

Editorials and Comments

North Carolina Justice

The Washington Post is concerned about what it calls "North Carolina Justice."

In a March 5, 1974 editorial so-named Colman McCarthy discusses a case that even many North Carolinians are not aware of. The following are excerpts from this editorial.

In North Carolina, a recent case involving three Black men has many responsible people in the state and elsewhere convinced or suspicious that another repressive prosecution has occurred. Two differences in this case are that the citizens--called the Charlotte Three--are already serving prison terms, and second, little national attention has been given the case.

The conviction of T.J. Reddy, Dr. James Grant and Charles Parker came in 1972 on a charge of burning the Lazy B stable in Charlotte and killing 15 horses. Reddy, a poet whose first volume of verse will be published by Random House this summer, had been in a small group that went to the Lazy B stable in 1967. They were denied riding privileges, apparently because of race. Eleven months later, the stable burned. Three years later, Reddy, along with Grant, a former VISTA and SCLC worker, and Parker, a youth counselor, were indicted.

In a January 1974 article, the Charlotte Observer said the "case raises many questions," and added that at the trial "no physical evidence was presented to link (the defendants) to the stable burning four years earlier. Officers who investigated the first had misplaced the firebombs the three were accused of using to burn the Lazy B barns and 15 horses." After noting the lack of evidence, that "sent Grant to prison for 25 years, Reddy for 20 years and Parker for 10. The Observer describes the "star" witnesses used by the state as two men "who were granted immunity from prosecution on a number of charges in exchange for their testimony in at least four trials of Black activists in North Carolina."

The Observer went on to say that the two witnesses, Walter David Washington and Theodore Alfred Hood, "had been sought on a number of charges, including illegal possession of dynamite and firearms, armed robbery and illegal flight to avoid prosecution. Washington had been discharged from the Marines for mental instability. Arrested in North Carolina after a flight to Canada, they agreed to give testimony in four cases in exchange for immunity from prosecution and protection by state and federal law enforcement officers."

Many in North Carolina were astonished at the severity of the sentences: 25, 20 and 10 years. The

Observer checked its files of other unlawful burnings and found some disturbing facts. In 1965, a Mt. Airy N.C. businessman burned a store, killing an employee and received only five years to eight years.

A Charlotte man got four to five years for burning the home occupied by his ex-wife. A Hendersonville man got five to 10 years for burning three schools. In 10 years, only one burning case exceeded the Charlotte Three's terms, and that was for seven instances of arson by the same person. Not only were the sentences astonishingly severe compared to other North Carolina Burning convictions, but when compared to the 20 years Lt. William Calley (who now walks free) got for murdering 22 Vietnamese civilians, the severity is even more striking. Fifteen horses in Charlotte are apparently worth more than 22 human beings in Mylai.

The Judge in the case was Frank Snapp. When asked in a phone interview last week about the case--about the severity of sentences, the reliability of the state's witnesses and the \$50,000 bond imposed on Reddy even though he had no previous convictions--the judge said "the men had a fair trial. I thought they were dangerous to the community and I gave them the maximum sentence." As for the steadyrun of newspaper stories and editorials, Snapp charged that Snapp charged that "the people who write them don't know the facts of the case."

Because Grant (a Ph. D in chemistry) is a Hartford, Conn., native, the editorial page editor of the Hartford Times, Don O. Noel Jr., went to Charlotte. "It is remotely possible," he wrote, "that he is guilty of that charge (burning the stable) but I did not find among several knowledgeable Charlotte newsmen I talked with, anyone who was persuaded of that, based on the evidence presented in court." Some clearly believe him the victim of a frame-up. Most, with the careful newsmen's objectivity concluded simply that his guilt was far from proven."

In America, and presumably North Carolina, court trials are meant to use the law as a means of settling doubts. But here, the opposite has happened--doubts have been raised. Those raising them are not the prison reformers who chant "Free everybody" but parts of the national and established community that have deep suspicions that these men are victims of government oppression. Clearly, the governor of North Carolina has an obligation to act, either to remove all doubts about the case so that the guilt is factually based, or to drop the sentences so that justice in North Carolina is no longer mocked.



