EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Trial by ambush

By the end of June, Baltimore City must have a new police commissioner, since Commissioner Tilghman will be leaving the position at that time.

The Police Commissioner is appointed by the mayor, with the consent of the city council, and already the search is on for a replacement for Tilghman.

Recent events have pointed up the need for the top official in the department to have ever increasing sensitivity to the problems of the majority population in the city.

While there is a hue and cry for the new commissioner to be an African American, this should not be the only criteria for the post. The problems in the inner city call for an awareness and determination to focus on the eradication of the root causes of distrust and adversarial relationship between police and city citizens.

The fallout continues over the shooting death of Booker T. Jones, suspect in the murder of two youngsters in Anne Arundel County. The official police explanation has not satisfied the community, nor civil rights groups who are calling for a grand jury investigation into police activities in the case.

At issue is the question of "trial by ambush" when a suspect . . . repeat, suspect . . . is gunned down, never to be tried for the crime of which he is accused. It is possible that he was not the murderer, and the real one is still around as a menacing danger.

We must insure that our policemen are attuned to these developments, and trained to react in a manner which preserves the integrity of our system of justice. This, of course, becomes a function of the top brass who must institute policy procedures.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Mayor's report card

We are in receipt of the AFRO-AMERICAN's Mayor's Report Card and find ourselves a little uncomfortable and at a loss as to how to respond appropriately. While certainly your newspaper is free to conduct opinion surveys on elected officials, as City Councilwomen we would have preferred a slightly different format.

We think it might have been better had you discussed what the Mayor had accomplished in each of the subject areas you have defined. You could have presented the objective facts of his accomplishments, then you might have encouraged the electorate to judge if his accomplishments in any particular line item were "satisfactory."

As the "report card" stands now, it would take a highly informed individual to "grade" the Mayor. Often it is difficult for the general public to know if a particular initiative falls into the category of "community development" or "public housing," for example.

Further, we hope that when the results of this survey are reported that care will be taken so that the reading public does not consider your results scientifically valid. For even scientifically executed polls can be interpreted to have significance far beyond the scope of the survey. The man in the street will be better served by reportorial caution.

Finally, for all the obvious reasons, we personally, will not respond to this survey.

VERA P. HALL
IRIS G. REEVES
ROCHELLE "RIKKI" SPECTOR

Automatically guilty?

In the case of Booker T. Jones it may not be acknowledged, but in addition to the murdered youths and the slain suspect there were still other victims; society, the legal process and the rule of law which the body politic claims to revere.

The outcome reeks of a sanctioned lynching and gives credence to those who maintain that in vital ways there has been little or no change in the attitude and behaviour of the white majority toward blacks, even if and when black underlings carry out the will of the majority.

Booker Jones was a suspect and entitled to a trial. He and society and the families of the victims have been deprived of seeing justice done.

It was not long ago that to be male and black and in the vicinity of a sexual crime against a white often led to the torture, mutilation and death of many innocent people.

Anyone so naive as to believe that race has nothing to do with the case and the operations of the criminal justice system in the U.S.A. is beyond hope.

Were the same value placed on black life as white, Jones would not have been out of jail free to murder again (assuming he was guilty in the present case) after having killed another black. One might characterize the categories of crime in white America as follows:

Crimes of white on blacks—no crime at all.

Crimes of blacks on blacks—petty crime.

Crimes of black on whites—serious crime.

Sexual crime of blacks on white—super - serious crime. Everyone knows this, but few admit it.

We are told that a witness informed police that Jones had implicated himself. Witnesses have an obligation to perform their roles in open courts, interacting with judges, lawyers, court officials, other witnesses and jury, not secretly as police informers.

However likely it may appear to some that Jones was the perpetrator of this heinous crime, it has not been proved. The police action left as many holes in the legal process as it did in Jones.

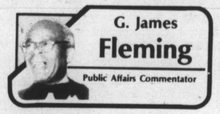
In some quarters, they may have made him into a martyr. They certainly have raised questions about the impartiality of the criminal justice system.

Was Jones a drug-crazed rapist? Possibly yes, but possibly not. For all that we know the murderer may still be at large and we had better believe that there are others capable of such a crime. Our society produces them en masse.

Until a few days ago, California permitted them to arm themselves with submachine guns. There are many questionable aspects of the case which will not come to light now.

If the community at large and the Afro-American community in particular permit this return to lynch law to go unchallenged, a giant step backward will have been taken.

