

The Daily Tar Heel

77 Years of Editorial Freedom



Todd Cohen
Editor

Tom Gooding
Laura White
Bobby Nowell
Mary Burch
Art Chansky

Managing Editor
News Editor
Associate Editor
Arts Editor
Sports Editor

Bob Wilson
Frank Stewart

Business Manager
Advertising Manager

Sandra Saunders
Night Editor this issue

John Agar

'Free Press' Seeks To End DTH Because It Disagrees Politically

Trent Oliver's letter of last Saturday is a good specimen of the kind of intelligence working behind "The Committee for a Free Press." If the issue involved weren't crucial, Miss Oliver's attempts "to debate the idiotic utterances of"—me—would just be funny. But as the "committee's" assaults on the TAR HEEL become more virulent and, seemingly, more credited, the humor of the situation dissipates.

Miss Oliver has three points to make, and I'll take them in order. First, she demands that I retract the epithet "proto-fascist," which I applied to our "free press" movement.

No. If one reads something without being prepared or equipped to understand it, she can only make hash of it, and heaven knows what fantasies raced through Miss Oliver's brain as she read my article. "Proto," she gasps, means "first in status," and "proto-fascist"—my God!—though without her dictionary she probably couldn't cite one word to illustrate her definition.

"Proto," in its general acceptance—in proto-plasm, protozoa, proton, prototype—but not protopresbyter, in which it means just what Miss Oliver suspects—"proto" means "primitive," or, in compounds like "proto-fascist," tending that way, incipient, capable of organic development in that direction.

Specifically, it refers to one who cannot believe that a columnist would be allowed to disagree with his editor. It applies also to someone whose sense of integrity is disconnected from her political biases—so much so that she'll argue any side of an issue to silence her opposition.

Miss Oliver, with mock surprise, discovers that editor Cohen and I disagree on the issue of funding the TAR HEEL. "One wonders," she writes, "if Mr. Agar was aware of the opinion of his editors... Surely if he knew that the editors were opting for this 'proto-fascist' free speech movement he would feel honor-bound to sever his relations with them. Unless of course he likes 'proto-fascists.'"

If I remember correctly, one of "free press's" first complaints was that the TAR HEEL editors tolerated no dissenting view points. Yet here Miss Oliver, speaking for the "committee," scolds me for disagreeing with my editor. Which way do you want it, Miss Oliver? Shall we all sing together, so that you can deplore our uniformity? Or is my editor a "proto-fascist" for letting me have my say?

The crux of this lies not in one or another of the alternatives. It's not even

that the writer has failed to grasp the flaws in her logic. It's that the alternatives Miss Oliver conceives of as the ONLY possible ones are inherently authoritarian: agree with your editor or resign.

An "editor's note" at the end of Miss Oliver's letter tartly informs her that I am "entitled to my opinion, just as a conservative writer would have been." But this possibility never enters her mind.

No, Miss Oliver. I do not like proto-fascists. And no, on this issue—and on many others, if you'll pay attention to what you read—I do not agree with Todd Cohen. The TAR HEEL airs many different views, and even gave you space for a long letter when you had little or nothing to say.

Other traits which, to me, mark our "committee" here as dangerous are its simpleness and its penchant for just happening to find itself opposed to the only organ for news and opinion which we have—and then only when the opinion seems to be going the "wrong" way.

Oh, yes, I remember the "Student Committee for a Free Press's" first release: "Our fundamental objection to the status quo is not to the political bias of the campus newspaper (although the existence of that bias is incontrovertible) but to its method of finance."

But why not the Yack, which is nothing but an expensive valentine card the student body sends to itself? What about sports which don't pay their way? Why not call for stricter controls on the University news bureau?

In short, why start your attack with what, even granting the "committee's" premise, is the most universally useful student organization: the one which even

Miss Oliver reads, or at least quotes from and writes letters to.

And why the vehemence of the attack? Doesn't the TAR HEEL at least deserve better than the baseball program, or the free space accorded for sale art work in the Union, or the existence and upkeep of the Union itself?

I won't generalize here. It's enough that the "principle" behind the Free Press Committee's campaign against the TAR HEEL seems to apply only when the "free press" people disagree with an organization's politics.

Just as repellent is the "committee's" habit of arguing by false analogy and broad emotional assertions.

The "Wall Street Journal" supports itself, we hear. Why not the TAR HEEL? Why should people be FORCED to pay for the Tar Heel? Why should we have COMPULSORY funding for a politically biased paper?

Does it ever occur to Miss Oliver and her friends that the TAR HEEL is NOT the "Wall Street Journal," that it exists in a society radically different from the Journal's, in which it performs a fundamentally different function?

