



*Congressional
Black Caucus
Reports to the
People*

On Monday evening, January 23, 1978, Governor Hunt of North Carolina, issued a statement on the Wilmington Ten. The Governor had only two honorable options. He could either pardon the defendants or he could commute the balance of their sentences. He did neither. Instead he chose the path of political expediency (looking ahead to his next election) and played it to the hards in the state of North Carolina he would see these young black men rot in prison.

By now, the case of the Wilmington Ten is well known. I became involved in this case even before these young men were sentenced. My involvement began at Union Baptist Church in Blatimore when a rally for the Wilmington Ten was held.

Of the original ten defendants, nine still remain in jail. Ann Turner, the only white person involved, was originally sentenced to ten years but was released under parole supervision last year, leaving only the blacks in prison.

Only last month I visited two of the defendants, Wayne Moore and Joe Wright, who are in the Triangle Correction Center in North Carolina. All of the Wilmington Ten are scattered throughout various prisons in N.C. . . . two here, two there, one here, one there. My visit with them was a heart breaking experience. Both Wayne and Joe said they were not hopeful about an early release because to secure such a release the state of N.C. would have to admit to wrong doing. They did not believe the state would do this and Governor Hunt's lack of action has prove them to be correct.

These defendants have all been unjustly convicted of crimes that they did not commit. Allen Hall's charges are very serious and, if true, constitute a violation of Federal law and the constitutional rights of these defendants.

This case lay naked and open the false platitudes the Administration and the U.S. Congress have been uttering about civil rights. When the Carter Administration talks about violations of human rights in Uganda, we must ask, "What about the human rights of Wayne Moore, now sentenced to 29 years?" When the Executive Branch and the Congress talk about violations of human rights in the Soviet Union, we must ask, "What about Rev. Ben Chavis, now sentenced to 34 years?"

More importantly, we must not cease our efforts until these men are free and justice is done. Towards that end, I made the following speech (excerpted) to the Congress on February 2, 1978: Mr. Mitchell of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, it is important that you, and my colleagues, have a full understanding of my position on Human Rights.

Time and time again I have voted for Human Rights Amendments in this House. As late as last week, I introduced a Human Rights Amendment in the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee as we marked up H. R. 9214. My Amendment failed by two votes (19-17).

Something occurred on January 23rd which has caused me to reconsider my position on Human Rights. On Monday, January 23rd, Governor James Hunt of North Carolina, issued his statement on the case of the Wilmington Ten. In the Congressional Record for January 26, 1978, I gave a brief history of the Wilmington Ten, I hope you will check the Congressional Record for that particular day, page E184 under Extension of Remarks. For now, suffice it to say, in 1972 ten civil rights activists were convicted on charges arising from disturbances in Wilmington, N. C. The ten persons, nine young black men, one young white woman were sentenced to a collective total of 282 years in prison. Of the original ten, nine remain in prisons. Ann Turner, the only white person involved, was originally sentenced to ten years but

was released under parole supervision last year, leaving only the blacks in prison. I had hoped that these nine young men would have been pardoned, or at the very least that the balance of their sentences would have been commuted. These things did not happen. Therefore, I have been forced to reconsider my position on Human Rights.

Sadly, I have come to the conclusion that I cannot, in all good conscience, vote for Human Rights Amendments for as long as these young men remain in prison. Therefore, on this Amendment I will vote present.

Some of my friends in this House have counseled me not to take the action I take today. They point out these young men have had their cases reviewed time and again through the appeals process. To those friends I simply say, "Was there not a similar review process in the Scottsboro cases?" I say to them, "Was there not a similar judicial review process in the Sacco-Vanzetti case?"

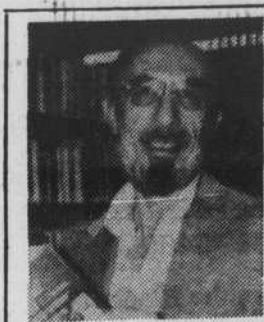
Other of my friends counsel against the action I take today. They ask me "Will you not support the Human Rights Amendment in the case of South Africa, or Uganda, or Chile?"

My reply to them is that in the future for me to support such Human Rights Amendments aimed at those countries and others would be hypocrisy on my part for as long as we here in America continue to violate the Human Rights of the Wilmington Ten.

In addition, I believe it would be a travesty to vote for Human Rights Amendments aimed at South Africa, while the Ford Company proceeds with its expansion plans in that racist nation.

Still other friends urge me not to take this stand because they say it can be used by those world powers who fight against America's stand on Human Rights. It is not my action or my words today that will be used by those world powers, it is the action already taken by the state in the case of the Wilmington Ten which will be used to attack this Nation's Human Rights policies.

I shall vote present on this Amendment, it pains me to do this but how else can I register my protest against a miscarriage of justice in America?



Library Notes

by Bill Ludwig

The celebration of Black History Week is 52 years old this February. It began in 1926 as the idea of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the reknowned historian and founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. The idea caught on and quickly spread throughout the country through local chapters of the Association.

However, it was not until the sixties and the spread of the Black-is-Beautiful theme that the celebration was widely promoted and adopted by the general public. Now schools and cities in virtually every corner of the country offer public programs and celebration relating the achievements of Black Americans.

Officially, the dates of Black History Week have been determined by the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12th) and Frederick Douglas (Feb. 15th). Whenever the two dates fell into different weeks or on weekends, it was decided to designate the week that included Douglass' birthday.

During the Bi-Centennial Year of 1976 the Association proclaimed a full month of celebration of Black achievements, to publicly underline the contributions of Blacks to the formation and growth of the country. Since then and including this year a full month of activities have been officially proclaimed, allowing local schools and communities to select their own schedules within the month of February.

Traditionally the high schools have selected the second week of February as Black History Week. This year they have designated the week of Feb. 6th as the time for school assemblies and activities. Both the Community College and the University have selected the week of Feb. 12th for their programs.

The staff of the West Las Vegas Library feel, as so many individuals have expressed, that Black history should be highlighted throughout the year as a normal dimension of our daily lives, with perhaps an increased intensity for special events. For that reason, the library has decided to show films, slides and artwork throughout the entire month of February without a specific schedule but continuously or at any time upon requests by library patrons.

A number of films and slides are available at the library and will be shown during regular library hours. The selection, ranging in subjects from Africa and slavery to the present, includes material appropriate to all ages. Artwork, posters and photographs will be added to the decor of the library to increase the public's awareness of the rich cultural heritage of Black Americans.

The schedule of special events throughout the city is crowded with a great variety of programs, including gospel singing, jazz concerts, lectures, guest appearances, poetry reading, dances, films and even a traditional African wedding. The allied Arts Council has compiled a calendar of these events and their locations for the general public. Information may be obtained through their offices at Reed Whipple Center (384-1208 or 384-1204) or by calling the library (648-9421) or the student activity offices of the Community College and UNLV.

Everyone is encouraged to take a little time from their busy schedule to attend any of the programs and renew their awareness that to the Black in America is to be proud and conscious and angry and determined. No people anywhere have a richer heritage. Your future is determined by that awareness.

Announcing
NEW ADDRESS FOR
Paul's Portrait Studio
Photography by
Clinton Wright
NOW LOCATED AT
806 1/2 Las Vegas Blvd. So.
(702) 384-9839
Special
FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY ONLY!!!!
1 5 x 7 \$1.95 Plus Sitting Fee

- ★ Portraits
- ★ Weddings
- ★ Commercial

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE