

# THE TRINITY TRIPOD

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EDITION

## WRTC, Announcers Settle

By Richard Ruchman

Black announcers and the Board of Directors of WRTC announced a settlement of their dispute over the station's new programming policy after the blacks sat in at the studio for four hours. While the sit-in went on, negotiators for both sides hammered out the agreement on scheduling "black experience" programming.

Under the settlement, the station will give black announcers from 10:00 p.m. on each night of the week for "black experience" programming and from noon-3 on Saturday and Sunday. The content of the shows and the announcers will be determined by the black announcers.

The station had originally planned to give the black announcers from 11:00 p.m. on, every night plus an hour and half of "jazz-rock", also known as soul, in the afternoon. The programming would have been determined by an assistant program director, who would not have necessarily been black.

Reginald Martin, '74, said the sit-in began to protest WRTC's board of directors' reply to the Trinity Coalition of Black's (TCB's) statement which appeared in yesterday's TRIPOD. In that statement, TCB said it felt the board was trying "to deny any and all efforts by Black people for adequate Black programming."

In their reply to the TCB statement the station directors said, "... we have made no attempt to stifle the creativity of any programmer ... we attempt to provide a broad spectrum of programs for the education and enjoyment of the community as a whole." Martin said eight black announcers took part in the action after a meeting "prior to the action". He would not say when the meeting took place.

He said the group blocked the studios so no one could enter. The group did not interfere with announcers who had already started their broadcasts, he said. He added that had the announcers left the studios they would

not have been allowed to return.

Broadcasting was delayed for about half-an-hour before an announcer was able to slip into the studios and sign on the station, sources disclosed.

The station's board of directors—Charles Ward, '74, acting station manager, Timothy Tillson, '74, director of programming, and Ridgely Evers, '73, director of development—met with the demonstrators, along with Mohamed Jibrell, assistant dean for community life, and J. Ronald Spencer, dean for community life.

According to all sources, there was no sense of confrontation during the negotiations themselves.

Spencer said he believed both sides accepted the agreement willingly and in good faith.

He said that the "strike" Tuesday morning "never reached crisis proportions." He said that while he was at the station "nobody came close to losing their tempers," although what he termed a "vigorous" discussion took place.

Spencer said that the Black Experience Programmers had a "sincere commitment to providing programming to the black community in Hartford" which he agreed was lacking. And, he also said that the WRTC management were "anxious" to see this type of programming take place but they were just as concerned with other types of listeners.

Spencer said the basic issue was not whether or not there should be the type of programming that the blacks wanted but, "what proportions would be considered a fair shake."

Spencer said that he tried to keep out of the controversy as much as he could because it was his policy to let college organizations work out their own internal disagreements. He said the WRTC-TCB controversy would "be best resolved by

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Photo by Alex Trocker

Reginald Martin, chairman of the Trinity Coalition of Blacks and one of the protesting announcers, discusses the settlement of the dispute.

## TCB Statement

To the Editor:

We the Trinity Coalition of Blacks recognize the move of the WRTC managing staff, specifically Chuck Ward, Tim Tillson and their advising cohort Ridge Evers, as being instrumental in the continuing attempt to deny the development of creative and legitimate programming geared to the Black community of Greater Hartford. We protest their uncompromising decision and will not allow such to stand!!!

The eradication of Black Programming is stifling the creative expression of Black people on this campus. We recognize their refusal to acknowledge the request of the people for more relevant programming as one of many attempts to deny any and all efforts by Black people for adequate Black programming.

This exemplifies the inherent injustice in the handling of policy making procedures in the communication media on a national level, i.e. the attempted extermination of Black Journal and other relevant programs. As a body we acknowledge this is a part of the struggle with other brothers and sisters to maintain a voice within this institution of an oppressive society. On that note we will not allow ourselves to be muted.

