Southeast Asia? Or are we fighting for what we believe to be matters of national interest and self-protection? What arguments are credible and what are not so believable?

Almost no argument is so eloquent or persuasive as that poignant picture painted by the American soldier of the death of the little Vietnamese boy and the agony of his mother.

Yet let us acknowledge that suffering in war is universal and certainly no novelty. People in the South have a unique memory of the pain of war. The Russian people certainly understand, as do the citizens of Coventry and of Cologne. So do the survivors in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

There are no easy answers and no amount of sadness, softness or sentimentality is going to help President Johnson solve the situation. We doubt that the superficial hard line advice offered the President this week by our junior senator will do much good, either.

The beginning of wisdom, however, is an awareness of one's ignorance. It is well to try to see all the pieces of this particular puzzle and to continue to work on a way out. Total war, unconditional surrender, absolute victory: these concepts do not make so much sense in the era of the atom. Neither does the escalating carnage of this "limited war."

Letters

The Daily Tar Heel accepts all letters for publication provided they are typed and double-spaced. Letters should be no longer than 300 words in length. We reserve the right to edit for libelous statements.