EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Lunch counter sit-in remembered

At 4 p.m. Monday, February 1, 1960, four students, all members of the ROTC on the campus of North Carolina A&T, marched into the lunch counter at a Woolworth's 5 and 10 cent store.

They were refused service, so they sat there at the counter until the store closed. Then they promised to return the next day—and they did—along with 19 other students.

The protests continued, and by Thursday, more than 400 students had joined the protest which had spread to cities in North Carolina and other southern states.

And thus the student involvement in the civil rights struggle began, gathering momentum as more and more young people chose direct action approach.

The four, who became known as The Greensboro Four were Jibreel A-A. K-K. Khazan, Joe McNeil, Franklin McCain and David Richmond. Khazan, who was known as Ezell Blair, Jr. then, said they decided to test the policies of the store, because others had only "talked about doing something."

This bold stand against lunchcounter segregation, was a beginning of the student thrust for equal civil rights. Just a few months following the initial sitin, a meeting was held at Shaw University in Raleigh, NC, at which the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee was formed.

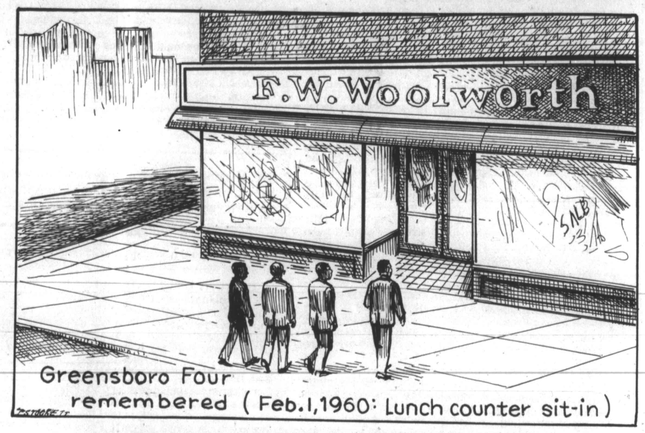
All this is history and is documented in archives and readily available for perusal. But credit for this action has been missing. According to Khazan, the NAACP and SCLC did not recognize the four — they were not invited to the 1963 March on Washington.

Now, 30 years later, these four brave men will receive recognition. A bronze frieze of the four is to be dedicated at the Memorial Union Quadrangle on the A&T campus, and a street is to be named Greensboro Four Place. F. W. Woolworth Co. will donate the original lunch counter stools to the permanent Sit-In Exhibit at the Greensboro Historical Museum.

It is interesting to note that the youth of the world are the leaders in pressing for change. The Beijing uprising was fostered by the young Chinese students; young people were very much in evidence at the crumbling of the Berlin Wall.

So, while a segment of the population denigrates the youth of today as being caught up in a drug culture with little regard for other humans, history does not agree. As we enter Black History Month, it is also a time to examine the exploits of youth in the struggle for human rights.

While it took 30 years to fully appreciate the exploits of the Greensboro Four, we must pay closer attention to our youth and what they are doing. After all, the world will be theirs and they know it. We are confident they can handle it.



BLACK POLITICS IN VIRGINIA:

Marion and Jesse

By Calvin M. Miller

Marion Barry, Mayor of Washington, D.C., has been entrapped by a federal sting; better, a scam. And, Jesse Jackson is lurking around like a convenient one to take the helm of government in D.C.

Is Jesse doing the right thing? As long as he stays away from the D.C. government, under its present state, he is doing the right thing!

The sting of Mayor Barry was a very serious act and it smells of "entrapment." Even so, the seemingly downfall of the Mayor should not be taken lightly and the reactions and remedies, likewise, should be very serious indeed and they should eminate from the Black leadership base.

It is very easy for the Black community whose moral tenacity seem to overreach into perceptions of public angels and saints. Black leadership should be held to the ongoing political morality and not some isolated and peculiar Black moral code.