JOSEPH HOWARD
M.DIV., Ph.D.



G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

Chinese officers almost won out

Some 100 officers of the Communist Chinese army almost won out, early in the mass protest of the Chinese students, when they refused to turn their guns on their own people.

These brave 100, at least, stayed the hands of the central government and prevented an immediate crackdown with military might.

The government was too big and strong, however, and could, eventually, call in brain-washed troops from the hinterland, red to "take on" those rowdy, city counter - revolutionaries.

It should have shocked the tight Communist regime to have a letter, signed by 100 officers, saying "no" to their command to attack their fellow-citizens. It was surprising to the rest of the world that such a phenomenon could happen in a totalitarian country.

If one soldier absolutely refuses to obey orders, he can be shot on the spot, but what can be done with 100 men—all Officers?

* * *

Neither the Chinese students nor the 100 officers brought democracy to Communist China, but both groups might have set an example to those who follow them and to the rest of the oppressed people.

Suppose 100 of South Africa's army officers should unitedly refuse to show down their fellow - citizens, and suppose those club - wielding, black "native police" would go on strike against brutalizing their own kind?

The South African government would retaliate, perhaps with tanks, but if these non - conformists could hold out long enough, their non - cooperation might bring about real change — even in South Africa.

The Chinese students were able to hold their despised rulers in hostage for over two weeks. The next time and in the next place, a similar freedom movement may, or should, have longer staying power.

One can only conjecture what might have happened in Germany, if in the early days of Hitler, 100 officers of his military machine had refused to pounce down upon their neighbors, had refused to carry them off to concentration camps and worse, had refused to take part in the wholesale extermination of Jews.

Or, how different it might have been in the Soviet Union if, during the reign of Stalin, 100 army officers or 100 of his secret police had refused to indulge in the mass arrests, banishments and mass burial of their fellow - Russians.

* * *

For the demonstrations of the Chinese students to have been a greater success, they would have had to multiply, to their side, many hundred and perhaps thousands of men in uniform who were willing to refuse to treat their own people as enemies. This time 100, next time 1,000 or more.

All is not lost, however, because the students cannot say they brought democracy, or near - democracy, to their Communist country. The powers - that - be received the message and will undoubtedly adjust their rule, here and there, sooner or later.

There may be a period of retaliation, but final adjustment will be favorable to democratic ideas, for a new generation, increasingly, will be replacing the "old hands" that now direct Communist China, just as younger hands are now getting control of Communist Russia.

Democracy is contagious. It is not surprising how frequently the Chinese students quoted from the American experience. They called to their aid the words of Patrick Henry, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. They also pledged themselves to pursue the non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Those Chinese students — in the hundreds of thousands — were the current version of the Freedom drives which have been going on for centuries, before and since Magna Carta, and marked by the American Revolution and the Freedom campaign of the U.S. civil right movement in the 1960s.

More power to the Chinese students and their supporters.

Anti-Nigerian protest

Our attention has been drawn to your "Nigerians charged in credit card scam" — April 29, 1989 — **The Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN**, p. B3 under which 22 Nigerians were allegedly accused of credit card fraud to the tune of $170,000 "loss to area business and more than $400,000 annually," according to a published report from Norfolk, Va.

Ordinarily, we would have waved such a seasonal anti-Nigerian diatribe aside as another ranting of a mad man who was only drumming up anti-Nigerian sentiment to cover up the plenthoria of societal decadence and injustices that have over the years become the bane of American policy.

But since we see your paper as one of the rare publications in the U.S. championing the course of our African heritage in the diaspora, we can't but comment on how that xenophobic report was in bad taste.

That the "Investigators" singled out Nigerians as responsible for a national credit card losses "that totaled $2 billion in 1988," to us, is racist.

Who are these "Investigators?" Are they not the same breed of people who have over the centuries kept Africans divided?

By now you should know that certain forces in your banking, INS, and other institutions, for obvious exploitative reasons, are hell bent on putting Africans, especially Nigerians, down.

For fairness, wasn't it incumbent on the "Investigators" to inform the public the percentage of other ethnic Americans who are engaged in similar clandenstine debauchery?

For your information, it is known in the Nigerian community that whatever bank tricks Nigerians are discredited for today are taught them by the Americans themselves. Any country that encourages citizens to live on borrowed future can't but expose itself to uncouth people, be they Italians or Koreans, taking an advantage of such morass.