Does Miss Oliver ever consider that the student body, vis-a-vis the administration, is by no means analogous to the readership of the Journal?

Does Miss Oliver stop to think that the constituency which elects the editor of the TAR HEEL is, in its nature, less fixed and less powerful over its individual members than the readership of the Journal?

Is Miss Oliver aware of the campus's need for an organ of news dissemination

and of opinion? And most important to the intellectual integrity of her argument, is she aware that the application of her principles would do to representative government? Let us all pay our taxes according and in proportion as we approve of each individual program, is that it, Miss Oliver?

Surely I would not have anyone assume that I consider Miss Oliver and her friends fascists. I am sure they're not. What they are is intellectually dishonest young people whose solution to even the most complex problem is simplistic and somehow, if only by implication, repressive. They will free us from the shackles of the TAR HEEL's editorial page—a page of diverse opinion, as Miss Oliver implies and illustrates—and leave us nothing.

Basically, Miss Oliver and her friends are out of their depth when they talk about principles. All they have is a piling self-righteousness and an inaccessibility to reason which makes their every thought impervious and impenetrable.

It is this kind of reasoning which may well leave us without a campus newspaper next year, and it is bad reasoning, the kind which appeals to knee-jerk prejudice.

I recognize Miss Oliver's right to speak her mind. Indeed, we must have all views if thinking people are to have the raw materials necessary to forging their own truth.

But still, that Miss Oliver can reason as she does, and that this kind of reasoning wins widespread assent—this sickens me.

(Editor's Note: The DTH offers the committee equal space here for a reply.)

After-Dinner Sleep

The Repression Day activities today might serve this community constructively. But that depends on two things.

First, it depends on the ability of the sponsors of the program to articulate what has become a problem of the greatest concern in this country. The acts of repression which have occurred and which continue to occur against political minorities is abhorrent to any principles of democracy which exist.

The genius of the American experiment, at least in ideal form, is the right of the minority to express itself and to represent itself. But that ideal is fast becoming no more than the fantasy of an after-dinner sleep.

Hopefully, the people who will be presenting the speeches, etc., today will be able to serve up more than the usual left-wing rhetoric. The effectiveness of such forums is to educate, not merely to indoctrinate, or worse, to emotionalize.

But even given the ability of the speakers to educate, there will be no education if there is no class of pupils yearning to be wise. Unless the members of this community who don't really understand the issues are willing to listen, nothing will be gained by a Repression Day.

Simply, this idealistic effort to inform the general masses about the problem of political repression is going to end up like most idealistic efforts—a failure—unless there is some kind of response on the part of the community to at least give the sponsors of the program a chance to say something and be heard.

And, of course, those same sponsors are going to have to remember that what is clear in their minds is not always clear in the minds of the masses.

If you want to teach the peasants, you are going to have to remember that they are peasants.

That maxim, of course, applies equally to all.

Which is about as idealistic as we can be.

Cansler Doctrine

A meeting to discuss the role of the resident advisor in light of the Cansler Doctrine has been called for tonight at 7 in 104 Peabody.

The forum is being sponsored by a group of "interested" resident advisors.

Dean of Men James O. Cansler issued his now-famous doctrine last January after he fired an RA for not enforcing the visitation policy. The RA, John Daughtry, claimed his job was as an advisor, not as a disciplinarian, and that Cansler had changed the meaning of that role.

Cansler claims the role of the RA has always been that of a disciplinarian, as well as of an advisor.

On Sept. 27, 1958, the Daily Tar Heel quoted then Dean of Student Affairs Fred Weaver as saying "the job of these counselors is to promote an academic atmosphere rather than to discipline the students... It is especially stressed that the counselor is not a disciplinarian and that all incidents which require disciplinary action

will be handled by the IDC rather than by the resident counselor."

That statement was issued at the time when the resident advisor program was first begun.

Clearly, there is a serious question as to what function the RA should serve. In light of the University's recent ruling that entering freshmen must live in dorms for two years, and sophomores and juniors for one year, is a decision which will put a lot of importance on the role of the RA.

What is needed now is not merely the one-sided pronouncements of Cansler. He has his way, alright, because he has the power.

But there is always room for other strains of thought than Cansler's.

Tonight's meeting might be a good time for any concerned RA to voice his opinion on the Cansler Doctrine, and its implications for the future of the University.

A Free Press

The article appearing at the top center of this page today is this paper's response to the latest barrage of criticism from the Committee for a Free Press.

Written by Mr. John Agar, a staff columnist who has been the particular target of the Free Press group lately, it expresses the too-long-unstated sentiment of this paper towards the Committee.