Mayor Barry did wrong. This is not the issue. The issue relates to the miserable public reaction.

Question #1 — Was the sting a selective and peculiar one timed to get the Mayor out of the mayorial race? Why? With all of the power and resources (undercovers, scams, stings, you name it) of the FBI, why did they wait until two days before Barry's announcement to run to spring a sting?

Question #2— Why was no one else caught in this sting?

Who is it in D.C. that do not want Barry to run?

The Black citizens and the Black leaders should take hold of this extremely serious and critical political situation and not leave it up to, nor be coerced by, the White press.

Already, in a majority Black city, White media and White leaders are trying to walk in and take over. The POST has already screamed editorially, "Barry Resign," a leading development group has said, "resign;" and too many Whites are for Jesse. Why?

The real tragedy here is the presence of that slimy creature that we know as racism and the contemporary history of attacks upon contemporary Black public leadership. Candor demands that we, at least, put these two items in the formula.

Maybe, Benjamin Hooks was right. At least he asked the right question.

Posted on the front page of the POST today (1/25/90). Representative Mervin Dymally is being questioned about some deal with his scholarship fund and a South African Importer of diamonds. Before Barry's sting, investigations were underway for Bradley in Los Angeles; Fauntleroy, D.C.; Gray, Pennsylvania; and Federal Judge Hastings.

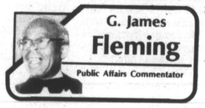
In Virginia, courts of investigations have been seen with Juvenile Justice Douglass. Richmond; Mayor Holley, Portsmouth; Councilwoman McDaniel, Richmond; Councilman Richardson, Richmond; Councilman Johnson, Petersburg; and Court Clerk Dawson, Petersburg. It is enough here to make any intelligent observer ask the question after Barry's contrived downfall is added.

Once more, we do not argue the rightness or wrongness of Mayor Barry's personal downfall.

We are arguing for intelligent analysis on the part of Black D.C. leadership and for them to make the proper resolutions for the City and not be driven too quickly into making the wrong decisions about when Barry should resign, who should run for Mayor and all other relevant matters related to D.C. government.

The public fiasco of Nixon and Watergate did not sink all of America. No one castigated all White people (White race). Likewise, D.C. government will survive Barry and the Black race will survive. There is no race guilt.

Innocent unless proven guilty



G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

Tremendous strain is placed on the public, and on the results of public opinion polls, when any important public figure is charged with violation of law.

No less so, in many minds so, in the cases of Marion Barry, mayor of Washington, now on leave, and Manuel Noriega, deposed president of Panama, now jailed in Miami, with an assist from invading U.S. troops.

Both Barry and Noriega are charged with violation of our anti-drug laws, but up to this point, neither has been subjected to p-r-o-s-e-c-u-t-i-o-n. Neither has faced his accusers or cross-examined them in court, nor faced a judge and jury, nor told his side of the story, nor called his own witnesses.

Regardless of statements, confessions and briefings, by one side or the other, neither defendant, to date, has been found guilty of any offense.

From the radio talk shows and the public opinion polls, however, it is fare to say that on overwhelming bloc of the public has already voted "Guilty" in reference to both Mayor Barry and Ex-President Noriega. For these blocs, it would be a waste of time to go through the motions of the American judicial system, due process and all the rest. They would by-pass the principle of innocence until proven guilty, "beyond a reasonable doubt."

They would settle these often involved and important cases and save time and money on the bases of what kind of a "skunk" or "rat" they think the defendant is. Others would make their pre-trial judgement on whether the accused "let us down" or not, or whether he "let his people down."

The American system is made of sterner stuff, however, and where and when we have detoured from the best of that system we have fractionized democracy and committed a moral wrong against ourselves.

Such was the situation during the New England witch hunts, during the impromptu trials and hangings on our frontier, and during the years of notorious lynchings in the South — all without due process and with presumption of guilt.

We, Americans, are not proud of that history. We must not repeat it, even in thought, in these days.

