



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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In Plotting The Future Of Midtown, A Common Denominator Of Danger

"Downtown is dying. You can already see signs of decay if you've a mind to look."
"Downtown is still as sound as a dollar. But we can't take all this congestion forever. Sure, it's getting worse. I guess something will have to be done before much longer."

TWO inquiries about the health of Charlotte's midtown business district drew strikingly different reactions from sidewalk partisans yesterday.

From one: Unalloyed gloom.
From the other: Stout confidence concerning present conditions but some uncertainty about the future.

Where does the truth lie?
It lurks, strangely, in both reactions.

In two opposing viewpoints there is a common denominator of peril.
Downtown Charlotte is in remarkably good health for a city with an exploding postwar population. Compared to some other cities we could name it is the picture of salubrity.

But the pressure points are there. Streets designed for buggy traffic are jammed with cars during rush hours. Competition is getting keener for the few available parking spaces. Some of midtown's buildings seem to get roachier by the minute. Slums bordering the city's heart contaminate whole areas.

Still, it isn't so bad when viewed as a whole.

But what about tomorrow?
What if nothing is done and downtown is simply allowed to shift for itself?

The peril is plain. Downtown will become a chronic invalid. The decay will spread until it threatens the social and economic well-being of the entire community.

The University of North Carolina's Institute of Government has taken a long, searching look into this common denominator of peril and this week issued a challenge to Tar Heel cities that has Charlotte's name written all over it: "It is time for Main Street to wake up to the threat."

Writes Ruth L. Mace, one of the Institute's research associates, in the first two reports on downtown decay in Tar-heel:

"The businessmen's investment and continuing profits are at stake. A substantial portion of the city's tax base hangs in balance, along with its investment in public improvements in the downtown section. All of the residents of the city and its hinterland benefit from a conveniently located focal point, a downtown center where they can

shop, play or attend to governmental or private business. Too many people have a stake in the continued vitality of the patient to allow it to die."

Cure is possible. Undoubtedly, it is desirable.

What, then, is the hold-up?

Researcher Mace states it well:
"Conversations with city officials and planners around the state almost all point up the current lack of awareness among merchants and business leaders of the need for an organized program of action to guarantee the future prosperity of the central business district."

The result: Old age and an apathy toward it or a paralysis before it. A sort of combined physical and psychological obsolescence.

CHARLOTTE'S own brand of apathy is peculiar. It is not total. There is nicely rendered awareness of certain aspects of the problem—slums, overhanging signs, a government plaza—but it lacks organization and integration.

What is needed is a comprehensive, long-range approach to the whole problem of downtown, a coordinated public and private effort to remove completely the possibility of peril. Researcher Mace suggests a "bold, inspiring scheme, designed to capture the imagination and the business of people who will shop in the new downtown."

The will, of course, have to come from the community itself. Outside experts and home town professionals can furnish advice but the inspiration and the spark for a comprehensive, long-range program will have to come from the local laity.

The specifics of a total plan must include:

- 1—Adequate parking.
- 2—Relief of traffic congestion and the elimination of hazards to pedestrians inside the shopping area.
- 3—Elimination of inappropriate land uses.
- 4—Replacement of ugliness with beauty (Elimination of overhanging signs in midtown is a start).
- 5—Protection of adjacent neighborhoods.

THE problem may seem to lack urgency today. The disease is only in its early stages. And the luxury of apathy is comfortable indeed.

But to wait is to invite peril.
The Institute of Government has sounded the alarm. It is worth repeating:

"It is time for Main Street to wake up . . ."

New England Blizzard, Go Home!

KERR SCOTT, who once proposed rerouting hurricanes by blasting them with atomic bombs, has been strangely silent about the cold wave.

Frankly, we're tired by the senator's taciturnity on the subject of low temperatures. Possibly the consistent frigid augurs well for a good peach crop in the Sandhills and, if that be the case, the man from Haw River can hardly be expected to demand that the cold wave be hopped with a bomb. On the other hand the senator numbers among his constituents a considerable number of grav soppers, and to say that they're in dire circumstances understates the facts. Red-eyes gray is congealing on cold crockery all over eastern North Carolina, but in the Senate there is silence.

And not only in the Senate . . .
We haven't heard a word from those people who are always insisting that all those bomb tests are making the winters warmer. Zipped up and clammed

up in their fur-lined parkas, they are. Nor has there been more than a mumble among the senior citizens who recall in sentences beginning "When I was a boy . . ." just how rigorous winters used to be.