REPRESENTATIVE FORD'S RELENTLESS EFFORTS TO UNDERCUT THE OPEN HOUSING LAW, THE RIGHT-TO-VOTE LAW, AND VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS STATUTE OF THE PAST DECADE AFFORD NO COMFORT TO THE NATION'S NEGRO CITIZENS AND ARE CLEARLY OUT OF STEP WITH MAJORITY SENTIMENT IN THIS COUNTRY WITH REGARD TO RACIAL EQUALITY. HIS LEGISLATIVE RECORD IS REMARKABLY LACKING IN COM-PASSION.

N.Y. TIMES

FORD

NO CHEERS FROM BLACKS!

For some months it has been evident to observers of America's racial scene that the tide was changing from hatred of white and the white world on the part of the small, but vociferous minority to some accommodation with those who represent the opposition.

Of course, American blacks who believed in and lived by the "Get Whitey" philosophy have always been in the minority. They have been loud and insulting and even vicious.

It has seemed at times that they committed excesses in their extremism just to sustain their own estimate of themselves. The black youngsters engaged in the game of sticking out their tongues at the authority represented by their teachers and school administrators. Then they broadened their attack to take in policemen, bus drivers, subway employees and members of the general white public.



They did this, however, with the sure knowledge that many black adults, some white adults and some white officials approved of their actions--or at least would not do anything that would actively oppose their conduct. White scholars, commissions and private groups could not understand why the great bulk of Negro opinion failed to condemn the small extremist segment.

It has been pointed out frequently that this great bulk of black opinion, while not agreeing with the methods of the black extremists, knew from personal experience that the extremist goals were the same as those of American Negro (and white) moderates. The average Negro in America has been kicked around so steadily that while he would not do violence, he keeps silent when others act.

Now the Black Muslims have been one of the small disciplined groups that has preached hatred of whites. It is news of first importance, therefore, that Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Muslims, has told his followers in a great convocation not to hate white people. In past years Mr. Muhammad has preached against "white devils" and has urged separatism from white society upon blacks.

This about-face matches up with the about-face of the Black Panthers. It follows the trend of black college students. The black Panthers completely reversed themselves, going from provocative violence to the settlement of differences at the ballot box. With the Black Muslims, the abrasive anti-white attitudes have been halted.

The point not to be missed is that these small but vocal segments of the black community have given up on violence and black separatism. Violence will persist in individual cases although it will not be a policy of a group. Separatism has gone down the drain as small black segments have recognized, finally, that relations between the races must be solved here, rather than overseas.

Most American Negroes have dismissed as foolish the idea of separatism, as a permanent way of life. They know they have a hard time here and that prejudice is all about. It wakes them each morning in their ghetto homes and follows them throughout their day and evening.

They are used to trouble. If it isn't a job, it is the schools where their children are not taught. If it isn't government with its endless bureaucracy it is the landlord or the police or the debts which pile up. Running all through this is a pervasive racial feeling, sometimes openly expressed and sometimes more subtly implied.

Each day there is something new. Yesterday it was lynching by mobs and by "justice in the courts". Today it is black mayors in 90-odd cities, including three big ones, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Detroit. Tomorrow may mark another forward surge. Will American blacks run away from this matching of wits (even with racism thrown in). This measurement of men?

Washington Report

CONGRESSMAN JIM MARTIN



Judging from the mail I get, nobody wants to be told that there is a fuel shortage. Nobody wants to believe it. There has been such a confusion of conflicting claims in the news that the public refuses to accept any claims unless they are in the form of accusations.

It is a fact that governmental restraints have thwarted production of oil on the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline, and badly needed refineries. Yet, prominent members of the United States Senate, and self appointed consumer advocates, accuse the oil companies of a conspiracy to hold back on production; and they are believed.

It is a fact that the United States imports over twenty times as much oil as we export. Yet, a prominent Congressman makes headlines by "exposing" the exports. This grandstand play is accepted because it involves some seven million barrels a month, so large a figure that it boggles the mind. However, that's less than two percent of the 500 million barrels of oil we consume each month.

It is also a fact that imports into the U.S. are 12 percent less than a year ago, according to the U.S. Customs Bureau. The Shah of Iran stirred up a royal flap by claiming otherwise. He may have concluded that since U.S. oil imports from Iran are up (which they are), that total U.S. imports are up (which they are not). Before jumping to the conclusion that His Imperial Majesty is just trying to help, keep this in mind: The Shah is not a disinterested spectator. His

government, after all, was one of the first to raise oil prices to exorbitant high levels. He stands to gain if he can anger our consuming public and thereby pressure U.S. oil companies to buy more from Iran and bid the price even higher. We stand to lose. He proved he can criticize us with impunity because any counter-criticism of him risks cutting off his oil supply to us.