Some segments of the American population returned pretty near to this point when Richard Nixon was at the depths of Watergate. Similar blocs, at the height of the Iran Contra Congressional hearings, were ready to hang Col. Oliver North "to the nearest branch."

Both Manuel Noriega and Marion Barry may be just as much in need of a lawyer, a judge or a jailor. They may need a counselor-in-residence or a battery of counselors. To the man in the street, in reference to Barry, he is mostly "just plain stupid," among other things.

The same may also be said of Noriega. Where one does not know when "Enough is enough," or when he has reached near the end of his rope, one verges towards stupidity.

One may fittingly be charged with being a liar, a cheat or a womanizer — or he may even be linked with "skunks" and "rats, but none of these findings, by itself, is unconstitutional, illegal or criminal.

Most of all, some of these alleged derelictions and flaws in character are sufficient to justify the United States violating its own principles which give to the most heinous offender the protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and the rest of the Constitution, including due process and the fairest of treatment.

Even the devil should be given his due, but not more than his due.

If the charges made by government attorneys, so far, hold up in court, and the opposing lawyers have their day, the public need have no fear that justice will not be served, within the law and with full recognition that every man or woman is innocent "unless or until proven guilty, "beyond a reasonable doubt."

The Black-labor agenda for 1990

The beginning of a new year is a good time for us at the A. Philip Randolph Institute to rededicate ourselves to working to advance the Black - labor agenda for racial equality and economic and social justice.

There are other reasons for renewing and strengthening our commitment now. One is the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, which reminds us that we still have a long way to go before achieving his dream of a society without racism.

Another reason is that this is the start of the Randolph Institute's 25th anniversary year, which makes us think about the legacy of struggle for minorities and workers that has been handed down to us by our founders, A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin.

But the most pressing reasons for renewal and rededication are the major struggles lying just ahead for the Black - labor alliance. The single most important battle this year will be over whether Congress passes national health care legislation guaranteeing health insurance for all.

Supporters of national health care have often noted that 37 million Americans are without either private or government health care coverge.

Much less known is that while those 37 million Americans represent 13.3 percent of the total U.S. population, fully 19.3 percent of all Blacks have no coverage. So national health care is at the very top of the Randolph Institute's 1990 Black - labor agenda.

Another critical item this year is child care legislation being carried over from the last session of Congress. The Administration backs an inadequate tax - credit approach to child care.

The Institute supports a more effective bill to give grants to the states for creating affordable child care and to establish guidelines assuring the quality of the care.

Although Black income is below that of most groups in our society, a recent Louis Harris poll shows that Blacks pay more for child care than most groups. So as with health care, Blacks have an especially vital stake in the passage of effective child care legislation.

A very important goal for 1990 is passage of legislation to override last year's Supreme Court assault against affirmative action and other remedies for employment and workplace discrimination. The first in a series of bills to restore the protections snatched away by the Reagan Court will come up early in the 1990 session of Congress and deserves the backing of all civil rights supporters.

Also of major significance is legislation for family and medical leave, which would establish a national policy to provide unpaid leave for workers to take care of serious medical or health problems for themselves or their families.

Virtually all industrial countries have adopted such measures, which are especially necessary in an era when the number of single parent and two income families is growing rapidly.

Clearly, we have a lot of work to do at the Randolph Institute in 1990. And in the Institute's silver anniversary year, our allies in the labor and civil rights movements can rest assured that we will do our share to advance the welfare of Blacks and workers.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

AFRO Welcomes Letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication. Write:

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Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

Marketing uptown

Not long ago, the expression "uptown" was the colloquial expression in many of our communities which indicated better living or high society.

"Uptown" is exactly the attraction that R. J. Reynolds, the largest U.S. tobacco company, has planned to use as a metaphor to our people to the consumption of its new product.

Uptown, in this instance, is the first cigarette designed to be marketed exclusively to African Americans. It is a menthol cigarette — allegedly the preference of Black people — and its packaging is to be black and gold (why not red, black and green).