The Committee, having recently lost much of its gusto due to lack of support in the state press, has taken to flooding the editor's desk with column-length letters—all peddling the same empty threats and irresponsible charges—and expecting all of them to be run.

Every statement accredited to the Free Press group reflects a severe harping on semantics, ambiguities, and half-truths. We now ask the Free Press Committee to emerge from behind their self-constructed wall of rhetoric and prove that their attack against

the Tar Heel is anything but political.

We offer the Committee equal space on this page for a reply to Mr. Agar's column.

It is worth noting that last fall Dave Adcock replied to our ad for a conservative columnist. The Free Press group had used as a major complaint that we refused to hire a conservative editorialist.

Adcock quit, though, saying he couldn't work for us if we allowed a certain other columnist to write. He seemed to forget that he had been given the same right to print his opinion as any other of our writers.

It was almost as if Adcock had taken the job so that he could quit.

In any event, our offer to the conservative group still holds. They are entitled to their point of view, and we will print that point of view.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the University of North Carolina Student Publication's Board, daily except Monday, examination periods and vacations and during summer periods.

Offices are at the Student Union Bldg., Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Telephone numbers: editorial, sports, news—933-1011; business, circulation, advertising—933-1163, Address: Box 1080, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

Subscription rates: \$10 per year; \$5 per semester. We regret that we can accept only prepaid subscriptions.

Second class postage paid at U.S. Post Office in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Letters To The Editor

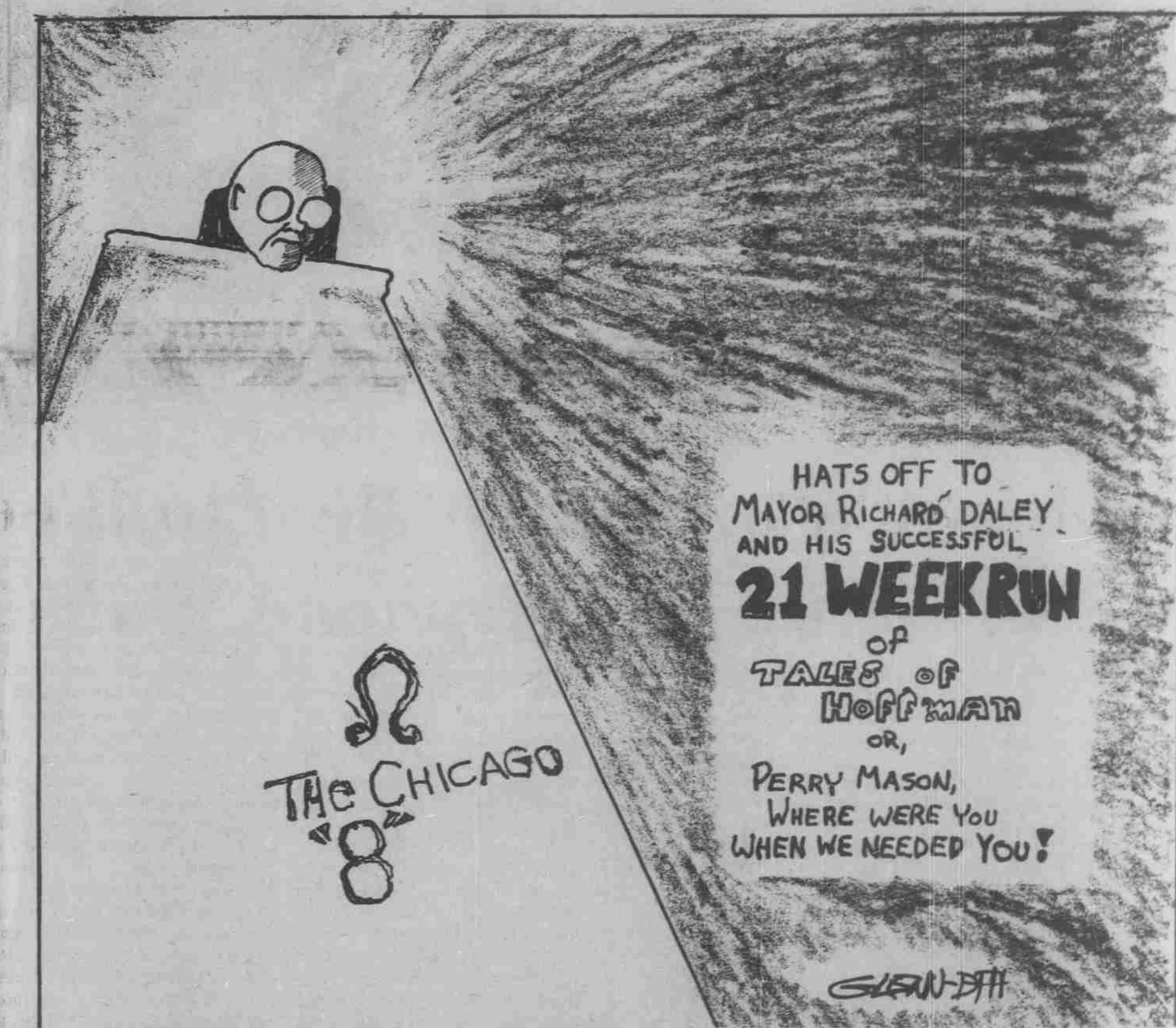
'Conservative' Laments DTH 'Persecution'

