

Administration Creates Newspaper 'Crisis'

by HENRY MISHKOFF

The University of Hartford administration, demonstrating unusual creativity, has transformed a mildly serious campus problem into an apparent "crisis" situation. To press time, the events leading to this "crisis" went more or less as follows:

In the last issue (Sept. 24, 1969) of the U.H. News Liberated Press, the editor, Jack Hardy, made it quite clear, through several articles and editorials, that he strongly disapproved of the way fraternities operate on this campus. Needless to say, adverse reactions to the issue are expected from the fraternities, and these reactions materialized at the Student Senate meeting the following day. At this meeting, several fraternity members and other incensed persons appeared to air their views on Jack and his newspaper. These complaints were referred to a Communications Commission meeting (the C.C. is the regulating body for all U.H. publications) scheduled for TODAY, October 1 (unless plans change, as they tend to do, be sure to attend this meeting).

Compared to the problems encountered by the paper last year, including the arrest of the editor and the attempted suspension of the paper by the Dean of Students, this current problem did not seem very serious, and it seemed as though the entire situation could be resolved without too much difficulty. It was only after the administration sensed that the students were about to solve their own problems that, in their usual half-assed manner, they decided that it was the right time for the invention of a crisis situation.

Early Thursday afternoon, a rumor reached the U. H. News office that

a) the newspapers that had been put in the mail the day before had been removed by Charlie Dwight, the UH Treasurer, without notifying Jack, and

b) there was to be a meeting about something concerning the newspaper (exactly what, nobody was sure) that evening, to which many student leaders had been invited, but of which, again, Jack had not been notified.

A quick visit to Mr. Dwight's office revealed that several items in the Liberated Press had been termed (on the advice of UH's lawyer Atwood Collins) "potentially libelous."

POTENTIALLY LIBELOUS??????!

ANY charge against anyone is "Potentially libelous." The only time a problem arises is when the charges are unfounded and the maligned party decides to take legal action. Did Mr. Dwight have any reason to believe that the allegations were unfounded? No, he said. Did, then, he know of any planned legal action stemming from the allegations? Again, no. Then WHY

did he necessarily refer to the paper as libelous?? The subject changed quickly. The purpose of the meeting that night was not, he said, to determine if any libel had occurred, but because the University was concerned that someone might sue the school for some future libel by the paper. Mr. Collins had informed them that this might be possible, and according to Mr. Dwight and later Dr. Komisar, the sole purpose of the meeting was going to be to discuss how the University could be protected from being sued for indiscretions by the newspaper.

Well, there was a meeting Thursday night officially an open meeting of the Faculty Senate. The purpose of the meeting, as best as this reporter could see, was to determine the purpose of the meeting. Various charges flew back and forth: Jack accused the administration of inconsistency, Dean Sweeney accused Jack of irresponsibility, NOBODY accused Jack of libel, Clement accused the administration of acting in bad faith in not allowing the Communications Commission to meet first, Angelo accused the University of racism "I don't take that charge lightly," said Dwight, "Well, I meant it heavily," said Angelo. The only decision reached was the long awaited decision to adjourn the meeting.

On Saturday afternoon, Sweeney notified Bill Clement, Communications Commission chairman, that he wanted to meet with the Com. Com. Sunday morning at 11:00 to discuss some mysteriously unspecified new developments. At the meeting, Sweeney and Professor Holder of the Business School, presented the "new development" -- an unsigned letter, noticeably not on official stationery, purportedly from Chancellor Wood-

ruff. The Chancellor was writing from his hideout in New York to tell us that he had heard from Mr. Collins that due to Jack's "irresponsibility," there was a chance that UH might lose its \$5 million libel insurance policy. In order to prevent this, the administration wanted Jack to look into the possibility of forming the paper into a separate corporation. "Fine," said Jack. How much time do we get? "Oh," said Mr. Holder, "I'd say about 48 hours."

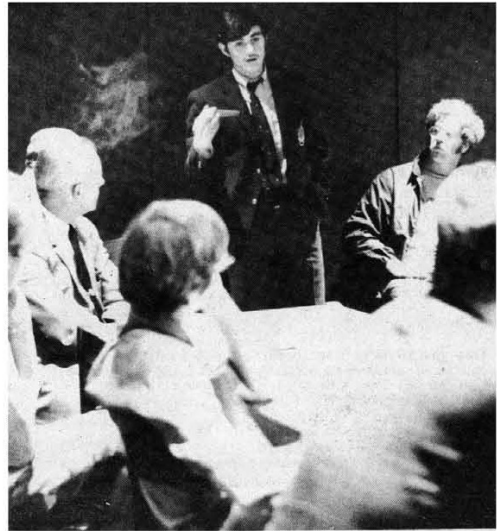
FORTY-EIGHT HOURS!!!

Catch this: the administration wants the paper to form a corporation in TWO DAYS!! This does not, of course, leave much time to do a number of things: talk to the Board of Regents, who indirectly license the paper; consult a lawyer to make sure the incorporating procedure is correct; consult the SA, the body that controls the paper; consult the students who pay for the paper. Incorporating is a major step and all possibilities should be carefully explored.

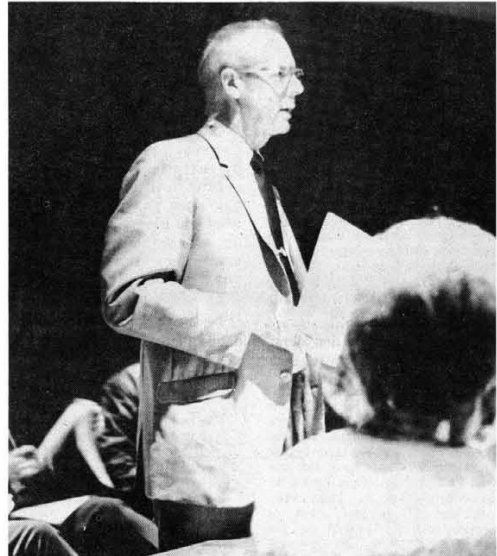
What happens if the paper doesn't incorporate in two days? "Well," says Mr. Holder, "action might have to be taken to make sure the next issue doesn't get published." "Is that a threat?" "Of course not," says Holder.

OF COURSE IT IS!! It is high time that the administration keep out of student affairs. Sweeney should have learned that last year when he tried to suspend the paper. The administration MUST be taught that the student body will not let itself get pushed around.

And don't be fooled when the administration tries to blame everything on Jack. If a crisis exists, it is only an artificial creation of the administration. DON'T BE FOOLED!



Paul Tieger presents opposing view.



Dwight looks off the page.



Holden & Grella exchange a few pleasantries.



Jon Rosenthal

"Sacred cows make the best meat"