At a time when the cancer rate among our people, especially Black men, is increasing instead of declining, this company defends placing this kind of commercial pressure on our group by saying we deserve a cigarette of our own.

They further defend this atrocity by claiming their critics are paternalistic and racist to suggest that Black people or other targeted groups cannot decide for themselves whether or not to smoke.

Economic incentives have always led to creative argument. (You remember the economic justifications for slavery.)

Study after study has shown that cigarette companies advertise with far more effort in poor, urban areas than elsewhere.

In Baltimore, studies have shown that billboards glamorizing smoking and drinking are more likely to be positioned in Black neighborhoods than in White ones. This type of commercial pressure is the most unavoidable.

According to a new atlas of cancer mortality statistics soon to be published by the National Cancer Institute, Cancer death rates for African ancestored Americans and other minorities are increasing faster than those for other Americans.

Increased death rates for Black men highlighted by the new report are in cancers of the prostate, oral cavity, larynx and esophagus.

Furthermore, the largest increase in the overall cancer death rate among all minorities was caused by lung cancer. Still, the industry says we deserve a cigarette of our own. Gee thanks!

Fortunately, test marketing plans for next month have been dropped after the company came under scrutiny last week by Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Louis W. Sullivan. However, any future plans for such test marketing remains unclear.

Sullivan accused the company of "Promoting a culture of cancer." While smoking poses a significant health threat to all segments of society, it is a particularly severe problem in our community.

"Higher smoking rates among Blacks, especially Black males are a major reason why Blacks experience higher rates of lung cancer, other cancers, heart disease, and stroke compared with Whites," Dr. Sullivan continued.

In 1987, the Maryland Governor's Commission on Black and Minority Health reported in its findings that cardiovascular disease (CVD) — heart disease, hypertension and stroke — result in more death and disability than any other acute or chronic disease in Maryland.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for all major race and sex groups, a leading cause of premature mortality among Black males between the ages of one and 65, and accounts for roughly 27 percent of excess minority deaths in Maryland.

Major or preventable risk factors include hypertension, cigarette smoking, and elevated blood cholesterol levels. Yet we deserve a cigarette of our own! !

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Maryland. For both the U.S. and Maryland, African Americans have the highest age - adjusted cancer incidence and mortality rates of any racial group. Major cancer risk factors include cigarette smoking and diet.

If Black people had died from cancer at the same rate as Whites, on average, between 1983 and 1985, almost 400 fewer minority Marylanders would have died, according to the Commission.

While not condoning the predatory nature of advertising products specifically to communities already downtrodden with the effects of a specific product, I do contend that we need to take more individual responsibility, to the extent that we can, for the choices of consumption that we make.

Buying cigarettes is legal and it is true that targeting is a standard marketing procedure for all products.

However, just as we are asking the industry to pay attention to the studies and the statistics that should condone more social responsibility on their part, so too must we pay attention to those statistics and studies and individually resist being preyed upon by those forces that do us harm.

And the effected group should not be the only ones concerned when it is being preyed upon.

Realizing the fact that we do share a common destiny and the nation's future and strength is interdependent upon the nurturing of all of its people, then it follows that any metaphor designed to disillusion a group and lure it to harmful and disproportionate actions ultimately effects us all.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since Rep. Mfume wrote this article, the Reynolds company has withdrawn the introduction of the new cigarette.

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Keeping perspective

We are justifiably delighted about the decline of Marxist totalitarianism and the rise of democratization in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Although we're saddened that Marxism and communism still have respectability on some U.S. college campuses and among some members of Congress.

We should, however, exercise caution and not deify Mikhail Gorbachev. He, with help from former President Ronald Reagan, is mainly responding to forces beyond his control.

During his 1980 campaign, Reagan promised to show the Soviets what an arms race was. With Marxist economic inefficiency, the Soviets had to rape their economy to maintain parity. Unlike us, they couldn't produce missiles, soap, and toilet paper at the same time.