Albeit we condemn debauchery in all its ramifications, we nevertheless refuse to condone a story designed to label most Nigerians into a fraudulent basket of "bad eggs."

AYODELE AYETIGBO
Coscomm Letters

* * *

While the Organization of Nigerian Citizens, Inc., will like to commend your staff writers in their effort to publicize negative events occurring within the Nigerian community, it is hoped that your paper will likewise devote equal space to positive news within the same community so as to provide your readership with a balanced and comprehensive information.

We will like to draw your attention to some erroneous assumptions made in the article.

Firstly, the ONC agrees with the article in its entirety, except in the following areas:

1. The assumption that "75 to 90 percent of the estimated 50,000 Nigerians in the U.S. have been involved" in fraudulent activities is way out of proportion. Using the lowest margin, 75 percent of 50,000 is approximately 37,500. By excluding the under-age group, a mathematical projection will put the remainder to the approximated population of Nigerians in the Greater Baltimore/Washington area alone, thus not accounting for forty-nine of the fifty states in the U.S., including its territories.

The ONC feels that the reverse of your reported statistics is actually the case. The atrocious acts your article is reporting is actually the action of a minority, therefore, an entire race or nation of peoples should not be condemned or be made to pay the price of things they are not responsible for.

2. The report that, "it is easy to enter the United States . . ." is also not in alignment with the current practices of the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria. The fact is that since the beginning of this year alone, the estimated population of 50,000 Nigerians have been decreased by almost .03 percent due to tighter restrictions by the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria. And since 1986, the amount of both Student and Visitors visas issued to Nigerians have been cut by almost 75 percent.

The Afro-American
MEMBER The Audit Bureau MDDC NNPA UPI

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

Educational underclass

In the 1980s, sociologists have popularized a new term which describes the permanent poverty of millions of poorly trained and uneducated residents of the urban ghetto — the "underclass."

This terminology suggests that millions of poor people, mostly blacks and Latinos, are so thoroughly marginalized by the lack of jobs, decent schools, health care and other institutions that they become virtually irrelevant to the process of production.

Many exist at minimum wages or less, or via semilegal or extralegal means, such as hustling, drugs and petty crime.

I have a number of reservations about the term "underclass," in part, because it tends to underestimate the centrality and utility of racism in perpetuating empoverished conditions for people of color.

But if an economic "underclass" does exist, its perpetuation and expansion are largely guaranteed by the tragic situation in our public schools.

At a time when our economy is demanding a higher level of technical ability, mathematic and scientific skills for the labor force, fewer young people are being academically prepared.

The **Wall Street Journal** recently documented a series of disturbing facts about the educational underclass.

In many states, the dropout rate for nonwhite high school students exceeds 50 percent. Across the United States, 3,800 teenagers drop out of school every day.

And of those students who stay in schools, millions don't receive any serious training in algebra, geometry, biology, English composition, history or foreign languages.

Approximately 80 percent of all applicants interviewed by Motorola, Inc. fail an entry-level examination which requires seventh grade English and fifth-grade math. According to the **Journal**, in 1988 New York Telephone Company received 117,000 applications for only several hundred fulltime jobs.

Less than half of the applicants were considered qualified to take the basic employment exam, and of this number only 2,100 passed. In short, thousands of people are applying for jobs as cashiers and bank tellers who cannot do simple arithmetic.

Thousands of high school students are unable to read the simplest instructions. Meanwhile, the new jobs generated by high technology increasingly demand the ability to operate computers and to analyze complex data.

The gap is steadily growing between the technical qualifications and academic background necessary for such jobs, and the actual level of abilities for millions in the educational underclass.

Part of the solution would appear to be the recruitment and retention of highly motivated and excellent teachers in the public school systems, especially in the sciences and mathematics.

In recent years, there's been a renewed interest in becoming public school teachers among college students. Back in 1982, only 4.7 percent of all college freshman polled wanted to be teachers; by 1988, the percentage jumped to 8.8 percent. But the bulk of these students aren't science majors.

Only 1,500 education majors qualify to teach high school math or science each year, or about one for every ten jobs which are advertised in these fields.

In the next five years, about 625,000 young men and women will be trained in colleges to become school teachers.

One fourth of all public school instructors will retire in the next 15 years, and a high percentage of younger teachers who are discouraged by low pay and poor working conditions will quit.

It won't be long before a new form of "segregation" will exist to threaten the prospects of millions of black youth.

