EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Pettus bridge revisited

In 1965, 600 determined activists gathered at Brown Chapel on what is now Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, a few blocks from the main street in Selma, Alabama. It was a staging area for the beginning of a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, a leg of the Selma to Montgomery March.

On that fateful day in 1965, the confrontation between police and marchers erupted into what has become known as "Bloody Sunday." The marchers were teargassed, chased with billy clubs and beaten unmercifully.

But, the stalwart group survived, and out of the turmoil, which was flashed throughout the world, focussing attention on the tragic circumstances of Blacks and their attempts to vote, came the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

This week, there was a return to Selma and a march across the old Edmund Pettus Bridge in which 2,500 people joined hands to re-enact that march of 25 years ago. This time, the march was peaceful. As the marchers crossed the bridge, they were met by just three police officers, who were smiling and applauding.

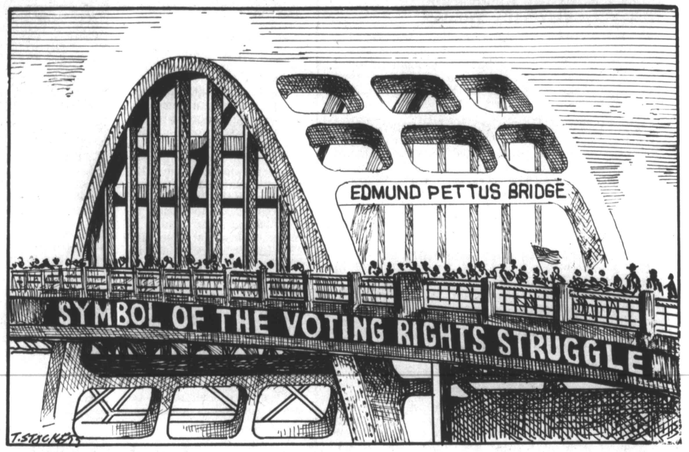
One of the organizers of the 1965 march stated succinctly the feelings of many about the march and its place in history: "There's joy in seeing the victories we've won after all the struggle and sacrifice, yet, it's still regrettable it took this to get us where we are now."

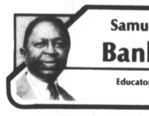
But the reminiscences are not the major thrust of the 1990 march. This time, high school students were a part of it. They got a first-hand look and an inkling of what it meant and the feelings engendered in those who put their lives on the line for the common good.

Many of the young people taking part knew of the first march and its significance only through history books. Seeing some of the civil rights leaders in person, and participating with them in the march, brought home the relevance of what was accomplished and what it took.

The diminution of civil rights legislation through Supreme Court decisions of the past year, has promulgated a renewed call for corrective legislation to insure that civil rights for all is the law of the land. Marches such as the Selma to Montgomery re-enactment, serve to call attention to the need.

The struggle must continue — and as our youth become involved, it will.





Samuel Banks
Educator

Marion Barry & Black America

The time has come, not only in Washington, D.C., but throughout our nation, for Black Americans to cease and desist with the litany of perpetual woes and lamentations regarding Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr.

It is, to be sure, given the incessant parading of Mayor Barry's name in the media, print and electronic, for the past five years and the expenditure of over $2.3 million dollars in terms of his investigation that he was treated in an invidious and heavy-handed manner by the U.S. Attorney office for D.C.

It is now a blessed relief now that Mayor Barry has been arraigned and entered his plea, that a resolution of this matter will take place away from the query, loquacious and, in instances, obstreperous reporters, secret, self - serving informers and investigators where it should occur: In the court before a jury of his peers.

The ugliest manifestations of racism have been shown in Barry's situation as represented by vile, crude, invidious and stereotypical portrayal of him in repugnant and insensitive political cartoons and decisions in the majority controlled White media; electronic and print.

Rational, thoughtful and fair minded observers of Barry's current travail and legal difficulties know full well that he is being portrayed in an unfair manner from White politicians or leaders who either have difficulties with the criminal justice system;

Or who bring enormous pains and chagrin to themselves, their families and their constituents. Barry's current failures are not being portrayed accurately and fairly by the White majority controlled media as his failure but the failure of Black people as a whole. This, to be sure, is reprehensible and unmitigated nonsense.

The majority Black population of Washington, D.C., now 35 million Black people in our nation, are not responsible for Mayor Barry's unfortunate and grievous status at present. However, we are prepared, in fair and open proceedings, to let the judicial system determine Mayor Barry's innocence or guilt.