Mark Twain to the contrary, people not only are not doing anything about the weather. Some of them aren't even talking about it. But Twain did not err in his long-range forecast of New England weather: "Probable not-east to sou'-west winds, varying to the southward and westward and eastward and points between; high and low barometer, sweeping around from place to place; probable areas of rain, snow, hail, and drought, succeeded or preceded by earthquakes with thunder and lightning."

That's the way it is—New England weather. And we join all the silent people in wishing New England would call its prodigal blizzards home and, in the future, properly confine them to that area.

Whit Whitfield in UNC's Daily Tar Heel

IN PRAISE OF CONFORMITY

DURING the past few years the favorite topic of the writers on college papers has been conformity. You've read it until you're sick of it, but this is a new twist. We'd like to defend conformity.

We conform. Why? We have to; if we don't, we're dead. How many non-conformists are there? Right? None. How much chance does a beard, a duck tail, pegged pants, or dungarees have in a society of conformists? Right again. None.

How far can a person go if he expresses opinions that are contrary to those of his peers? As far as the next country if he's lucky.

So, we conformists are faced with self preservation, the oldest of man's common laws. If you can't conform or be annihilated, so it either conform or join 'em.

Mr. Conformer or Mr. Averageman is typically like this:
He goes to whatever church is the latest in his neighborhood.

He reads *Lure, Look, Tare*, you know, the type mags in the dentist's office.

He reads the sports section and the funnies, sometimes the rapes and murders if he has time. (He is always busy.)

He wears whatever is fashionable, regardless of how many old clothes he has in his wardrobe.

His hobbies are hunting and fishing. (He can't go wrong here.)
His favorite interests are Channel 5, Channel 2, Channel 11, and poker. (In that order.)

This is the man whom the writers proudding non-conformity constantly harass. Why? He hasn't done anything—nothing at all. He never does; he never will. Why bother him?

If you ever get the chance, look at the writer on non-conformity. He dresses like the rest of us. You can't blame him. He wants to live. Too. You'll find him watching TV at a flick, or criticizing *Lure's* handwork.

He has to enjoy the worldly pleasures too. He's human. The fact that he is following the trend in college writing by writing on the same topic (and conforming meanwhile) doesn't bother him—he's a conformist.

God Bless Conformity.

People's Platform Should Today's Teenagers Shun 'Uniformity'?

Patrick AFB, Fla.
Editors, The News:
IN his letter to the editors of The News Feb. 12, a Mecklenburg high school student stated: "The education of youth in America has turned into a standardization process, molding every child into an unoriginal stamp of a model of a proper 'respectable' person. We are no longer taught how to think, but what to think. If it is what he thinks then he's missed the point entirely. Let me explain:

I'm a graduate of a Charlotte high school, Myers Park High, to be exact, and I thought pretty much the same way, even when I graduated. It took the Air Force's basic training to show me that what's needed is a series of set forms to go by at the first. As you can see, the aim of basic training is to make a "Tin Soldier" out of the individual; to make him "uniform." But if the individual remains "uniform" in thought and action, he will very soon be forced out of the service. The whole structure has fallen together so that it is the person with initiative, with that "gumption," that gets ahead.

So it is in civilian life. Take a look at the great men of our country. Take a look at the strictly regimented education that many, many of them got at the first. Think of the hundreds of classmates that they had in these schools where everything was taught by rote and rod. As an example, Abe Lincoln went to a "Rab School," a school which was denounced by his father as being just that. Take a look at the British public schools where



everyone marches in straight lines to and from everything, and the privileges are strictly limited. Take a longer look at private schools all over the world, where the discipline is like nothing that one encounters in our own public schools—then look long and hard at the men they produced. Do a lot of comparing and a lot

more thinking, and you'll see that it's the men who are "uniform" for the training that being "uniform" gives them, and who then turn that training to their own use, who make their mark on the Big Board.

Don't get me wrong. Very few rebels get anywhere. The people

who show up in the final count are the ones who turn this very thing that you are talking about to their own use, who use this "basic training" as it was meant to be used, as a foundation upon which to build their own lives, that make our leaders, our statesmen, or our people who are honest "assets" to their communities.

To sum up, I'll say this: Whether this schooling is meant to make you a "well-behaved little robot," or whether it is really meant to serve as a foundation for further development, as I have said in the past three hundred or so words, is strictly up to you. It is the harmless clods who become the "Babbits," the "Men in the Grey Flannel Suits," the typical suburbanites. It is the people who use this "basic education" (for that's all that it really is) that show up on the count, as I've said.

To help you become one of the latter, just remember this. Your education never really begins until you get out of formal high school or college and start striking for yourself in this big wide world. I've yet to learn that. I'm only 18, myself.