There won't be the Jim Crow signs of "white" and "colored" to preserve job discrimination. Instead, the new segregation of the twenty first century could be the division between the educated "haves" and the uneducated "have nots."

Those who lack scientific, mathematical and computer skills are already disproportionately nonwhite.

The struggle for expanded federal expenditures for student grants and improved public schools is directly linked to the economic future of Black America.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, The Ohio State University.

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

It's unnatural

Getting older one expects to see change, both challenging and uncomfortable, but some changes have been wicked and unnatural. Let's look at it.

Three or four times a semester, my daughter brings a consent form to allow her to accompany classmates on a trip to see a Broadway play or go skiing.

When she goes away to summer camp, I must sign a consent form permitting the medical staff to treat her in event of an emergency. There's nothing unnatural about that; it's right that parents be informed, and make decisions, about the goings and comings of their children.

But what about if our minor daughter became pregnant and wanted an abortion? Some states have laws requiring parental consent and knowledge.

But the Supreme Court, in the case of a 15-year-old Florida girl, has recently invalidated a state law requiring consent. Now she can just walk into an abortion clinic and have an abortion with neither parental knowledge nor consent.

There have been instances of girls as young as nine, 10 and 11 years old who have gotten pregnant. Liberals have seen to it that these children can undergo a medically and psychologically risky abortion procedure without their parents having any say whatsoever.

That makes me mad.

It's not too hard to see why the same liberals lead the anti-gun movement; they have a lot more in store for us. If I had a minor child who got an abortion, the clinic that did it, the judge who allowed it, and the lawyer who represented her would be in a world of trouble and so would I.

Government has clearly gone too far in usurping the traditional rights and responsibilities of families. It is the mystery why family structure and child discipline is on the decline.

After all, What kind of message is being sent to our young ones when the government tells them they can have abortions without parental knowledge or consent? That's the same as telling them they can do anything without parental knowledge or consent.

You tell me. If the government says my daughter can undergo something as important and serious as an abortion without my knowledge and consent, why should she have to get my knowledge and consent for something as trivial as going on a class trip or something not so trivial as smoking crack?

Granting kids abortion rights is just the latest government foray into the family's affairs. Several years ago, a father suspected his son of having drugs in his bedroom. So he asked the police to search the room. Drugs were found.

The kid got a lawyer and sued for illegal search and seizure. That a lawyer would take the case and a judge would listen is preposterous. Lawyers have made it difficult for school principals to search students' lockers with a warrant.

Is it any wonder drugs have gotten such a foothold in our society?

It causes me to wonder. When will the average American stand up and say he's fed up; that he's had enough of liberal, government-sponsored interference in our private lives?

Our founding Fathers waged a war against, what was at the time, the most powerful nation on the face of this earth for far less intervention into the Colonies' affairs.

Making that momentous decision in 1776, these leaders knew that if they lost they'd be hung as traitors by the king. We have betrayed their risk and sacrifice by sheepishly allowing our government to seize the kind of control over our lives that would have made King George foam at the mouth.

History has shown that a government's appetite for control cannot be satiated. Americans who care about liberty had better dig in their heels now before it's too late.

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

Lessons from Panama

In the wake of President George Bush's call for the people and military of Panama to overthrow General Manuel Antonio Noriega from power, the old adage "what goes around, certainly comes around" appears to be true in this situation.

No one wishes continued hardship on the people of Panama. No one who is interested in the cause of justice and freedom would deny that there are needs to be a change in Panama.

Yet, it should be of great concern not only to the people of Panama, but also to people here in the United States and throughout the world that to date President Bush has not admitted to his role nor the role of the United States in helping to prop up General Noriega in the first place.

During the Reagan Administration years, Noriega was viewed as a strategic ally of U.S. foreign policy in helping to overthrow the government of Nicaragua by supporting the Contras.

Even when the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies knew of Noriega's involvement in the transportation and selling of drugs to sources in the United States, Noriega was tolerated and even supported.

It is important for African Americans. Latin Americans and others to remember the paternalistic and explojtive relationship that the United States has had as a matter of policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the echo of Bush's inference that U.S. military forces might have to be used to protect or evacuate U.S. citizens in Panama, we still remember the unjust invasion of the African Caribbean nation of Grenada.

Of course, what is happening in Panama was not the same situation that was happening in Grenada when President Reagan ordered in the invasion.