In the interim, we neither deserve nor shall we accept the execrable and racist gross generalizations of the White media; electronic and print.

It is highly significant from a historical perspective that the White dominated and controlled media did not portray the egregious and shameless fall from power of Spiro Agnew, Richard Milhous Nixon and other White political leaders as the failure of White Americans as a group.

The point, simply made, is that the media have an obligation to be truthful, fair and accurate in portraying the news. Individuals create their own problems and not a collective ethnic - racial group.

Black Americans have a keen interest in Mayor Barry because he represents one, hailing from Ita Bena, Mississippi, who has achieved success and manhood against monumental societal odds who was in the midst of the struggle for human, and civil rights in the turbulent 1960's.

Mayor Barry's heroic and sacrificial efforts won him the support of Black Americans in Washington, D.C. and across the nation. There was rejoicing and exultation when he, through sheer grit, determination and ability was elected mayor of Washington, D.C. and received national acclaim.

At present, understandably, within the Black community, there is a profound sense of sadness and keen disappointment that Mayor Barry has brought shame and pain to himself, his family and the constituents he serves in Washington, D.C. The overriding interest now is for Mayor Barry to regain his health, secure his family and prepare for his day in court.

The majority Black population of Washington, D.C., one of the most affluent and highly educated in our nation and Black citizens throughout the nation in spite of the Barry debacle must not permit their collective spirit and will to be broken by the racist and demeaning gross generalization of the White dominated and corolled White media.

As I have indicated, Mayor Barry's present failures of 35 million Black citizens. We must not allow ourselves to capitulate to perpetual lamentation or sack cloth ashes because of the deplorable and racist predilections and propensities of the White media.

Marcus Garvey, a prescient, proud and powerful Black leader, over a half - century ago, sounded a compelling theme for Black citizens which has vital and contemporary value for Black citizens, to a very substantial degree in the most prosperous nation in the world:

"Black men, you were once great; you shall be great again. Lose not courage, lose not faith, go forward." For us as Black citizens, the choice is unequivocally clear in terms of our collective survival and progress: Go forward!

'The Learning Place'

Complete text of Mayor Kurt Schmoke's remarks.

I am very pleased to be here with you today to celebrate the opening of the Learning Place Northwest, because this is indeed an event to be celebrated by all Baltimoreans. This new literacy center represents a dramatic expansion of literacy services now available to Baltimore citizens, and brings us closer to our goal of making Baltimore "The City That Reads."

The Learning Place — which is ready to serve 300 people this year — is our first new literacy hub, and will serve as a prototype for additional centers throughout the city.

We have just heard a beautiful rendition of "Lift Every Voice," which conveys a very strong message of hope and rejoicing, but also of determination to "march on, till victory is won." I think the Learning Place sends a similar message to the Baltimore community.

The Learning Place is a concrete symbol of hope, by offering valuable literacy training to adults in this community, this center opens the door — perhaps for the first time — to getting a job, or advancing up the career ladder.

The Learning Place is also a very real symbol of determination on the part of the city and the community that together, we can serve the literacy needs of our residents. The Learning Place is a prototype for our new expansion of services, because it connects this hub to a satellite at St. Ambrose Outreach Center nearby, which will also offer tutorial services.

When I came into office over two years ago, I pledged to make Baltimore "The City That Reads," but I knew that in order to succeed, all of us — city government, Baltimore businesses, community groups, and city residents — would have to share that same vision, and work together to make it a reality. The Learning Place is a visible confirmation of the city-wide literacy partnership.

You will be hearing from many of the people who are responsible for Baltimore's burgeoning literacy campaign: Maggi Gaines of Baltimore City Literacy Corporation, Mrs. Frances Draper, vice chair of Baltimore Reads, Mr. Randall Evans, Dept. of Economic and Employment Development, Ms. Linda Harris, Director of Office of Employment Development, Mrs. Rosalind Wilson, Director of The Learning Place.

Together with the United Way of Maryland, the Enoch Pratt Library, the Community College of Baltimore, the Department of Social Services, and the governor's Literacy Works Program, we have been able to build the Learning Place Northwest, and offer a uniquely holistic approach to help and train adults living in this neighborhood.

The public/private partnership that worked together to create the learning place mirrors the partnership so essential to making Baltimore "The City That Reads." It's only with city-wide support that we can leverage the necessary resources to create the comprehensive learning programs necessary for this monumental task.

