

Editorials & Comments

Unanswered Questions About "10"

By HOYLE H. MARTIN SR.
Post Executive Editor

Gov. Jim Hunt's state-wide television address that was supposed to have laid to rest the Wilmington Ten case did just the opposite. Hunt in fact created a new interest in some old questions as well as posing some new ones. The evidence of this is seen in the fact that more, not less, has been written and said about the case and an increasing number of disturbing questions are arising, most of which were ignored in Hunt's address.

"Why," in the words of the "10" leader Ben Chavis' sister, did he (Hunt) ignore the recantation of the states three witnesses? Why, in the words of Charlotte Observer report-

er Milton Jordan, did the governor ignore "evidence of marauding whites who rode through Wilmington's black community, firing (guns) indiscriminately": Why did Gov. Hunt shorten the sentences of the "10" and feel the need to address the entire state on that decision, if, as he said, he'd reviewed all the facts in the case and believed a fair and impartial trial had been held:

Finally, we ask, was Hunt's decision motivated by the undercurrent racism that is yet a part of our state as well as his own personal political ambitions: Until these and many other questions like them are answered North Carolina's presumed commitment to justice and equality will be tarnished.

Death For The Area Fund?

As a preface to announcing his resignation as executive director of the Charlotte Area Fund (CAF), Sam Kornegay reportedly said, "I'll make it... wherever I am, I'll spend some time trying to help slow down that merry-go-round (of poverty) so somebody can get off. Somebody... slowed it enough for me to get off. I've got to return the favor."

Kornegay's comment seems equally appropriate for the embattled 13-year-old poverty agency he is leaving. CAF, Kornegay said in a recent POST interview, aims to "do things to enable low income people to have an opportunity to improve their lives." Ironically, CAF as an agency is having trouble doing things to live itself.

We believe Charlotte's only anti-poverty agency is facing possible death for a number of reasons. First, as the agency's chief administrator, Kornegay views himself as a behind-the-scenes technician who asks probing questions and pushes the right to buttons to get things done. This is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. Kornegay has never played the public relations role his position calls for. He has rarely communicated with the political powers, except in time of extreme crisis, he's rarely seen at public meetings where issues affecting the poor are being discussed, and he rarely responds to news media

Urban Economic Solution?

Last week the Charlotte Athletic Club named Cedric Maxwell the "Carolinian Athlete of the Year." Maxwell, now a rookie with the Boston Celtics of the NBA, was the superstar who led the UNCC 49ers to the NIT and NCAA basketball finals in successive years.

In spite of many honors and a promising basketball career with a reported five figure salary, Maxwell appears to have kept things in perspective. This was evident when he said, "I'd like to play pro ball for a couple of years... then come back to Charlotte and start my own

inquiries. Secondly, CAF and agencies like it are dying a slow death because their pointed confrontation with the "power structure" in past years has led to their systematic extinction through the denial of operating funds, funds provided by many of the same sources that created conditions leading to mass pockets of poverty.

Thirdly, and most significantly, CAF and its counterparts throughout the nation is dying because they have never developed within the poor a sense of loyalty and a philosophical commitment to the purpose and intent of such agencies. It is for this reason that the approximately 40,000 poor people in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are not rallying to support CAF in its hours of crisis. The poor are instead simply turning to those agencies, public and private, who now control the dollars to fight poverty, irrespective of whether such agencies are providing worthwhile services or not.

Ironically, too, CAF is dying because its very existence, like that of all welfare maintenance agencies, is a constant reminder that the system doesn't work for everyone and those who are more fortunate don't want to be reminded of the fact of poverty, a level where many of their own lives had begun. Do we need the Area Fund? We think yes!

When considering President Carter's difficulty in devising an urban policy to fit many varying needs and Vernon Jordan's charge that Carter's tax cut plan will not aid blacks in the cities, it seems that Maxwell's approach might be a good start for many blacks to find their own solutions to urban economic problems. Small business ventures are not easy undertakings, but federal loan funds are available as well as private financial support for those with the courage to try something new.



Guest Editorial

Editorial Opinion

EDITOR'S NOTE - Mr. Jervay is the distinguished publisher of the Wilmington Journal.

By Tom Jervay, Editor

By his disposition of the Case of the Wilmington Ten last Monday night, it is our opinion that Governor Jim Hunt has done more to divide the state racially than any event in recent years.

According to comments in local and state-wide dailies and interviews on TV and on the radio, the majority of blacks and the larger and more influential dailies in North Carolina, plus liberal whites, are on one side, thinking that the Governor did not go far enough, while on the other side of the fence, most whites and some blacks think the Governor struck a happy medium.

The JOURNAL is inclined to go along with those who believe Governor Hunt missed a golden opportunity to exhibit statesmanship of the first order by commuting the sentences of the nine men still in prison to time served. He said in so many words that his Monday night address ended the matter once and for all, as far as he was concerned. He wants the citizens to forget the matter and move forward in unity to greater things for the Old North State. We do not view this possible with so many people thinking that these young men have been punished sufficiently.

