

The Daily Tar Heel

90th year of editorial freedom

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Direct democracy?

If you're one of the 2,931 students who signed a petition calling for a referendum to vote on the 1983 Student Government Spring Concert, you certainly expected a chance to vote on the bill.

Guess again, kid.

If the Campus Governing Council passes its own concert bill tonight (a bill that also would give the CGC the power to cancel the spring concert) students may not have the option to vote on the concert — even though they have met all the conditions stated in the student constitution to hold a referendum. For that reason, the CGC should not vote on their own concert bill and the referendum should be held next week.

If the never-ending saga of Chapel Thrill '83 sounds confusing, it is. Last semester, the CGC Finance Committee ruled it would not fund a 1983 Chapel Thrill. On Jan. 10, in an effort to overturn that decision, enough signatures were collected to call for a student referendum on the concert.

"This is an excellent opportunity to practice direct democracy," said Student Body President Mike Vandenberg, who was a driving force behind the petitions. "We'll find out what the students want on a major issue that's important to them." The referendum, required to occur within 15 days, was tentatively scheduled for Jan. 25.

But then the CGC unwisely became involved with Chapel Thrill again. With the support of Vandenberg, the CGC Finance Committee passed a bill allocating money for the concert even though it knew a student referendum on the concert was upcoming. By doing so, the Finance Committee and Vandenberg undercut 2,931 students who had signed a petition calling for a campus-wide vote on Chapel Thrill.

The bill, which goes to the CGC tonight, contains a clause that enables the CGC to cancel the concert if it likes, thus giving the CGC more control over the spring concert than if students had approved it through a referendum. If the bill is approved, Vandenberg probably will cancel the election, although the constitutionality of that action would be very questionable. The referendum section of the constitution was not created to give presidents the option of holding elections; in fact, it was created for students who disagree with the policies of a president or CGC.

Vandenberg is a strong supporter of staging a spring concert. By supporting a concert bill in the CGC, he knows he can use the upcoming referendum as a bargaining chip in the CGC; if the CGC won't pass the bill, they know students probably will, and then the CGC will have less control over the concert. Encouraging the Finance Committee to pass a concert bill was a smart political move on Vandenberg's part, but one that could drag Chapel Thrill down with it. If the CGC passes the bill tonight, Vandenberg cancels the referendum and the CGC later cancels the concert, nearly 3,000 students will be asking why they didn't get the chance to vote on Chapel Thrill '83 when they should have.

The CGC knows that a concert referendum should be held next week. The CGC did not pass a spring concert last semester and students, as was their right, have attempted to override that decision. Enough signatures have been collected; a campus-wide vote should be held. For the CGC to vote on a Thrill bill would be to make a farce of students' constitutional right to petition for referendum.

Conservative column has errors. . .

By DAVID PORTERFIELD

I read with considerable interest the two-part column "On Being Conservative In America" (DTH, Jan. 12-13) and found it to be enlightening, well-written and very much in concordance with my impression of the general conservative outlook. For a statement which purports to dispel pervasive false assumptions, Shadroui's article is riddled with them.

One of the most disturbing of these assumptions is that which characterizes the political left as the pinnacle of adolescent idealism and its proponents as angry, hysterical maniacs who have neither the desire nor the capability to cope with the grim realities of life. People who don't know what they're talking about or why they believe what they espouse so fervently exist on either side of the political spectrum, and they usually evoke embarrassment and chagrin in the more perceptive thinkers whose views they attempt to emulate.

Jerry Falwell's farcical attempt to impose a monolithic value system on a socially stratified and diverse society is as absurd and unrealistic as Abbie Hoffman's scheme to change the world by giving everyone LSD.

Facing the facts is a matter of maturity, not of political affiliation, and most serious campus liberals (as well as those who managed somehow to miraculously survive in the "real world" — Ezra Pound, Alan Alda and Paul

Green spring to mind) would likely take offense at being depicted as a bunch of overgrown, dreamy-eyed teenagers.