There are two aspects of the Learning Place that I think illustrate the increasingly successful strategy of the city-wide literacy campaign. The first is accessibility. We cannot provide services in a vacuum. We need to offer our adult citizens learning opportunities through neighborhood based programs — convenient to where people live and work. And that is exactly what the Learning Place, and the other literacy centers that will open over the next few months, are able to do.

The second aspect of the Learning Place that we hope to duplicate elsewhere is its recognition of the need for motivational training for those who come through its doors. As anyone knows who has ever done it knows, the decision to go back to school — especially to learn to read and write — is not easy.

People wonder what others will think. They doubt their own ability to learn. So the Learning Place will help people build their self esteem, help them make decisions, and prepare them psychologically for re-entry into the learning, working world. Given her background as a former mayor's representative working in the community, I know that Ms. Wilson will be particularly sensitive to the needs of her new students.

Today's event represents the opening chapter in our city-wide literacy expansion strategy. During the course of the next few months, the Broadway branch of the Pratt Library will re-open as a literacy hub, offering a range of library services for new readers, as well as other learning and employment development opportunities.

The Urban League will soon be opening its new literacy center, and the Cal Ripken center is also about to begin operations. In addition, the city's Office of Employment Development is getting ready to open its new center in Southwest Baltimore. OED is now playing a major role in supporting literacy services city-wide, and offering training programs for our workforce.

I want to underscore the crucial impact that the Learning Place, and the many other new neighborhood literacy centers, will have on the city. As **Business Week** put it in a recent article on Baltimore, "first the renaissance, now the three R's." Baltimore must begin to match its economic growth with a comparable workforce.

We must get in sync with the demands of this city's growing economy, which translates into the need for strong schools, good job training, and highly literate, well educated workers.

So part of our job is to convince adults to recognize the value of improving their skills — both to themselves, to their children, and to the city, learning to read, or sharpening literacy skills, is the key to getting a job, or advancing in a career. It also helps to create productive, independent citizens involved in the life and health of the community.

Learning to read means helping your children with their homework. And that adds momentum to our ongoing efforts to broaden the educational opportunities for the city's young people.

In other words, we need to tap into the talents and abilities of every one of our citizens. We literally cannot afford to neglect a large number of city residents who, with training, could become active participants in Baltimore's future in the 1990's.

So today, we are celebrating more than the opening of a major neighborhood literacy center in Baltimore. We are also celebrating the increasingly successful partnership of area businesses, city and state agencies, and neighborhood groups working to expand literacy services in Baltimore.

If we are going to lift up our voices and sing, then we need to give everyone a voice. And the first step to that kind of empowerment can take place right here, at the Learning Place.

'The City that Reads' gets a push forward

The Afro-American
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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Dr. Ramona H. Edelin
On The Cultural Offensive

Men like Mandela and Malcolm

In February of 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison by the South African government after 27 years of political incarceration; and a new movement to observe the life and death of Malcolm X on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his assassination, was launched.

In the context of the African American cultural offensive, what can and should we say about these two men and their meaning to all of us?

Nelson Mandela is, at 71 years of age, the paradigm of the African democratic spirit.

He personifies all that we have said before and during these centuries of enslavement and domination about the unique role that African people have played in the attainment of recognition and respect for each and every human being — in government, business and in social and cultural life.

The first words from his mind and heart upon his release were to the people, praising their steadfastness in struggle and crediting all progress toward freedom, including his release, to them; and placing what remains of his life in their hands.

In response to all the seductions of glory and power posed by the media, he never wavered or faltered in his response that he is not the consummate leader who can now perform miracles — he is a loyal and disciplined member of the ANC who will never act unilaterally or alone in the furtherance of their struggle.

We have never seen such a man of integrity, maturity, courage and dignity, of any race, on the world stage.

Malcolm X was murdered in the prime of his manhood rather than imprisoned; and it is the integrity, courage and clarity of El-Hajj Malik El-Shubazz that we enshrine and commemorate today.

Like Nelson Mandela, Malcolm devoted his talents to the service of his people; he was prepared to defend his people; and he was an unalterable political threat to any who would wrong his people.

Let us reflect upon men like Mandela and Malcolm. Let us feel both the tumultuous joy and the searing pain of their lives. And let us raise African American boys and support African American men who will faithfully walk down the path they have cleared for us.

Ramona Hoage Edelin, Ph.D., is President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban Coalition, an urban action and advocacy organization founded in 1967. She will be a regular contributor to the Commentary Page.

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Destroyed lecture notes

It's unprofessional to solicit pity, but here's a case just begging for sympathy. The worst disaster for a professor is to have his lecture notes destroyed.

