

Militant, Radical Student Paper Assailed at WSU

BY GLENN McWHIRTER
Free Press Staff Writer

"They can say whatever they please, but they ought to learn to say it well! This bunch the last couple of years . . ."

Frank Gill, faculty adviser to Wayne State University's student newspaper, pulled on his pipe and shook his head.

He can speak coherently about the paper's present and immediately past editorial staff only by exercising great control over a volcanic Irish temper, heated to boiling.

"THEY HAVE no integrity, no pride in what they produce, no idea what a newspaper is or how a newspaper functions, he said. "For a year I've felt like a home room teacher in a class for mentally retarded children!"

Wayne's Daily Collegian, like hundreds of college newspapers in the past few years, has undergone painful change.

The Collegian was established in 1918.

In October, 1967, its name was changed to 'The South End, by a hip, rebellious, white editor-in-chief, Art Johnston, who has since left Wayne for the West Coast.

"WE'RE THROUGH with objective journalism that first South End proclaimed. The Collegian dissolved in a sea of its own parochialism. We have made a radical departure from tradition. We have begun a search for our own identity."

That search is now a year old.

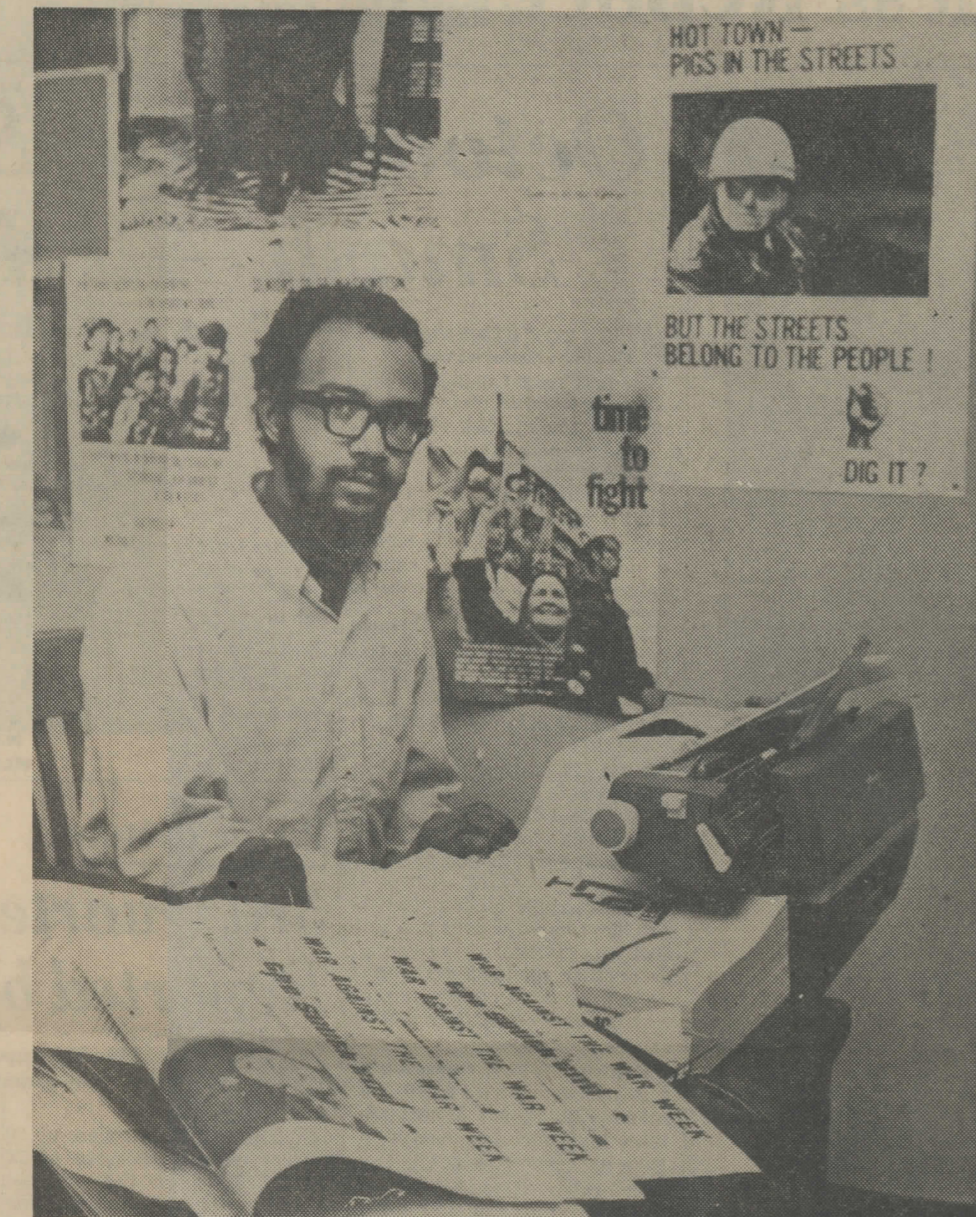
It has seen the campus newspaper change in format and content from a conservative disseminator of campus information to a radical source of what its present editor, John Watson, a Negro, calls "social analysis."