The Student Legislature recently completed its report on Tar Heel funding, and concluded that "there exists on our campus a basic need for a student-oriented newspaper," and spoke of the cost of such a paper as being "infinitesimal when compared with the benefits reaped." Uh huh.

The only "benefits" conservatives have ever reaped from the DTH are "Peantus", "Andy Capp," and the crossword puzzle. But even Charlie Brown can't outweigh the studied neglect and/or vitriolic attack we receive in the news, the editorials, the sports (honest! read Art Chansky),—and even the Campus Calendar, would you believe...

The Young Republicans Club is one of the very largest dues-paying organizations on campus, with over 225 members. A notice was dropped into the Campus Calendar basket two days before our last meeting (well within the time limit imposed by the sign above the basket). Our notice did not appear. I asked in the Tar Heel office why this was so. Oh, not everything goes in, by a long shot, they replied. It's purely random selection. Uh huh. I really do believe that it was pure accident that landed notice of the last SDS meeting in the top corner of the front page...

Yet this is one of the indispensable services which the Student Legislature



insists we continue to be forced to pay for.

Everyone is aware of the broad spectrum of student opinion expressed on the editorial page of the Tar Heel: left, far left, new left, and radical left. But what people may not realize is that opposing views have little chance to survive intact even through the "Letters to the Editor" forum. Writing letters to the Tar Heel is like allowing yourself to be bound hand and foot in order to remove the gag from your mouth. They will print the letter—usually—but the power of the press becomes blatantly clear when you examine what they do to your letter.

First, there is the large bold-face headline, which introduces your letter with such winning comments as "Free Press" Says "Name-Caller" Agar Is "Idiotic" (Feb. 14). The obvious implications are the first (and sometimes only) thing people see and note. What do you do? Write another letter to refute a headline? All right. The fact is, the "Free Press" said nothing of the sort. I said that Mr. Agar's journalistic UTTERANCES were idiotic, and then proceeded to prove my point in the letter. Moreover, this is at least the fourth time the Tar Heel has misused a headline in such a fashion.

There are several other minor tactics such as the use of (sic) in the body of the

letter, or placement on the page, but I am limited to 300 words; so I shall skip directly to the most obvious tactic of inserting editorial comments in the middle of a letter—or at the end. The editors did this to both the letters submitted last week by members of the Free Press Committee. You cannot defend against such a practice.

The comment at the end of my letter read: "The committee did not advance anyone to fill the position of 'Conservative Columnist' when the DTH advertised for one last year."—which is a flat out lie, in more ways than one, and would need another 200 words to counter. And it continued, "Mr. Agar, as a staff editorialist, is entitled to his opinion,"—no journalist is entitled to express libellous opinions in print, which is what Mr. Agar did in calling the Free Press Committee "Proto-fascist."

Once again, Mr. Cohen, we demand a retraction.

And we further ask the student body if it can honestly believe that it is right to fail to force all students to support a paper which undeviatingly persecutes a very large political minority.

Trent Oliver
Box 663 Craige

Readers Forum

Letters to the editor must be typed and double-spaced, not exceeding 300 words. The letter writer must indicate his willingness for his opinion to be expressed in print. All printed letters must carry the name and address of the writer(s).

Letters should be addressed to the Associate Editor, care of The Daily Tar Heel, Student Union.

'Allegedly' Is Debated Again

To the editor:

Mr. Dick utilized this distinguished forum on February 15 to admonish Mr. Gardner for having taken the DTH to task in regard to the alleged bias of its reporting. Mr. Dick alleges that Mr. Gardner offered no argument in support of his allegations and thus he, Mr. Dick, found himself at a loss to reply.

I find all this very curious, since Mr. Gardner was most explicit in basing his accusation on a well-reasoned objection to the DTH's misuse of the word "allegedly", and since Mr. Dick, in spite of allegedly being at a loss to reply, replied.

Richard L. Clinton
711-B Hibbard Dr.
Chapel Hill