Shadroui also implies that while serious conservatives allow their political demands to be shaped by moral considerations, liberals never do. Legislation of absolute equality among individuals is indeed folly; but it is preposterous to deny that the goal of a true democracy should be to accommodate existing physical, intellectual and financial disparity among its constituents in order to attain a more just consensus and better provide for the common good.

If compassion and respect for the needs and aspirations of our fellow human beings constitutes a spiritual vacuum, so be it.

It is difficult to discern a higher moral order of any kind in an administration — elected and supported by ardent conservatives — which has sought to bolster corporate profits at the expense of consumer protection and environmental safety, attempted to defund its opponents in order to render them politically ineffectual, clung tenaciously to the myth that any American who works hard and does his best must surely succeed while record numbers of such Americans crowd the unemployment offices, perpetuated the view of education as consumption rather than production and individual differences as qualities to be tolerated rather than rejoiced in, accepted contributions from fundamentalist religious leaders whose actions help pervert a doctrine of love and fellowship into a pernicious and oppressive political tool, and amassed a

staggering deficit to finance a sensely orgy of nuclear proliferation that threatens to level the world in the raceless, sexless equality of atomic dust.

As author Alvin Toffler has observed, most people have difficulty dealing with a dynamic, changing society in which the mores and traditions that benefited one era may be useless and even destructive in the next. There is comfort in stability and solace in the familiar; such is the appeal of the conservative point of view. But Thomas Jefferson noted that "... laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. . . . As new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times."

Edmund Burke, incidentally, opposed the French Revolution more because of its frightening proximity than its frightening methods, and he certainly was aware that the revolt in America constituted more than an abstract philosophical disagreement. The British didn't send troops to the colonies to organize debate teams.

Yes, Shadroui, conservatism, like any system of thought held by one or by one million, deserves better than careless, thoughtless disposal. I hope that this letter will not be brushed aside as merely another "shrill denunciation" from the mindless, fanatical left.

David Porterfield is a graduate student from Burlington.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

. . .and more on Shadroui columns

To the editor:

Kudos to Shadroui — he has grown up, matured into the respectable conservative his superego no doubt wants him to be. I hope he won't mind if I pick apart a few points in his first "On being conservative in America" column.

* Some liberal he was — Jerry Ford in '76?

* So the "sophistry was unrelenting" on the liberal-riddled 'DTH' staff — sorry, George, but people on the left have no monopoly on that vice.

* So "it isn't difficult to be a liberal in college"? Is it "difficult" to be a conservative (all it takes is shutting your mind and buying all kinds of rationalizations for elitism)?

* Let me see if I have it straight: because "for many students money considerations don't exist," because "the real world . . . is an unwelcome intruder on most college campuses," "because the acceptance of harsh realities is anathema to most students," because of all these things, "liberalism thrives."

Let's try another version: this is, as the "responsible" conservatives I know agree, far from the best of all possible worlds (or haven't you heard, George, of racism, sexism, war, intolerance, insane arms races that choke off the fulfillment of human needs, terrible squandering of human resources on the misery of unemployment, gross disparity of income and opportunity, etc.?).

Is it strange, George, that young people throughout history, not yet worn down by the all-too-harsh world that people created and people can change, have often agitated for and demanded solutions to these problems, or at least progress toward a more just and humane society? Is idealism a crime, a deviation to be dismissed as an indulgence of irresponsible youth?

The answer is hell no, not now, not ever. Up with righteous indignation, up with the burning anger at injustice that has wrought so many beneficial changes throughout the world. I know this is hard to believe from your lofty perch a year and a half out of college, George, but idealism need not be thrown out the window in the "real" world. Take it from a 32-year-old veteran of a number of social struggles

who is now in law school in order to increase his effectiveness in the fray.

No socially conscious college student need feel ashamed of his or her idealism. Damn the defeatist attitudes of the world's Shadrouis. George, the old farts who run this society love to see your sort of craven rationalizations in one so young ("such a responsible young man"). But nobody should be under the illusion that that outlook will prevail. Many will go on struggling for a society where people come before profits until it is achieved. Happy Birthday Martin Luther King! Long live Alex Charns!