In my case, 22 years of teaching have produced rich lecture notes with plenty of anecdotes, data, examples, and tricky questions, which, if lost, would be hard to replace.

My lecture notes are safe, so it's not a case of personal pity. The pity is earned by Marxist professors who've been roguishly brainwashing and lying to our youth for decades. Their lecture notes have been so decimated by recent events in Eastern Europe, that they might easily qualify for disaster relief.

Their notes contain pages of tirades against U.S. imperialism and oppression. But the cat is out of the bag; the world now knows that Russia is ringed by captive nations, such as Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Armenia, who are now threatening unilateral declarations of independence.

Our Marxist professors must discard their notes and substitute: Russia is the world's cruelest and last colonial power.

They may seek to explain, evade, or deny the cruelty of Marxism - Leninism, and make claims of its success in Cuba, China, and North Korea, but there's no getting around the facts and the corpses.

Marxist professors led campus struggles for disinvestment and sanctions against South Africa portraying communism as a friend to the Black struggle against apartheid.

They make no mention of how previous Russian rulers Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin created an ethnic homeland policy that South Africa's Hendrik Verwoerd would have envied.

The Russian program is called the "policy of the nationalities." Different ethnic groups are required to live in certain places, and laws are passed restricting travel.

Marxist professors lecture our youth that communism is "the wave of the future," and in the "workers' paradise" there is no want because "from each according to his ability, and to each according to his needs."

Of course, no mention is made of the scarcity of soap, toilet paper, and adequate heat. In Marxism 101, professors preach the Marxist cry, "Working men of all countries, unite" for they "have nothing to lose but their chains." Try telling that to Romanians and Lithuanians.

How about the Marxist claim of no privileged classes as exist in the evil United States. If the profs try that this semester, the students should list all of Rumanian President Nicolae Ceausescu's finery and the pampered life - styles of the other communist bosses.

These are just a few of the lies that flourish full blown in some of our most prestigious schools, like Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Dartmouth and Brown where parents coughed up $20,000 or more to see their youngsters indoctrinated with unadulterated flimflam.

Worse yet, we have members of Congress spewing similar blather about the moral equivalency of capitalism and communism.

We have our news media burning a path to communist countries to give us testimonials of deprivation and atrocites. You'd think they'd also fish up a few of our campus and congressional communists and query, "You've been preaching about the wonders of communism; could you reconcile your outlook with those who've actually lived under communism?"

Our sympathies go to the Marxist professors who've had their lecture notes destroyed and who must tell students Ronald Reagan was right: Communism is headed for the dustbin of history. Socialism is headed in the same direction. After all, socialism is the same as communism, but with a happy face.

We'd feel even greater pity for our Marxist professors if a Romanian happened to become president of Harvard, Stanford, or Yale. If this happened at the University of Massachusetts, there's a real chance of Marxist professors being Ceausescued.

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

Keep pressure and sanctions

Now that South Africa finally has freed Nelson Mandela and suspended some of the restrictions and bans that had been instituted against the African National Congress and other groups, there are many, including President George Bush, who are saying the time has come to relax the pressure on South Africa.

To the contrary, we believe the anti-apartheid movement should increase the pressure and international economic sanctions campaign on South Africa.

In spite of the latest government actions, apartheid is still very much alive in South Africa.

Despite the eloquence of South African F. W. DeKlerk's speech to the racially exclusive and segregated South African Parliament, the basic racist principles and institutions of apartheid are being maintained.

Yes, changes are now unfolding in South Africa. Yes, DeKlerk's speech was a welcome departure from the rigid positions of past South African presidents.

Yes, we greet the freeing of Nelson Mandela with a great sense of joy. But it is exceedingly clear that the changes that are now occurring in South Africa are a direct result of pressure from the majority African population in South Africa and from the global anti-apartheid movement's economic sanctions against South Africa.

Yes, sanctions have worked and will continue to make a difference. Sanctions are effective and this is a concrete method of helping to force change in South Africa.

We salute the faith, fortitude, courage and irrepressible strength of Nelson Mandela after living through the ordeal of being unjustly imprisoned for twenty-seven years in South Africa as a political prisoner.

Mandela's struggle embodies and epitomizes the struggle of the people for freedom, justice, self-determination and peace.

President Bush stated, "I think when people move in the right direction, it is certainly time to review all policy....I view it positively, and most people around the world will".

Yet most people around the world, particularly in Southern Africa, are calling for keeping the pressure on South Africa so that more changes toward dismantling apartheid will occur.

