

Action to the trial

of the Guilford College
ed for their reactions to the
trial results.

— Jan Earl —

Many, many factors led to that verdict -- I do not feel the jury could be expected to have determined them guilty. The CWP members involved refused to testify, and when they attended the trial they created distractions. More importantly, the defense was allowed approximately 100 peremptory challenges in the process of selecting a jury. They practically had the option of picking the perfect jury for their defendants.

Unfortunately, these reasons do not ease my frustration with the verdict. The defendants were guilty of attending the demonstration with the intent of confronting the CWP and they are guilty of bringing out their guns when they could have driven away. I do not condone the actions of the CWP because they seemed to desire a confrontation, but the Klansmen are by no means innocent men. God help us if we accepted all the Klan as innocent.

My anger at the trial and verdict led me initially to express protest against them. I objected to Mayor Melvin's statement that Greensboro citizens were calm. Many of us were not calm -- we were distressed and angered. Fortunately, we were expressing that anger in nonviolent ways, but by no means were we calm.

Before long my concerns focused on:

- 1) The importance of showing the city, state, country, and world -- all those watching -- that we could not accept the Klan as innocent and that we could not remain calmly at home while they were declared such; and
- 2) the need to determine the factors affecting the trial which led to the not guilty verdict and try to determine appropriate ways of protecting ourselves from them in all future trials, particularly the trials of the remaining 8 defendants and the CWP members involved in the

Photo by Jack Mohr

or Benfey

media events that would draw attention. But would they be substance or image?

There must also be concrete steps to change the economic and social patterns that discriminate unjustly - in housing and employment - that make difficult communication and provide inadequate representation at decision-making levels. What is there that students can do - particularly Guilford students?

I have been speculating: What if tuition and fees here are increased by \$10? That would create a fund of \$14000 to be used by the students for building and strengthening human understanding and helping those, of whatever color or persuasion, in need of support, financial, emotional, spiritual. I have in mind for instance those on full scholarship who have essentially no added funds for books, travel, gifts, "pocket money". I once, on behalf of a

Foundation, provided small additional support to two such students, to whom it made a considerable difference. If the per student amount were \$15, the fund would stand at \$20,000 Guilford faculty might each contribute the same amount. Could students explore this possibility with their parents over Thanksgiving and report on their return to the student government? It might be a step that other colleges and universities might copy.

Those who are caught in the economic crunch of our time are losing faith, becoming cynical and bitter. Factions then become polarized. That occurred in Germany in the twenties, but as chaos threatens, the populace almost inevitably will choose the forces promising law and order, the tough men, fascism of one kind or another. Against that we must bend our efforts, against the loss of faith, providing a base for new hope.



Guilford students at vigil outside Federal Building last Wednesday

Photo by Jenny Baumen

November 3rd incident.

For these reasons I have not been able to keep my mouth shut. Neither have many, many others. We've stood quietly in front of the Federal Courthouse, and we've had numerous planning sessions to determine appropriate strategies. Students from Guilford and Bennett Colleges joined the SGA of A & T and others from the community in silently marching to protest of the verdict and to appeal to the community to nonviolently combat the forces that produced it. Here at Guilford we had a meeting which successfully provided many of us with information and a variety of opinions regarding the trial.

The trial itself was not a racial issue, perhaps, but it has produced an increased awareness of the racial issues still existing. This increased awareness has led many citizens to organize, making this a prime time to work toward social change. We join forces as a community to fight inequality. We are not calm -- but neither are we violent.

Barbara Phillips

News Editor

The liberal educated media opinion about the Nazi/Klan murder trial verdict seems to be that we, as mere citizens, are not in a position to second guess the jury's decision. No one outside those twelve white, not-highly-educated, prodeath penalty jurors knows what complicated and heart wrenching process took place behind the closed doors, and no one who did not sit through every day of the longest trial in the history of the state is aware of how intricate and confusing the testimony was. We must be careful to maintain respect for the jury system, we are told, and not throw the baby out with the bath water just because we don't like the verdict.

Most of us only know what we read in the papers and see on the news. But forgive us for reserving our right to express "reasonable doubt" that justice was achieved.

And explain to us how the

concept of "self defense" can apply in a case where residents of another town load automatic weapons in the back of a van, drive into the middle of an already volatile situation, hand out their weapons, and shoot five people. I thought self defense involved a bit more innocence than was evident in this case.

It is incumbent upon all of us, despite the jury's decision to evaluate what we know of the facts (including the questionable process of jury selection) and arrive at a sensible, rational position.

That is only the first step. I suspect that most of us out here on the western edge of town, in our college community, with our intellectual orientation, do consider it our moral responsibility to evaluate what we believe. But the connection between inward conviction and outward action concerns us far less frequently. I had a shocking realization at the time of the presidential election: I had followed the candidates, closely examined their positions, thought long and hard about who I would support, and then on November 3, I almost forgot to vote. In fact, it seemed to be a lot of trouble. It was as if I had come to some kind of moral closure because I had reached a responsible decision -- which does my candidate not one whit of good.

I see that happening now. Most of us are now wrestling with what we think about the trial verdict. What we think, however, is essentially irrelevant if our responsible decisions are not represented in some responsible action. We must address the societal causes of a Klan/Nazi shooting (not to mention the causes of the existence of the three groups at all), the less than adequate trial by jury as it exists now, and how best to show support to those victimized -- the families of the victims, the black community, the poor white community, and Greensboro as a whole.

Carol Stoneburner

A number of persons have asked me if I though despair, fear and/or confusion were real alternatives to cynicism. I suspect they are temporary alternatives, but they are just that, temporary. It takes hard work and conscious effort to move beyond hurt, fear, confusion, disillusionment, and even despair, but if we do not move beyond these, we shall have chosen to believe the worst of our fellow human beings and in the process will begin to believe that of ourselves.

We must face this whole set of incidents as serious, complicated problems, and, as Richie Zweigehaft and Jonathan Malino said, ask fundamental questions about the systemic problems of racism and injustice which this trial represents.

Asking hard, tough, honest questions is an alternative to cynicism -- if they are posed in

such a way as to get at the truth. Asking tough questions about ourselves and our own fears, confusions, and anger -- as well as our prejudices and our enjoyment of systemic rewards, also are necessary.

Another possible alternative to cynicism is building networks and coalitions to address the issues of social injustice which made the initial confrontation possible. Students as well as faculty and staff have a stake in helping to make Greensboro a better community.

As you return home for Thanksgiving, please do not succumb to answering questions about this whole affair as a simple blaming of one group. Try to share more of the complexities of the issues as well as the complexities of your own response. Try to affirm that there are, in fact, alternatives to despair, fear, confusion and certainly to cynicism.