Rob Gelblum
Chapel Hill

Calvin crusader?

To the editor:

After reading George Shadroui's two-part series on conservatism (DTH, Jan. 12 and 13), two quotes come to mind. The first concerns Mr. Shadroui's sentence that said:

"Striving for it (equality), we are bound to fail . . ." and that quote is:

"It is better to have tried and failed, than not to have tried at all."

The second quote concerns the entire article, and that quote is: "Rubbish!"

If George really wanted to extol the virtues of Calvinism, why didn't he just say

so, instead of wasting one whole article and half of another getting to the point.

Charlie Voliva
Carboro

Letters?

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns to the editorial pages. All contributions should be typed, triple spaced on a 60-space line and are subject to editing.

Column writers should include their majors, and hometowns. Each letter should include the writer's name, address and phone number. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

BLOOM COUNTY



WG "LARGE"



Miami riots

Heroes and scapegoats easily made

By ANN PETERS

The patrolman fired a single shot. The bullet lodged in the skull of a 20-year-old. One day later that man, Nevell Johnson Jr., died.

Johnson, shot in a Miami video arcade three weeks ago, was black. Luiz Alvarez, the Miami patrolman who fatally shot Johnson, is white. Overtown, a predominantly poor black neighborhood in Miami, erupted after the incident.

Nineteen hours after the shooting, Rosemary Usher Jones, a judge for the Florida Industrial Commission, drove through the neighborhood, searching for a route onto I-95. It was poor planning on her part — concrete blocks and rocks crashed through her car windows.

Two young black girls tried to help her escape. One of them ran to the arcade where Johnson had been shot. As she did, Jones' pursuers reached the car and tore open the doors. They ripped off her jewelry and took her credit cards and driver's license. Then they began to drag her out of the car.

Willie Watkins, the arcade owner, and three friends grabbed Jones away from her assailants. Until her rescue by Miami police, Jones' haven became the arcade, the scene of the shooting that ignited more than two days of sporadic violence.

In an interview with *The Miami Herald*, Watkins blamed looters for the continued violence. "The looters really keep things going. They use it to profit," he said. "They're really not interested in it (the Johnson shooting). This isn't the way to express it if they are."

Not all residents of Overtown raced through the 200-block community. Many tried to calm the angry crowd. Howard Gary, Miami's first black city manager, directed efforts to control the situation. Gary was raised in the slums of Liberty City, the scene of Miami's May 1980 riots. Those riots followed the acquittal of white officers in the death of Arthur McDuffie, a Liberty City resident. Gary said he could sympathize with the frustrations and

concerns of blacks. Overtown residents came to city hall. They complained of injustices after Johnson was shot.

The key to Gary's strategy: give Overtown residents an opportunity "to vent their emotions and concerns" and then draw from them some solutions. It's the old attitude of self-help.

The roots of Miami's problems go deep beneath the surface of hoodlums on the loose on a destructive free-for-all. Problems simmer beneath a plane of high unemployment, low standards of living and the lack of a middle-class community of black residents and merchants. About 50 percent of Overtown's 12,000 residents are employed in low-skill jobs, 25 percent are unemployed and another 25 percent receive welfare. The median income is less than \$8,000 a year.

The deterioration of one community is a warning signal to other communities with similar qualities. Miami is not falling into the Atlantic, but it is slipping not too quietly into a fog. The ghettos and the suburbs are divided by more than a few miles. And one person's death is not the only reason why violence marred the streets of Overtown with blood and broken glass.

A slow burn of racial injustice, perceived and actual police insensitivity and low self-image fanned the fire of this volatile situation. The only course of action is to extinguish the next fire before its first flicker. To forget the events of the 1960s — Watts, Chicago, New York — and the recent examples of metropolitan violence is to be too easily swayed into a cloud of passivity.

Police, complete with riot gear, who patrol checkpoints around a cordoned black ghetto will not eradicate the difficulties the people within the rundown area must deal with each day. The black community in Miami is suspicious of the establishment — predominantly white, predominantly male. Approximately 60 percent of the officers assigned to the area that includes Overtown, downtown Miami and Wynwood, largely a Latin neighborhood, have been with the department for 18 months or less and are officially on probation, statistics show.