ACCORDING to Gill, the paper has become, "A vulgar, vicious, paranoid sheet. Propaganda and diatribe. A story wrapped in an editorial. No newspaper at all."

"Who is Hubert H. Humphrey? Is he the ventriloquist or the dummy? We know that Humpty does have a position on the problems facing our country. It's just that you have to really squeeze him hard to get any answers."

—South End, Oct. 17, 1968

Recent issues of the South End have featured stories urging student support of the grape boycott and higher wages and promotion for black cafeteria and snack-bar employees of the university and including criticism of "all aspects" of the American educational process, eulogies for Che Guevara and praise for Eldridge Cleaver.



Free Press Photo by MIKE McCLURE

SURROUNDED by the slogans of revolution and black power is the South End's editor-in-chief, John Watson. To

those who complain about the paper, Watson says: "Our purpose isn't to win friends."

SOUTH END stories are written with an arrogance, militancy, and reliance on revolutionary clichés all the way back to Karl Marx. And they are seasoned with four-letter words. That galls elements of the university faculty and student body.

"Academics have sat on their scholarly asses for years and talked about the way things SHOULD be, but left the running of the way things ARE, to those imbecilic sponges in Washington. Where, precisely where, have we been pushed because of it? Conditions must be changed now—not gradually . . . and they must be changed by any means necessary."

—South End, Oct. 10, 1968

At a recent open forum held to discuss the function of the paper a student complained, "You only print one point of view."

Mike Hamlin, managing editor of the South End, replied, "There are two points of view, of course. The right and the wrong. You wouldn't want us to print the wrong one, would you?"

That kind of flip reply and the attitude it reflects have become intolerable to some university administrators and other members of the community.

Walter Grant, a WSU physics instructor, was able to say calmly, "The antagonism the paper causes is more a matter of public relations than substance."

BUT GILL raged, "You can't talk to them. They don't speak the same language. The previous editor hated my guts and I had an abiding contempt for him. I was glad to see him go, but when this new one, this Watson, walked in, he had the same look of cool hatred in his eyes."

"November 5, 1968: the Sick Society will once again lift up its skirt and reveal to the world its horribly decayed organs, filling the air with the effluvium of traditional politics in America. It matters little if one responds rationally or irrationally."

—South End, Oct. 10, 1968

One largely unspoken but evidently major complaint

against the South End staff is that it is black.

The paper's major editors are Negro militants, and Black Panthers appear on the paper's name plate. Its major stories regularly deal with Negro problems, causes and personalities.

A WHITE student protested at the forum, "This is supposed to be a student newspaper, but you don't represent all the students, just the ones you're interested in!"

Watson was unimpressed. "The paper is devoted to the Black Revolution," he said. "If you aren't interested in it, you'd better be pretty soon, because that's where it is. If you whites want to be relevant, that's where you've got to go."

W. Sprague Holden, chairman of Wayne's Journalism Department, is as angry about the South End as Gill, but he's once removed from the battle line.

As at most large universities, Wayne's official newspaper is staffed and administered as an all-students activity. Journalism students may work on the paper, but so can others, and the department of journalism exercises no control over the paper's editorial policies or practices.

HOLDEN SAID, "The changes in the student newspaper at Wayne State University are the local phase of a temporary nationwide upheaval in university journalism. The militant new left has moved in and taken charge on many campuses, including ours."

"The traditional concept of objective news reporting and of the clear division between news and editorial opinion has been killed and buried. In its place is propaganda."

"We, the Association of Black Students at Wayne State University, do hereby propose that:

1. A Black college be established at Wayne State University and that this college be under the control of the Association of Black Students.

2. This college be named the W.E.B. DuBois Institute of Black Studies in honor of our most venerable leader . . ."

—South End, Oct. 7, 1968

Publication of the South End costs Wayne over \$100,000 a year. About \$65,000 of that comes back from advertising revenues.

The editor-in-chief, John Watson, is paid \$2,400; lesser editors are paid less, but the annual payroll exceeds \$23,000.

The editor-in-chief is chosen each year by a student committee and approved by a student-faculty council in which students have more votes than faculty.

