

viewpoints



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hope to the forsaken and be an advocate for good and noble causes. It shall use its might to bring hope to the hopeless and light where there is darkness. And in doing this, hope to contribute to the general well-being of humanity.

State Of Black America



To Be Equal

Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

The National Urban League recently released its annual report, The State of Black America. As in past years, it presented a grim picture of black disadvantage. The past decade saw a widening of the yawning gap between blacks and whites. Black family income fell from over 60 percent of white family income at the beginning of the decade to barely 57 percent at the end of the seventies. Over a half million more black people were poor in 1979 than in 1970.

worsen in the decade ahead.

If the seventies were a decade of benign neglect, the eighties threaten to render black people, their needs and their aspirations, invisible.

Closing the black-white gap has been a matter of national indifference for over a decade, and current national obsessions indicate the issue may virtually disappear from national debate.

The President's State of the Union address, in sharp contrast to the State of Black America report, ignored the continuing disadvantage of America's largest minority.

Candidates in both parties refuse to address issues of black-white disparity, poverty, and a new deal for the nation's disadvantaged.

Instead, a deteriorating international situation has resulted in calls for a renewed cold war and increased military spending.

Despite the obvious need for a strong defense, substantive improvements in our military posture are not always identical with splashy new weapons systems and their inevitable cost overruns and malfunctions.

So we enter the eighties with the nation's attention focused on military weapons, energy and inflation to the neglect of racial equality, full employment, and urban revitalization. The inevitable result will be further deterioration of the living conditions of poor people and black people.

But the state of America is interwoven with the state of black America; a strong, economically healthy and just America is an essential to national security as any missile arsenal -- even more so.

It is vital to have a balanced national policy that includes important domestic initiatives such as full employment, welfare reform, and health, education and urban initiatives designed to secure parity between the races.

Such measures would also benefit the nation as a whole, improve the lives of all its citizens, and heal the wounds that weaken our nation domestically and internationally.

Passing Judgment

It is never a delightful moment when a person who has been held in high regard by an entire community falls upon hard times.

That fact is all the more apparent in the case of Carl Russell, possibly the one person who has stood out head and shoulders as a black political leader in Winston-Salem.

He served for 16 years, longer than any other black, as alderman from the Northeast Ward. Russell dared to think that his experiences qualified him to be mayor.

In 1977, he came ever so close to fulfilling that wish. He won the first primary, but lost a runoff to Mayor Wayne A. Corpening. Russell was then the rallying force behind a dramatic campaign during which more than 10,000 voters were instructed to go through the laborious procedure required to cast a write-in ballot.

Russell's appeal was still apparent when he was nominated by the Black Political Awareness League as a candidate for the vacant State House seat left open last year.

However, that record of leadership has been interrupted by the indictment, conviction and sentencing of Russell on the charge of income tax evasion. Court testimony has indicated that the accused had not paid the taxes for 17 years.

The way in which the case was handled has ruled out a full explanation for the many questions raised by this incident.

There are a number of ethical questions presented by

the spectre of Russell being imprisoned.

Should elected officials be held to a higher standard of morality?

Do health and other personal factors have a valid role to play in the determination of sentences for violations of the law?

Are blacks unfairly singled out for prosecutions of crimes winked at among other segments of the community?

Does any circumstance warrant breaking laws which so many people painstakingly adhere to?

Can a prominent figure be punished enough by simply the public knowledge that he or she has been found guilty of a crime?

The answers to the questions must be found in the hearts and minds of those who assess the meaning of the Russell case.

Few can fail to acknowledge that situations present many difficult dilemmas. It is not a question which can produce a quick jingoistic answer.

Some forum needs to address the ambiguities left by the current court case. Is there more distinct pattern of abuse for which one person is being singled out? Or was there a winking at certain acts and by whom?

Answers to those questions will enable interested persons to help resolve some of the ethical dilemmas presented by this case.

Whatever the outcome, no one should be allowed to ignore or obscure the accomplishments of Carl Russell.

Time For A Change

One of the most important steps toward increasing citizen input in local government is about to be taken by the Forsyth County Board of County Commissioners.

The commissioners are being open-minded enough to consider a change in their meeting time from the first and third Mondays of each month to the second and fourth Mondays.

This would change a situation in which the commissioners, the city Board of Aldermen and the city/county Board of Education all meet on the same day and at the same time -- first and third Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

All three bodies have been aware of the situation for a long time, but have passed the buck among themselves when approached about the idea of staggering their meeting times.

The commissioners have decided to act, finally, thanks to the tireless efforts of persons such as Mrs. Velma Hopkins.

Mrs. Hopkins, president of the Citizens Neighborhood Council Inc., is generally at some meeting, somewhere each Monday night.

She has seen first hand the problems that occur when

one is interested in something being done at both the city and county board, or even the school board.