So the Miami Police Department has assigned a relatively inexperienced and predominantly Latin group of officers to patrol Overtown. But Miami Police Chief Kenneth Harms and Miami Police Sgt. Eddie Smith, president of the black Miami Community Police Benevolent Association, reject the consideration that black neighborhoods be patrolled by black officers.

"Twenty-five years ago we rejected the theory that it was proper to patrol a black area with a segregated force," Harms said. "People in all communities want professional, sensitive police officers regardless of color."

How then can police in a major city patrol black communities?

Miami officials, federal authorities and experts on police practices wonder:

- Should Miami police walk beats?
- Should more black officers be assigned to Overtown?
- Do officers need extra "stress" and "sensitivity" training?
- And is there a quick remedy for the department's severe imbalance of rookies?

Officer Luiz Alvarez, with 21 months of active duty, was training a younger officer when the shooting occurred. Alvarez was assigned to Sector 30, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. He left his zone presumably on his own initiative, in violation of police procedures.

Those are the facts. Investigations continue. Police-community dialogue must be opened. Competent police need to work with neighborhoods. Beyond that, employment and self-worth among the lower-class must be improved. These are not fantasies.

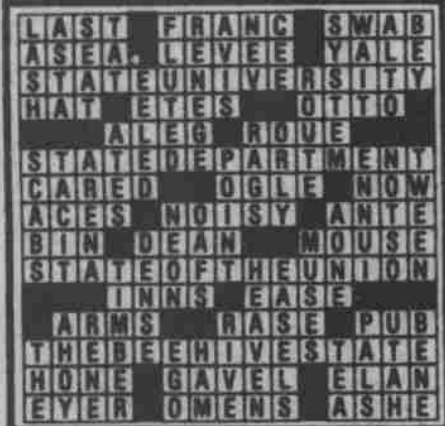
Heroes and scapegoats are easily made in volatile situations. Construction rather than destruction is the key. Neither should Johnson nor Alvarez be made pawns to further violent acts.

Ann Peters, a senior journalism and political science major from Miami, Fla., is managing editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

THE Daily Crossword by Lee C. Jones

- ACROSS
- 1 One of the 3 Bs
 - 5 Greek letters
 - 10 Baby's bed
 - 14 Flaxen hue
 - 15 Nautical term
 - 16 Singer Cantrell
 - 17 Hand: prof.
 - 18 Wilder-Radner film
 - 20 Ships' backbones
 - 22 Frozen
 - 23 Mythical maidens in trees
 - 26 Sandra or Ruby
- 27 — a jolly good...
- 30 Bakery item
- 32 Orderly plan
- 34 He needs sunglasses
- 37 Borne by the wind
- 38 Impel
- 39 Potato
- 41 Prehistoric chisel
- 42 Seed covers
- 44 Trivial
- 46 Deep valley
- 48 — Bulba
- 49 Mel of baseball
- 50 Devotee
- 52 Overindulge
- 55 Chief Vedic god
- 57 Sound acronym
- 59 Barrel organ
- 64 Grotto
- 65 Indigo
- 66 Funny Fudd
- 67 Amerindians
- 68 Carry on
- 69 They color cloth
- 70 Mailed
- 21 Delhi robe
- 24 Fender mishap
- 25 Took notice
- 27 Raddy of song
- 28 Zola
- 29 Faction
- 31 Bookkeeping entry
- 33 Deception
- 34 Fish
- 35 One of five
- 36 Brief summary
- 38 N.H. river
- 40 — avis
- 43 Tufts or Bono
- 45 Sweet potatoes
- 47 Poked gently
- 51 Indeed
- 53 Maternally related
- 54 Glossy bird
- 55 Run in neutral gear
- 56 Weapon, to Napoleon
- 58 Remainder
- 59 "Turn left"
- 60 Actress Merkel
- 61 Tractor-trailer
- 62 — Alts
- 63 '82 and '83

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



1/18/83