Trinity Coalition of Blacks  
January 28, 1973

## WRTC Reply

To the Editor:

WRTC is an FCC-licensed, non-commercial, educational radio station. In keeping with the spirit and letter of our license, we attempt to provide a broad spectrum of programs for the education and enjoyment of the community as a whole. This policy means programming as many different forms of music as is feasible, in addition to news and public affairs, given the limits of the broadcast day. We are trying to reach as large an audience as possible with each. This policy also indicates that programming not be directed to any specific audience to the exclusion of all others; further, that these people best qualified to educate the audience about the music, do the programming.

During the first semester of this year, in response to requests from Blacks, we experimented with programming music stemming from the Black Experience. The results of this experiment were extremely encouraging, and in changing to a block programming format this semester (for the first time in the history of the station), we have allocated an even greater number of hours to Black Experience Programming. We have placed these blocks, as we have done with the others, in such a manner as to attract a maximum listening audience; we have also attempted to mesh WRTC's Black Experience Programming with similar programming offered on other Hartford-area stations, such as WKND and WWUH.

Specifically, we have made no attempt to stifle the creativity of any programmer. The 39 hours of air-time currently set aside each week for Black Experience Programming, which constitutes nearly one-third of the time we are on the air, could hardly be considered, "The eradication of Black Programming." Now that renovations have been completed sufficiently to allow WRTC to enjoy a full broadcast day, we would hope that all programmers will recognize their responsibility, so that we may once again serve the community.

Respectfully Submitted  
The Board of Directors  
WRTC-FM  
January 29, 1973

# WRTC...

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people who knew something about radio." Spencer also said that both groups recognized the need for a loyalty to WRTC and its welfare and that both parties resolved to work towards that goal.

The original position of the Board of Directors according to Martin, was that blocks of time would be allocated by the station for certain kinds of programming. For example, at one p.m. each day, someone would play rock and roll. At three o'clock each day, there would be folk.

Martin said he understood the blocks of time and the announcers would be determined by the board.

He said the black announcers opposed this idea. He explained they wanted to slate their own announcers at the time of their choice—9:30 p.m. to 3 a.m., seven days a week.

Ward, the acting station manager, asserted however, the board did not intend to limit the black announcers. He said the station directors wanted an assistant program director of jazz—who would probably be black, he said—who would program the time for "Programming from the Black Experience."

The Board's desire to have a representative from the black announcers was opposed by the blacks because it would create more tensions on the staff and would create a symbolic barrier between black experience announcers and other staff members.

Ward said he felt a liaison between the board and the blacks would increase communication.

Martin said the black announcers finally decided to accept the idea and will name a representative soon.

All "black experience" programming will be handled by the black announcers, according to Martin. He said they will decide who will broadcast what kind of music in each slot of "black experience" time and the board will have no say in this area.

The blacks offered the board a plan for scheduling under which the board would control all programming until 9:30 p.m. At 9:30, the black announcers would present an hour and a half of jazz-rock (also known as soul) and jazz from 11:00 on.

Martin explained the black announcers wanted to provide "a smooth musical transition."

The board of directors rejected the plan, however, because it would have forced the station to push a public affairs slot back by a half-hour.

He asserted this would have put the station in conflict with FCC regulations. He added this would be dangerous because many groups are trying to get frequencies in the "college band"—which is currently filled.

Martin, a participant in the sit-in, said, "What happened today was extremely positive. After deliberating for four hours everyone was very tired. Everyone agreed a settlement should be reached and (afterwards) a feeling of unity was reached between blacks and whites."

Spencer remarked "Both sides were responsible enough to keep negotiating in good faith until an agreement had been reached."

Jibrell attributed the confrontation to poor communication on both sides and termed the mood at the discussions "friendly."

One point continuously stressed by the blacks is their desire to be a part of WRTC. Martin described the fears of some whites that blacks were attempting to control the station as "quite absurd. Anytime students get together to rectify social problems, reactionary forces oppose them."

He repeated that Black programmers say the call letters WRTC "with pride".

One group uninvolved in the events and settlement today is the white announcers make up the bulk of the WRTC staff.

Commenting on the settlement, Jim Wilson, '76, a white announcer on the radio staff, termed the settlement "ridiculous: I think the percentage of black Dj's and black students at Trinity is not equal to the percentage of the listening audience and needs of station."