Now that the Soviet Union is more open, the true nature of Marxist-Leninist doctrine is coming to light.

One of its features, which excapes Western notice, much less comment, is its similarities to South Africa's Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoed's plan in the '40s for grand apartheid.

This plan provided for the formation of eight separate homelands (Bantustans) based on ethnicity, language, and culture. Among them were KwaZulu for the Zulus, Transkei and Ciskei for the Xhosas, and Bophuthatswana for the Tswanas.

Tribal chiefs and headsmen would be the administrative authorities but ultimate control was held by Whites in Pretoria.

Lenin's and Stalin's ethnic homeland policy, called the policy of the nationalities, was more successful than Verwoed's. Among the Soviet Union's ethnic homelands are: Armenia for the Americans, Azerbijan for the Turks, Ukraine for the Ukranians.

Like South Africa was, with its "pass laws," none of these people should be caught in downtown Moscow without authorization. Like the Afrikaans language was thrust upon Black ethnics, Russian was thrust upon the White ethnics. Indeed, much of today's unrest in the Soviet Union, like that in South Africa, is ethnic or racial protest against heavy-handed practices of a central government controlled by another ethnic group.

What should be our foreign policy toward the Soviet Union and its ethnic homelands? I say, continue our military buildup. Does that mean yours truly is against what seems to be the outbreak of peace?

No, it's the unpleasant memory of the legacy of former outbreaks of peace. After World War I, we signed treaty after treaty, scuttled our naval vessels, and disarmed.

We ignored the fact that Axis powers had duped the West into thinking about peace so they could spend the lull regrouping to build a massive war machine.

We scorned, and held up for ridicule, men like Winston Churchhill who tried to warn us. As a result of the West being suckered by the "olive branch," 45-million lives were lost in World War II.

Falling for the same trick today might mean the loss of 500-million lives in the first few days of war.

Members of Congress, with visions of handouts dancing in their heads, are pushing for military cuts. For the past eight years, we've heard them crying about deficits. Now they're saying we ought to cut military spending so we can get our "peace dividend."

Here's a question for you: If we reduce military spending by $25 billion a year, which do you think would be the most likely scenario? Would Congress use the peace dividend to reduce the deficit? To reduce the national debt? To reduce our taxes?

Did I leave something out? The omitted scenario is precisely what Congress plans to do: increase spending for handout programs. If that prediction proves correct, all their statements of concern over the deficit and the national debt are nothing but boldface lies and political deception.

Ron Daniels
Vantage Point

Social Uplift

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching "spiritual death."

These were the prophetic words of Martin Luther King as he spoke at the Riverside Church in New York one year before he was assassinated.

The Vietnam War was sapping vital resources away from programs and projects to help poor and working people in America.

King talked of "spiritual death" because placing a priority on manufacturing bombs to make war over producing bread to feed the hungry is symptomatic of a deranged value system and a sick political - economic system.

King realized that millions of people would continue to suffer cultural, educational, occupational and physical death as long as this nation could build exotic weapons for defense, while failing to defend poor people against hunger, poverty and disease. America did not heed King's warning.

America continues to maintain a war economy.

In the 80s, Ronald Reagan presided over a multi - trillion dollar escalation in the defense budget including billions of dollars for his "Star Wars" fantasy. The massive military build-up was achieved at the expense of poor and working people as virtually every major social program to aid the disadvantaged was drastically reduced.

There was a 63 percent cut in job training programs in the Black community for example and aid to education was reduced by 20 percent. During the Reagan years fifty-five cent of each tax dollar went to the military while only .2 cents went to education.

In reality the massive build-up was far out of proportion to any real or perceived threat from Reagan's imaginary evil Russian empire. Much of the bloated military budget amounted to a huge welfare check for wealthy defense contractors and corporations. The rich grew richer while the poor were driven deeper into poverty.