Changing the meeting times will enable more people to join Mrs. Hopkins and others such as Mrs. Mary Sloan Jones, Walter Marshall and H.B. Goodson in attending those meetings.

There is the mistaken impression that what county government does is not as important as the functions of city government.

Nothing could be further from the truth. County government includes animal control, environmental protection, health services, Reynolds Health Center, libraries, home economics and agricultural extension, social services and detentions for both adults and juveniles.

The county commissioners also have to approve the budget request of the school board. In short, most of the services which directly deal with people handled through county government.

You will find it in your best interest to, first, make the commissioners aware of the need for a change in the meeting dates; and second show up regularly at the meetings. You do have a say.

Feelings on Russell's Sentence

Carl Russell, the man who has represented the goals and aspirations of many, has now been sentenced to jail on income tax evasion charges. How does the person on the street feel about it. Chronicle Camera went to the corner of Fourth Street and Liberty Street to ask? Here's what people said.

Ronald Carlton--"I believe it was right because it took him so long. There's really not anything you can say. I do believe that if it had been somebody white, they would not have done any active time."

Dwight Smith--"It just shows how vindictive they are and that they'll get you sooner or later if you go against the system. Time? No more than Smith Bagley. His

sentence is not because he's guilty but it was given to punish him and to break his credibility in the community. Look who sentenced him. He was neither sentenced nor judged by his peers and that is what is wrong with the whole criminal justice system in N.C."

Kathleen Foster--"I do think it wasn't fair. They did it to him because he ran for mayor...Somebody had probably told him years ago, that it was alright. Then, they went back and looked it up. But they don't go back and look up all the good things Carl Russell did."

Angelo Johnson--"Everybody else pays taxes and with the position he held, he should have known better in the first place."



Carlton



Johnson



Foster

Chronicle Letters

Inmates Express Their Views

Found A Mission

Dear Editor:

I have been in the Virginia prison system for some time. I was paroled in October 1967, but while out, I was convicted of armed robbery in Salisbury and received a sentence of 10 to 15 years.

I've watched guys come in and out of prison. I would ask them what happened? They would say "Can't make it work."

At times you try to catch up with the world outside but there's nothing out there that can help you catch up. You have to do what you can in here to stay human.

With a little motivation, I'm able to combat the anxiety of being caged like an animal; not in a physical sense but in my head, I know I can only go so far, then I have to stop. In some instances, the mental barriers are far more effective than the physical.

Before being paroled back to Virginia for parole violation, I did attend Sandhills Community College as a mental health associate and did social work training with Moore County Middle District School while in training. I also counseled youth at the Samuel Leonard Training School at McCain.

This, I believe, was the turning point in my life which gave me something to achieve out of life as a human. Prison is a place you go when you do wrong. You have to pay your taxes, but instead of paying with money, you pay with your

life. I look forward to the day when I'll be able to walk until my legs get tired and not until the space runs out.

When I came to Baskerville, Va. Correctional Center, I met some nice people. I'd like to do something for them, I said. When I approached them with my idea, the attitude was, "Hey, are you kidding?" But, I knew where I was.

I once heard, "It's a matter of caring for people and wanting to help someone who hurts and yells out for people..." I've been there so I know how it feels to cry out, to reach out and hurt for help.

So here at the Baskerville Correctional Center, I assist in Adult Basic Education, I have a cooking and baking class and do individual counseling with inmates who have problems. I am now writing a manual on suicide prevention for the Virginia Department of Corrections which has high rate of suicide.

Henceforth, I got to see part of myself and parts of other people I never saw before. If I am lucky in year or two, hopefully I'll be paroled and I want to continue to do counseling with young adults on drugs alcohol and crime.

Hubert R. Brawley
Baskerville Correctional Center
Baskerville, Va.

He's Lonely

Dear Editor:

I am a very nice person, but I have no friends; nobody with whom to share my feelings. I am writing this in hope a friend will come forth; one with whom I can relate, and who will help fill my empty life, and bring a bit of joy to an otherwise unhappy ex-

istence. Is there anyone out there who will hear my plea? If so, will you offer to help?

Miserable,

Leonard Leon Wilson Jr.
No. 143-701
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CAPITOL COMMENTS

From Allied Press International

CONGRESSMEN STOP WAFFLING

As the new session of Congress gets underway look for most of those members running for re-election to take more positive stances of issues that they have waffled on in the past few years - the draft, national defense items, energy, transportation and the general economy.

DEFICIT GREATER THAN EXPECTED

The deficit will be greater than projected in the President's budget message because of increased defense spending and maintaining or expanding social programs. Increased demands on the money market will result in higher interest or at best they will stay within the present range.

Your Voice

The Chronicle welcomes expressions, comments, criticisms and letters to the editor. We encourage you to speak out on any issue raised on the editorial page or any issue that you feel is worthy of comment. The Chronicle is your newspaper...Use it.

The Chronicle cannot return letters, manuscripts or the like.

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