We cannot see the logic of the Governor's reasoning that the Ten must be guilty, because Alan R. Hall (the chief prosecution witness and the only person who claimed to have seen the nine blacks bomb the store) recanted his testimony to Attorney James Ferguson, the chief lawyer for the Ten, recanted it again at the hearing in Burgaw for a new trial and then changed his testimony in a tape-recorded conversation with chief prosecutor Jay Stroud, saying that

he told the truth during the original trial. Fact is, Hall's testimony in the original trial should be totally discredited because of his continually changing his mind.

The Wilmington Morning Star, under an editorial in Wednesday newspaper headed "Wilmington 10 Case Should Remain Settled" seems to forget that people have rights to fight for what they believe in just as we newspaper folk always declare that we should have freedom of the press. They seem to condemn the Rev. Ben Chavis as an extremist and agitator, while they deserve the right to sit as judge and jury on almost everything which happens in Wilmington. In addition, they infer that so-called extremists on both sides of the case should cease in giving their opinions while their newspaper has some God-given right to keep on putting in their two cents worth.

The case cannot be wished away by either Governor Hunt or the Morning Star or anyone else, especially when the Star daily keeps the story on its front page. Certainly that's news, and it also sells papers.

Well, we are not by ourselves among the members of the Fourth Estate who disagree with the Governor. The Charlotte Observer, the Raleigh News and Observer, the Fayetteville Times, the Winston-Salem Journal, in our way of thinking, are not extremists. We do not consider ourselves an extremist. We consider ourselves a liberal, while these other newspapers are mostly liberal and fair-minded and at times may be viewed as moderates and even conservatives on some subjects.

Earlier this week, the Star listed the places which were burned during the local racial disturbances. We are not saying that they were laying these cases on the door steps of the Ten, but to be fair they should

have also mentioned the bands of whites who roamed the city, carrying guns into the police station to offer help, and the tear gas which was sprayed into homes of blacks out Dawson Street way.

We are carrying editorial opinion and cartoons from other N.C. white dailies elsewhere in this issue so that our readers may see what the other part of the state is thinking about the Case of the Wilmington Ten.

The nine blacks who remain in jail have already said they will appeal in the Federal Courts and will continue their fight. Regardless of what some may say about this angle, these people are within their rights. We, as American citizens though black, have the same rights have others under the Constitution.

We were hoping the Civil War could be put in the history books and the museums, but the nasty calls received by a local TV station just because one of the mothers of the Ten was interviewed Monday night should disappoint all of us who have worked for better race relations in Wilmington.

This is our home. We selected to return here from college. We plan to stay here and call the shots as we see them. As Sojourner Truth told Frederick Douglass, who became downcast at one point of his life, "Fred, God ain't dead." This is our firm belief, and so long as our home town which has so many potentials continues to have so much hatred and malice for our people, just so long will it remain among the smaller and less progressive cities of North Carolina. The same holds true for the State. We have lost our image of being the most progressive in the South on racial matters and let South Carolina, Georgia, and even Mississippi top us in many respects. Booker T. Washington wisely said "You cannot keep a man down in a ditch unless you remain down there with him."

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



Humphrey Is Irreplaceable

The national outpouring of grief at Hubert Humphrey's death was entirely appropriate; he was a giant in an era of lesser men with smaller vision. His last honors were typical of those of men who had served as President, and that too was appropriate, for he should have been President.

President Carter sent him a photograph of the two of them behind the desk in the Oval Office and inscribed it: "Hubert Humphrey, this desk should have been yours."

He lost the Presidency by an eyelash in 1968 - only half a million votes out of a total of 73 million. If he had won then the nation would have spared the disastrous economic dislocations of the following years. Most likely we would have avoided the intolerable unemployment rates of today.

And the reason is that Hubert Humphrey was a man who translated his compassion to the public arena. He was concerned throughout his career with the underdogs, with the sufferings of people left out of our affluent society. That's why it so fitting that the new headquarters for HEW is named after him.

At the dedication ceremonies of that building, Senator Humphrey, weak from his illness, summed up the compassionate philosophy that animated his life.

"The moral test of government," he said, "is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged, and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped."

Hubert Humphrey met that moral test by championing the interests of those who desperately needed a champion in the seats of power. His last great cause was the battle for full employment. He co-sponsored the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, designed to set the nation on the road to a full employment economy and convinced the Administration to accept a compromise version of the Bill. Then, even from his sickbed, weak from chemotherapy treatment, he worked long and arduously for its passage.

There could be no better tribute to this great man than for his colleagues in the Congress to make passage of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill their priority item of business in the current session.

And if anyone rates the title "civil rights leader," it was Hubert Humphrey. From the start of his career he worked to advance the interests of blacks and other minorities. As the young mayor of Minneapolis, a city that then had few blacks, he pushed through the first municipal Fair Employment Practices Commission in the nation.