—SAM LINDEMAN
A/5C USAF

Land Of Sunshine Is Shivering, Too

Rock Hill, S. C.
Editors, The News:
MAN IS THE eternal tourist. Lucky is the family that can close down the furnace, call the

delivery boy to stop the paper, plan to slow down the food purchases to lighten the ice-box, do a little travel cost computing and head for the warmth of open breezes and clear, sunny skies of Florida.

Never mind of the threatened cold wave and reluctant to concede that the Weather Bureau's facts could dissolve thermal optimism, one soon found that the pile of snow on the yard of a Jacksonville home was the remains of a snowman, soon come to doom in the heat of a fleeing northern Florida sun.

Strange names rolled by — Palatka, Okeechobee, Ocala — and one's thoughts returned to Lumberton and what the Seminoles would have done to a white sheeted meeting in the Everglades.

Rained fruit, the sad face of a luckless grower who was less worried about the loss of thousands of boxes of citrus than the possible permanent injury to his brown and lifeless orange trees. The ruined truck farms greet the rebels as far as the eye can see passed by.

Moels as luxuriant as a Pasha's palace shivering in the low 40s and green rough waves pushed their way up over empty sandy beaches. Soon we headed back toward the snow of the Carolinas hoping that Helios will beam some relief February over the bicus and neon lights of the hotel-crowded shores.

—A. S. TOTTLE

Imperialism's Secret Weapon: An Occasional Massacre

By JOSEPH ALSOP

IN the very midst of the senseless, perilous Franco-Tunisian crisis, it may seem untimely to search for first causes. Yet it is not good enough, either to say that everybody goes mad sometimes, and leave it at that. France's terrible difficulties in North Africa, like Britain's lesser difficulty in Cyprus, are the ultimate result of the most interesting, least studied great change in

this age of great changes. It is a change that has only occurred among the Western democracies, and it has no past precedent.

In brief, the subject of weaker nations by stronger nations has been going on unceasingly since the beginning of what we call civilization. The dawnstone in the known story of civilization is Imperialism. Most ancient

towards the end of the ice age, has a strong defense wall. The implications of the wall are obvious.

As far as is known, moreover, no one seems to have questioned the rightness of one nation subjecting another nation; until the era of the first great religious teachers 500 years before our Lord. From Buddha and Confucius onwards, the men who spoke of good and evil were decidedly anti-imperialist.

But in this respect at least, the great religions never convinced the majority of those who thronged their temples and cathedrals. Until the end of the 19th century, or thereabout, any nation that was strong enough to subject another nation rarely hesitated to do so; and the cause of the hesitation was never moral.

ANGRY QUEEN

"It serves our interests," was a perfectly satisfactory justification of imperialism until the great change started. This was in the last century when the imperialists began to say of their subjects, "We are subjecting them for their good." The change had some odd consequences, such as virtuous Queen Victoria's angry demands for the bloodiest possible measures to suppress the Indian Mutiny, for the Indians' "own good."

For another century or thereabouts, the imperialist nations had the self confidence or thick-skinned smugness (take your own choice) to drown the first signs of dissidence among their subjects in floods of their subjects' blood, always "for their own good." But it was the death knell of Western imperialism when the democratic empires began to feel a queasy distaste for expedient massacres.

OTHER EXPLANATION

The other explanation of the end of democratic imperialism is that "You cannot defeat the new nationalism of the modern age." It is obviously silly nonsense, as anyone ought to be able to see after the bloody tragedy in Hungary. Any nation that has the power to do so, and is willing to commit a massacre when necessary, can hold another nation in subjection, in our age as in the past.

But one nation cannot hold another nation in subjection if it is

only willing to make war on its subjects "legally" and according to a set of rules. The dissidents may be a small minority, as the French maintain the Algerian rebels are a minority today. Great forces may be deployed against them, but no amount of force or toughness or determination will bring success as long as the mere pretense is maintained that "law abiding subjects" are safe.

NO QUALMS

As long as this is the theory, the rebels, or at least enough of the rebels, cannot be located and killed. The rebel organs, all survivors. The rebels have no qualms about killing anyone whatever. This a few thousand rebels may inspire more fear among the inert masses than a vast imperial army. In the end, even the most "loyal" members of the subject race, fearing the rebels more than their masters, end by serving the rebels in secret. And in these circumstances, no rebellion can ever be finally suppressed.

COSTLY COMPROMISE

Such are the hard and cruel underlying facts of the present situation of the Western nations that grew great as empires. Precisely because the facts are cruel, they are not faced. Westerners are too soft-skinned nowadays, ever to say forthrightly, "If I want to keep these peoples in subjection, we must commit an occasional massacre, and we don't want to commit an occasional massacre, we must see these peoples free."