Prime minister Margaret Thatcher following Bush's perspective concluded, "We believe in carrots as well as sticks and...the South African government should now have some of the former."

Thatcher should be reminded that the problem in the past has been the diplomatic and economic support of "apartheid" by the Western notion through "constructive engagement" that has helped to prolong the life of apartheid. Racist apartheid should not be fed "carrots."

The United States and Great Britian should refrain from supporting the apartheid regime in Pretoria.

The African National Congress responded to DeKlerk's announcement. The ANC stated, "We welcome the lifting of the bans on the ANC and other organizations.

We also welcome other positive measures announced by F. W. DeKlerk.

We are however, gravely concerned that the Pretoria regime has taken the decision that some political prisoners will not be released, that the state of emergency is not lifted in its entirety and that the practice of detention without trial will continue.

These decisions subtract rather than add to the process of creating the proper political climate.

The normalization of relations between South Africa and the rest of the world must continue to depend on ending the apartheid system.

We therefore, expect no country committed to ending White minority domination in South Africa will do anything to lessen the isolations of the apartheid regime."

The momentum for change in South Africa is now on an irreversible course. While more repression might occur in the short term, inevitably the forces of justice and freedom will prevail.

That is why the pro-democracy and pro-justice constituencies here in the Untied States must hold the line and oppose any effort by the Bush Administration to release sanctions against apartheid.

Therefore, together with the African National Congress, Bishop Tutu, Rev. Allen Boesak, the Mass Democratic Movement of South Africa, and millions of others we say, "Keep the pressure on South Africa until victory is finally won."

Norman Hill commentary:

Building a progressive constituency

Recently, I commented on last November's victories of Black "crossover" candidates in predominantly White constituencies.

While observing that the election of Douglas Wilder, David Dinkins, and other represented triumphs over racism, I suggested that if these victories were to be programmatic as well as symbolic, Blacks must work to build constituencies for progressive economic and social legislation.

This is more apparent than ever, now that President Bush has unveiled his 1991 budget and made his State of the Union speech.

The address, unfortunately, followed a pattern that has become typical for Bush: inspiring rhetoric without concrete proposals to support it.

As the **New York Times** said: "At times, the speech was quintessential George Bush, filled with the litany of campaign oratory — drug-free schools, help for the disabled and homeless and commercial enterprise zones, without the offer of substantial money to back the programs."

The President envisioned an America where everyone is employed, but his way of achieving this goal is capital gains tax cuts for the rich rather than substantial new funds for education or federal jobs programs for the unemployed.

Bush proclaimed his commitment to quality child care.

But he favors an inadequate tax-credit approach to child care that does not include the establishment of quality standards.

In his budget, Bush merely tinkered with social programs, adding a little money here and taking away a little there. He has, alas, been faithful to the Reagan legacy.

Despite all of the nation's grave social problems — homelessness, drug addiction, troubled school systems, etc. — he offered no daring social initiatives.

The unfortunate fact is that for the last decade, the White House has been controlled by those who favor the "trickle down" approach to economic problems.

Spur economic growth and eventually everyone will benefit, they say. What they mean is spur economic growth that will further enrich the wealthy, and don't worry too much about how things turn out for the poor.

Returning to November's political victories, we must recognize that what the Black community needs is not just electoral wins for individual Black candidates.

What Blacks and all workers, Black and White, require is nothing less than a concerted campaign to build a progressive political coalition on behalf of the Black-labor agenda for racial equality and economic and social justice.

On the agenda right now is legislation to overturn the Supreme Court's retrogressive 1989 civil rights decisions, to create affordable, quality child care, and to implement national health care reform that guarantees health insurance coverage to everyone.

In the longer run we need to work for an industrial policy tht includes fair trade measures, quality education for all, adequate assistance for the distressed, and jobs programs.

In this, our 25th Anniversary Year, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, is committed to rededicating itself to the Black - labor agenda.

To build a long-term political constituency for progressive social and economic programs, we are dedicating ourselves in 1990 to an outreach to Black youth.

We are working with the AFL-CIO to develop public school programs around the life and values of A. Philip Randolph, the founder of the Black - labor alliance.

We are inviting Black college students to meet the Institute's Black trade union activists and get involved in union organizing activity.

And to spread our message to the next generation of opinion makers, we are making contact with college newspaper editors at historically Black colleges.

If our like - minded friends in the Black - labor alliance also work to consolidate and enlarge their constituencies over the long term, then we all will have done our job, which is applying our educational and organizing skills to create a majority constituency for progressive social and economic change.

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