Much has been made of the fact that our stockpile of refined gasoline in late February was higher than it was a year ago. Before astonishment turns to anger, it is worth remembering that last year was the first time we experienced gasoline shortages - so last year's stockpiles turned out to be inadequate. Furthermore the increase of two million barrels of stockpiled gasoline is enough only for about a fourth of one day's needs: enough for 3 or 4 hours, or enough to get us through either one day's morning or evening rush hours, but not both.

The biggest hazard in all this is that widespread anger has set in, stimulating the Congress to want to "do something," whether it helps or makes matters worse. The Congress has passed a rather chaotic Energy Emergency Act, loaded down with a long list of amendments. The heralded crude oil price roll-back will temporarily reduce the price at the pump a few cents, but it will also reduce production: meaning less gasoline in the pumps. In order to make up the shortage of domestic production U.S. oil companies would have to buy more from foreign oil sources, which would have the un-

desirable effect of pushing the international price even higher. The majority of my colleagues chose to ignore these consequences and voted to roll-back prices.

The best way to deal with oil company profits would be to impose a steep tax on "excess profits" which might be defined as more than 12 percent return on investment. The companies would have an incentive to escape this severe tax by plowing their earnings back into exploration, drilling, and construction or refineries.

This will do far more to reduce the gap between demand and supply, whereas the crude oil price roll back will just make the shortage worse.

Some of my mail reveals that there are rumors being circulated in my district that I have been "captured" by the oil companies. This kind of unfounded political attack compels me to point out that the total of all campaign contributions from people connected with oil companies that I know of comes to less than one percent of my 1972 campaign fund. I own no oil stock. My only association with the oil industry was when as a student, I worked three summers at a petroleum research lab. The little communication I have had with oil companies has been either for the purpose of helping constituents get fuel for their customers or to ask for the oil companies explanation of the complaints I have received. These were then compared with the replies from other sources in government and outside. From this I have formed my own independent opinions.

To Be Equal

Full Employment Gains Support

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. The problem of chronic unemployment, never really given the priority attention it deserves, is getting more attention these days, especially since some 200,000 people have been laid off due to the energy crisis.

Until now, policy-makers have been playing the dangerous game of figuring out hypothetical trade-offs between unemployment and inflation and debating what the "optimum" level of joblessness is.

Some say four percent unemployment is what we should be aiming at, others five percent, and still others would be willing to settle for six percent -- as long as their own jobs are safe, of course.

So national policy has been based on a deliberate ac-

ceptance of large-scale unemployment. Federal officials have had no trouble with setting policies that doom five million or more people to go jobless.

At his last news conference, President Nixon again promised that there will not be a recession this year. What he doesn't seem to know is that the country is already in a recession and for minorities, it's in a depression.

Recessions are defined in technical terms including national output, inventories and a host of categories that may not look too bad at the moment. But for the guy who has just been laid off, the only real yardstick in defining a recession is the availability of jobs and by that standard, we're in a crushing recession.

By its own faulty figures,

the government admits that nearly five million people are out of work: At least as many are unemployed but not counted as such. And another ten million work full-time, but for wages that keep them below the government's own "minimum living standard" level.

All that adds up to a whole lot of trouble -- for families caught in an economic bind, for the country as a whole, and for the economy which is forced to operate at low levels of productivity because it is wasting its human resources.

It's about time the nation formally recognized every individual's right to a decent job at a decent wage. We have come to the point where we should see a job as being something people have a right to, not just something they

should be lucky to have. Once we start from the definition of a job as a right, then it becomes clear that any unemployment above the frictional unemployment caused by moving from one job to the next, is intolerable.

This implies a national full employment policy that should be at the core of federal priorities. Such a policy would work at two levels -- private and public. We've given subsidies to farmers not to grow crops and subsidies to corporations to invest in machines that cut labor costs. Why not, then, use subsidies and other incentives to get private employers to add more workers?

Such a program could be combined with an economic development program that will attract new private in-



dustry and new ventures into areas with high unemployment, especially rural areas and inner-city sections.

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