He didn't do it for personal gain - there weren't enough black voters in Minneapolis then to make it a political move. If anything, he probably lost votes from prejudiced whites.

Nor did he have to fight for a strong civil rights plank at the 1948 Democratic Convention, a move that split the Party and led to the revolt of the Dixiecrats. No, he did it because it was right. He was told then that it was too early to raise the issue of civil rights. "Too early?" Humphrey replied. "It's 172 years too late."

His death leaves a gaping hole in the nation's leadership.

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as i see it

Some Realistic Views On Wilmington 10

By Gerald Johnson
I have refrained from writing about the Wilmington 10 case because of my lack of information related to the case. Moreover, the case had reached a point where emotionalism had taken it from the realms of rationalism. A lot of people have worked hard for the nine Black men and one White woman in an effort to free the allegedly political prisoners.

However, since Hunt has given his verdict concerning the case and since so many opinions have been floating around about the case, I can not resist the temptation any longer.

I must hasten to add, though, that my opinion is not directed towards the innocence or guilt of the 'Wilmington 10', but rather it is on some observations surrounding the case.

To start off I would like to say that Governor Hunt, in my opinion, did the correct thing. I feel his decision was based on the information he had been able to gather concerning the case. He didn't appear to give the case a cursory review, but rather, he seemed to have attacked the case both logically and systematically. Because his decision concerning the case was not what the 'Wilmington 10' supporters wanted is no reason, indeed no excuse, to ridicule the final decision. The Governor was placed in a position where regardless of what his decision was he would have been wrong in somebody's eyes. Hence, He did the most logical thing, what he thought was right. The 'Wilmington 10' supporters shouldn't have misconstrued his announcement of making a decision on the case as a necessarily favorable result. Consequently, the final decision wouldn't have been such a disappointment.

The publicity the case has received is unprecedented in recent North Carolina history. The publicity could have been a negative factor for the '10'. I noticed that the support for the 'Wilmington 10' concentrated on North Carolina racist policies in judiciary matters. In other words it always focused on the faults of North Carolina and not with the case itself. When facts were presented about the case they were cloudy and ambiguous.



Gerald Johnson
Obviously, any Appellate Court would tear this type of information to shreds and in fact they did. Few of the supporters were knowledgeable enough about the case to give anything but lip service to the case. Which I found very appalling because it meant to me that most of the more vocal supporters were seeking publicity for themselves and could care less about the 'Wilmington 10'.

I have written in this article before that the days of marching and protesting to get results are over. No one will

make a decision based on emotional yet irrational situations. This type of thing only gets publicity, but it does not influence the decisions of good politicians. In fact it shouldn't. If a political figure would base his decisions on who could put together the best protest, then the Country would be in a sadder state of affairs than it already is in.

I thought it was in bad taste for the six black congressmen felt it was necessary for them to come to North Carolina to show their disapproval of how the case was handled. This action undermines the ability for North Carolina to be able to handle its own affairs. With all of its bad points, the North Carolina Judiciary System was one of the first to force school busing. It is the same system that freed Jo Ann Little from murder. Yes, it has had its share of unfortunate circumstances, but all the decisions will not go your way.

The one point that has not been mentioned as far as I know is the defense for the 'Wilmington 10'. A lot of innocent people are serving time because the defense lawyers could not present a case good enough to set them free. It

would appear to me that this is the place to start in an earnest attempt to free the '10'. A case is won or lost by lawyers, not guilt or innocence.

I would like to suggest to the 'Wilmington 10' supporters that if they plan to continue to push for the freedom of the '10', that they go about it a little differently.

Instead of wasting time and money trying to make the case overly political, they should use the time to raise money. While raising money contact one of the nations leading lawyers and find out his opinion on the case. If he will take the case then you are on the right road to freeing the 'Wilmington 10'. This is not to say that the current lawyers are not doing a good job, but it would be the first place of suspect.

I don't know Rev. Ben Chavis, but I do his sister Dr. Helen Othow and if he is anything like his sister, he deserves the best. Unfortunately, the plan of attack up to this point falls far short of being the best. It is time to re-think old plans and formulate new plans and start the struggle anew.

Philvity Dis-Service

It seems that the utility companies have us over a barrel. They can tell us anything and we are at a loss to argue the point.

But I find it disgusting that when you need the service the most is when they deliver the least.

During extremely cold or extremely hot weather when your utilities are a necessity, you are immediately warned to cut back on your usage or a blackout will ensue. So, you end up freezing, starving, and bored, in the dark.

Or, when a heavy storm hits you lose all power anyway. Trees fall over the lines or they freeze until they break. Hence, you still freeze to death.

All of this wouldn't be so bad except after doing without power when you really needed it, your bill comes in and you still have to pay \$300.00.

It is no wonder that everybody is going back to basics and depending on themselves. The pot belly wood burning stove is the hottest selling item in many areas of the country. It is not as convenient, but its cheaper and more dependable.