National failure to face facts always lead to highly irrational and immensely costly compromises. And precisely because these compromises are costly and irrational, they produce such episodes as the Franco-Tunisian crisis.

'Now, Ain't That A Dilly Of A Launching!'



Inflation Note The Books That Men Read

HOW MANY books can any man read? A supposedly well-informed journalist has written that Hitler undoubtedly read most of the 7,000 military books in his library. So Lawrence of Arabia was said to have read at Oxford most of the 40,000 books in the library of his college. So Thomas Wolfe allegedly devoured 30,000 books or so. Wolfe obviously pictured himself as Eugene Gant in "Look Homeward, Angel," "pulling books out of a thousand shelves and reading like a madman . . . He read insanely, by

the hundreds, the thousands, the ten thousands." How tiresome, all this, and how untrue. People speak of these things very much at their ease. For the last twenty years I have been obliged to read an average six or seven hours a day. I have certainly read far more than these others have. In time for, in the short periods referred to, and how many books have I read in these twenty years? Something less than 6,000. I think, less than a book a day.

—Van Wyck Brooks in "From A Writer's Notebook"

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round FCC Member Denied Receiving Gifts

WASHINGTON
HERE are further interesting facts about FCC Commissioner Richard Mack and the payments he received from an attorney close to National Airlines.

Fact No. 1—On Dec. 30, Commissioner Mack wrote Congressman Moulder, then chairman of the investigating committee: "Neither I nor any member of my immediate family has received any honorarium, loan, or other payment, directly or indirectly, from the time of my appointment to the FCC July 1, 1955, to the present time by or on behalf of any person, firm, corporation, association, organization or group having any interest direct or indirect in any matters subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission."

Turnabout

Contrast — One month later, Commissioner Mack admitted to congressional investigators that he received checks from Thurman Whitehead and that he knew Whitehead had some connection with National Airlines and that he was pledged to vote with Whitehead for National on the Channel 10 case.

The letter which Mack had previously sent Chairman Moulder was not sworn to under oath. Dr. Bernard Schwartz, then

counsel for the committee, had asked that replies be sworn, but Congressman Oren Harris, the Arkansas Democrat who kept the committee on the committee's operation, refused. He also refused to sign subpoenas for FCC information.

Tardy Probe

Fact No. 2 — The FBI, now hastily called upon to investigate Commissioner Mack, was supposed to investigate him thoroughly prior to his appointment in 1955. On May 27, 1955, before he was actually appointed, this writer predicted his appointment and called attention to his dubious record as a member of the Florida Railroad and Public Utilities Commission.

Campaign Contribution

Last month, Mack admitted to congressional investigators that as a member of the Florida commission he had received a payment from the same "trucking company" matter. He called it a campaign contribution. Mack was supposed to be an impartial commissioner ruling dispassionately between the railroads and the truckers.

The FBI, which has better means of

investigating than a newsman, should have been able to ascertain this. G-men have been investigating prospective federal employees as to who their friends are, what they think, and at times even whether they read The Nation or Reporter magazine. The FBI hasn't seemed too much interested of late in whether a candidate was honest.

Public Pressure

Fact No. 3—Members of the Moulder committee originally proposed cross-examining Commissioner Mack in private. This was proposed by GOP Congressman Bennett of Michigan at a time when a majority of the committee was trying to hush up the probe. Later, when public pressure got too strong, they rushed into an open session without even Mack present to defend himself. Ex-counsel Schwartz protested that this was no fair way to defend evidence. He was overruled.

Fact No. 4 — Congressman Flynt of Georgia and Williams of Mississippi, Democrats, expressed surprise at the testimony showing the check from Whitehead to Mack. They acted as if they had not known about the Mack case. This was hogwash. Real fact is that they

had been well briefed. Furthermore, many of the facts had been published in this column on Jan. 17 and both committees read the papers. In fact, Flynt has been busy writing to Georgia voters, trying to alibi the facts published in this column.

Ikeman Sought

Fact No. 5—Before Mack was appointed to the FCC, it was noised around conservative circles in the South that the White House was looking for a conservative "Eisenhower" for appointment to the FCC. McCarthy Downer, former corporation commissioner of Virginia, was contacted, told he could have the appointment, but turned it down. The appointment, under the law, had to go to a Democrat. All the administration could do was getting a pro-Eisenhower Democrat who would go along with other Republicans on the FCC. There was no interest in the man's attitude toward the public or protection of the public.

This was the framework in which Mack was appointed. On the Florida Utilities Commission he had gone along with heavy hikes in phone rates, mileage rates for phone lines, and concessions for the railroads.