Needless to say the African American community suffered disproportionately under Reaganism and Reaganomics. The gap between Black and White incomes widened significantly and there was a dramatic expansion in the so called Black under-class.

The drug crisis, crime, violence, increased incarceration and the deterioration within America's inner city ghettos is directly attributable to America's senseless militarism and corporate greed.

African Americans are bearing the brunt of America's "spiritual death." Black people are dying.

As we enter the decade of the 90s the National African American community must muster the energy and resolve to mount a major assault on America's defense budget, the defense establishment and America's militaristic mentality and values. We cannot win the "war on drugs" without winning the war against poverty.

African Americans will not have a secure future unless the battle against illiteracy, and inadequate education is won.

The elevation and uplift of the Black masses will require a major change in America's priorities and a massive infusion of resources for jobs, housing, education and healthcare.

It will be impossible to make the necessary investment of resources for human development without taking direct aim at the military budget. To use a time worn cliche its time for African Americans to push for a conversion of "guns to butter." The very life of our community may depend on that prospect.

NEXT WEEK: Cashing in on the Peace Dividend.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Civil Rights Journal

Boston: violence, myth and racism

To many persons in the United States, Boston, Massachusetts represents the historical setting for the founding of American democracy. Yet, for the past several decades, Boston continues to be a city polarized and rigidly divided by the forces of poverty and racism.

In particular, the African American community of Boston continues to be victimized by acts of racially motivated violence.

Now the African American community is confronted with the stereotype of being the spawning ground of vicious anti - White violence and crime.

The recent bizarre episode of the murder of a White woman, Mrs. Carol Stuart, allegedly by her husband Charles Stuart is yet another example of how quickly elected officials, the police and the established media of Boston are prone to conclude that the African American community is the likely culprit of hideous acts against the White community of Boston.

The truth is, however, that the African American community during the last 30 years in Boston overwhelmingly has been the victim of racial violence in the city.

Charles Stuart had driven his seven - month pregnant wife to the predominantly African American and Hispanic Mission Hill section of Boston where he shot her to death and shot himself but then proceeded to tell the police that an African American male had jumped into their car, robbed and shot them.

Mrs. Stuart was shot in the head and her baby did not survive the shooting. The local as well as the national media once again made it clear that another African American male was the subject of another highly publicized manhunt.

When Charles Stuart learned that the Boston police had acquired evidence that he had lied about the incident and that the police were on the verge of charging him with the murder of his wife, he leaped to his death from a local bridge.

Before Stuart committed suicide, he went so far as to falsely identify and accuse an African American in a police lineup.

Although the truth of the Stuart murder eventually was revealed, the stigma and the virulent cloud of suspicion that was unjustly cast over the African American community in Boston, has left the community vulnerable.

In the wake of the increase in urban crime throughout the nation, racially stereotyping entire communities is becoming commonplace.

Democracy is not an abstract phenomenon. It demands social and racial equality. In this pluralistic society, justice demands fairness and an end to racist discrimination and subjugation.

The Stuart case also has exposed the vulnerability of our society as a whole to the temptations of hatred and violence based on race.

We realized that merely commenting on the situation in Boston will do little to resolve the problem. It is important that when incidents like the Stuart case occur, there needs to be a multi - racial response which attempts to draw lessons from the incident.

For example, the media both local and national really need to be severely criticized for the undue sensationalization of the crime.

If more African Americans and other racial and ethnic persons had more important upper management positions in the media, the tenor and the scope of the coverage of these kinds of cases would definitely change for the better.

In addition, the Boston Police Department as well as other police departments throughout the country must be more responsive to and respect all communities and not disproportionately to just respect or protect the dominant community.

The 1990's can offer more hope in the area of race relations, if and only if more people will boldly challenge the malignancy of racism in our national midst by discerning more effectively the subtleties as well as the overt indications of racism.

One of the tragedies of today is not only the myths and stereotypes of racism, but also the growing tendency for the victims of racism to accept it.