The point that we are raising is that the very persons and forces that help to set Noriega up as a military strong man in Panama now have the loudest voices calling for Noriega's overthrow. The United States should not use Noriega's contradictions as an excuse to launch an invasion of Panama.

The reason why the people of Panama are having problems now is because of the history of U.S. overt and covert intervention into the internal affairs of that nation.

Just as the invasion of Grenada was wrong, any thought of invading Panama is also wrong. What Latin America and the Caribbean people deserve is a little less tampering and violation with the sovereignty of the nations of this region;

And more effective assistance in helping to eliminate poverty, drugs and exploitation which has become commonplace in this hemisphere largely due to the history of U.S. military intervention and multinational corporate exploitation.

With all the problems that drugs have created throughout the United States, We believe that Bush should first lead the charge against the drug barons who have found haven and great livelihood in many cities of this nation.

Noriega in Panama for the United States is as Malcolm X once said, "This is a case of the chickens coming home to roost."

In one of my past columns, "White House Budget is 'Bush League,'" I documented how the so-called "education President" is doing less for education than his predecessor, President Reagan. Ironically, the Bush budget recommendations also cut funding by 40 percent for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which was the legislation linked to Vice President Dan Quayle as his contribution in the Senate.

The Bush budget cuts in education and job training, provide a classic example of how the American public can be duped by the rhetoric of a Presidential campaign.

Unfortunately, now that the whirlwind media activity, that closely scrutinized President Bush's every statement during the campaign, is history, much of the national press seem to have lost interest in carefully examining his lack of consistency between rhetoric on the stump and the Administration's present budget proposal.

The Congress, in their strong support for a humane budget, now urges the President to reconsider his spending priorities and join them in a political partnership, to invest in the energy and talent of our great nation.

REP. GUS HAWKINS:

Addressing the needs of workforce 2000

For too long many of our nation's lawmakers have been political Rip Van Winkles. Although recognizing that education is a major national issue, they have been dozing off when others have been calling for a long term investment to address illiteracy, low academic achievement and joblessness.

In an effort to focus our nation's attention on this problem I recently introduced the Workforce 2000 Employment Readiness Act of 1989 (H.R. 2235).

The legislation is intended to be a catalyst, for meeting our nation's workforce needs through an education fund and to strengthen our existing equal employment opportunity law.

The **Workforce 2000 Report**, prepared by the Hudson Institute for the U.S. Department of Labor, has warned that by the year 2000 the majority of new entrants into the labor force will be women and minorities of whom, many have suffered substantial barriers to accessing education and employment.

The result is a lack of skills and education necessary for most of the jobs in our increasingly technical and complex labor market.

Today, some 23 to 27 million Americans cannot read above the fifth grade level and another 35 million cannot read above the eighth grade level. Yet, 70 percent of the written material in the workplace is between the ninth and twelfth grade reading level.

The literacy problem is so large that the costs to business are incredible: over $200 billion every year.

The number of high school dropouts is equally staggering, but, estimated to be as high as one million a year. In addition, another 700,000 cannot understand a newspaper or fill out a job application despite having completed 12 years of formal education. The average Japanese high schooler has better math skills than the top five percent of Americans taking college prep courses.

Given the fact that 25 million entrants to the labor force will be needed by the year 2000 to fill jobs requiring increased skill levels, education and job training are of critical importance.

The Workforce Employment Readiness Act will help meet this need by establishing an education improvement fund, by assessing a 0.5 percent of every Federal contract (equal to ½ of one percent).

It is estimated that this fund could be as much as $850 million a year.

The money would be used in part to establish special scholarship funds to encourage minorities to enter fields where they have been previously excluded, such as engineering, chemistry and others.

The funds would also be used to provide grants to state and local education institutions and agencies for the purposes of promoting the same career preparedness activity.

One such program would be aimed at early identification and preparation of minorities and females to enter fields requiring substantial skills in math and science.

Another program would be directed at promoting minorities in the teaching profession. The bill could also fund workforce development centers in which a partnership is forged between schools, industry and community groups to upgrade teacher skills.

H.R. 2235 also strengthens the anti-discrimination requirements for federal contractors, makes it easier for employees to file job discrimination suits and simplifies affirmative action reporting forms and procedures.

Basically, H.R. 2235 links civil rights and federal contract compliance with the funding of a targeted education program. It is an investment plan that recognizes that we can no longer afford to look at simplistic and shortsighted remedies to solve our skill shortages.

The political Rip Van Winkles must wake up and join this effort to prepare our workforce for the year 2000.