He added, "I don't think blacks having most of the prime serves the interests of Trinity College."

Just how common this sentiment is will be measured Thursday night at 7:30 at an all staff meeting in Wean Lounge. Chuck Ward explained the board acted without white opinion because "We felt we had to deal with the problem. To drag it out would have made things more difficult." He said the white announcers gave him no feedback at a meeting last Wednesday when the original plan to set aside a "black experience" slot from 11:00 p.m. on was announced.

Martin conceded a de facto segregation in the new programming schedule. Under the blacks rejected plan, Sunday night would have been left open for white programming of jazz. But under the schedule agreed to today only blacks will broadcast during "black experience" time.

Both Ward and Martin seem to feel that the issue has been put to rest. The two seem united in their feeling that "the whole thing's settled".

Ward said the staff of WRTC could impeach the Board of Directors if it is not content with the settlement.

One aspect of this issue that seems uncontested from any side is the need for black programming. According to Martin there is an isolated black community in Hartford with a population ranging between 50,000 and 60,000. He said that while there are certain stations in the area which gear their programming to black people, such as WKND, no one provides them with a variety of programming. He sees WRTC as a potential filler of this gap. "People who listen to WRTC in the black community could enjoy it and be educated," he said.

He is joined in this feeling by the Board of Directors, Mohamed Jibrell, and white announcers.

Jim Wilson said, "Nobody thinks there shouldn't be black programming."



Photo by Lloyd Wolf  
Charles Ward, acting station manager for WRTC, gives his reactions to the Trinity Coalition of Black's charges and praises the settlement.

## Editorial

Let's get it out in the open--there has been some pressure between black announcers at WRTC and the station's board of directors over questions of who will determine what will go on the air and what times certain shows will be on.

We feel the give and take that has come out of the pressure cooker is good for the radio and good for the College. We hope it has shown both whites and blacks that each group is flexible and that neither group is really interested in denying the other what is in their mutual interest--a top-notch radio station.

We understand that there is some dissent among WRTC's white staff members--who feel that, like the black announcers, they, too, should have been consulted before signing away any time-slots. We appreciate the complaint but we hope that these dissidents will recognize that the current settlement while not ideal is satisfactory and will not seek to open old wounds.

We also feel there should be more and better programming relating to the black experience--or what we suspect is really black experiences.

On the other hand, we have some reservations on the quality of time allocated to the black announcers. These individuals by virtue of their "blackness" will have a disproportionate share of prime time, while whites, because of their "whiteness" will not get a shot at this time. We feel this is good old ugly segregation.

Besides, there is something fundamentally wrong about the entire way this matter has been handled by the black announcers and by the Trinity Coalition of Blacks (which came out in support of those individuals).

The problem is that we dislike duress. We dislike coercion. We dislike tension. In seizing the radio station we feel the black announcers unnecessarily raised the level of tension at WRTC and did nothing to further their cause. We think they could have received as good terms from the management of the station had they not acted in this manner. And, more important, we see their action as stimulating a lot of the resentment that white announcers have communicated to us.

If there is justice in the end, one would expect that the black announcers would have chosen a just means of pursuing their best advantage. As they handled it, however, they have jeopardized relations at the station and relations on campus.

We should never permit ourselves to live in a world of constant threat and tension. It makes little children grow up neurotic and communities disintegrate.

The point is that everyone involved in this scuffle should recognize they had best not push the other side too far.

WRTC's New Schedule						
M T W Th F					S	S
8:00	Morning Rock				Portugese	Portugese
10:00	To be Announced					
12:00	Rock				Black Experience	Gospel
3:00	Folk Country & Western, Blues				Classical	Classical
5:30	NEWS					
6:00	Public Affairs (education)				Oldies	6:00
7:00						Rock 8:00
	Rock				Rock	9:00
10:00						Spitz & Pebbles
3:00	Black Experience					

There will be a WRTC staff meeting  
Thursday night  
at 7:30 in Wean Lounge.