The editor-in-chief chooses

A South End editor said: "There are two points of view, of course. The right and the wrong. You wouldn't want us to print the wrong one, would you?"

his own staff. He can pass the paying jobs out among his friends. The university has no control or veto power over his job choices. It does not censor the paper.

NEITHER GILL nor Holden advocates censorship or administration control of the editorial policies of the South End. But both said they had complained through the university hierarchy all the way to president William R. Keast that "something should be done" about the South End. There was no positive response, they said.

Gill added, "Job must be president of this university!"

A spokesman for Keast told the Free Press, "There have been expressions of concern and a number of complaints about the nature of the South End." He declined to identify the disgruntled.

"It is the University's position that the editors have been selected by established procedures and that the university supports freedom of the student press."

THE UNIVERSITY has no plans to withdraw financial support or change the method of selecting student editors, the spokesman said.

"The president of this university could do anything—he could dissolve the paper, or withdraw its funds, anything—but he won't," one irate faculty member said.

Another, closer to the top, suggested: "I know some of the South End stuff bothers him. Not so much because it is militant, but because the paper isn't as good as the Michigan Daily (the University of Michigan's student newspaper)."

KEAST HAS been lampooned, ridiculed and insulted in the pages of the "South End," without any apparent response.

One faculty member suggested that Keast may be caught on the twin horns of a dilemma: "He is haunted by the examples of campus riots at Berkeley and Columbia. That might happen here if he clamps down. But at the same time he's got important people complaining, and telling him he's got to do something."

Neither President Keast nor his executive vice-president, Edward Cushman, were available to answer Free Press questions about the South End and its future.

One change is about to be made, however. Gill, still a few years from retirement, is stepping away from the faculty advisorship of the South End after 21 years. In his

place the university has hired a former Free Press staffer, 39-year-old Stan Putnam.

GILL POINTED to a string of framed pictures of former Collegian editors which decorate one wall of his small office at 90 West Warren.

"We won 10 national awards with the Collegian," he said. "Those are some of my boys."

All of the faces were white, clean-shaved.

"We got along. But since Art Johnston, I'm ignored. Nobody wants any advice."

IF IT EVEN occurred to Gill that the presence of the pictures on the wall might rankle today's new breed of student, he gave no sign.

One of those clean-shaved, white, former editors, now employed by the Free Press, said, "The Collegian was well-written and well-edited, but we never did anything exciting. One reason we never got in trouble was because we never did anything to stimulate emotion or, I suspect, thought."

WATSON SAID he offered to cover the "civil rights demonstrations" for the Collegian several years ago. "That was the beginning, the sit-ins and that non-militant baby stuff," he said. "I was told never mind. 'We don't do that. You can cover sports.' Well, all that's changed."

The South End appears five days a week and has a current daily press run of about 18,000. It's free, at various newsstands around the Wayne campus.

THERE HAVE been several unsuccessful attempts to institute a rival campus newspaper with more traditional format and content.

One was the Phoenix, which appeared in November, 1967, and was dead by February, 1968. The Phoenix was sponsored by the student council of the School of Business Administration and employed a number of journalism School students.

"It got no support from the university and couldn't sustain itself with advertising," Holden said.

Some disgruntled South End staffers kicked around the idea of reviving a metropolitan edition of the South End that came out for several months last spring. It ran stories about and for students at most of the major campuses in the Detroit area, including the University of Detroit, Marygrove College and Oakland University.

The metropolitan edition con-

centrated on entertainment and generally wasn't politically controversial.

The Metro edition idea isn't dead, but no one has been able to solve the problems of finance and staff to get the paper going again.

The South End is financed through the Student Activities Budget of the university and it would be illegal for the Metro edition to use public funds from the South End to finance an activity that also serves other campuses.

Wayne Report is a weekly, slick paper, newsletter-size publication, which appeared for the first time Sept. 23. It's a successor to Inside Wayne, which was a faculty and staff house organ, published on a less regular basis, for several years previously.

DON BECK, Director of Publications for WSU, said, "At one time the thinking was to expand Wayne Report into a tabloid style general newspaper that could compete with the South End. That idea was shot down by President Keast. He didn't want any direct competition with the student publication. So, we don't cover student activities, and our news isn't aimed at students."

Wayne Report is circulated through the campus mail system to 2,800 WSU staffers. Another 3,800 copies are mailed to part-time personnel. Only about 200 copies are available, free for the taking, in various campus buildings.

Their presence, and the fact that students do read them, give solace to some faculty members who hope that Keast may eventually change his mind about competition.

Wayne Report costs the university \$600 a week to produce, in addition to the salaries of the four people who produce it. Those salaries, combined, amount to \$47,500 a year. The same people, however, also produce the alumnae magazine and a variety of booklets, pamphlets, and special materials.