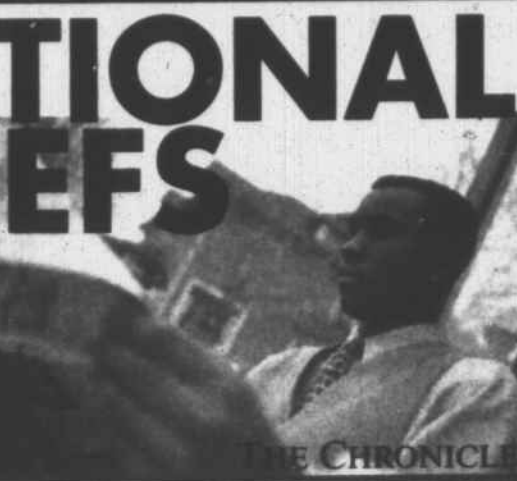


NATIONAL BRIEFS



Jackson endorses boycott of Crown Oil

In a joint press statement, PACE International Union, Rainbow/Push Coalition and the AFL-CIO announced that the Rev. Jesse Jackson has endorsed the national boycott against the Baltimore-based Crown Central Petroleum Co. for its alleged unfair treatment of workers and unsafe environmental practices.

"We are asking consumers not to spend their dollars at Crown gasoline stations and convenience stores, until Crown stops its abuse of workers and addresses its race and gender problems," Jackson said.

Jackson and Rainbow/Push join a long list of leaders and organizations supporting the boycott, including: the Rev. Al Sharpton, the NAACP, National Baptist Convention, Baltimore City Council, National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, several ministerial alliances and numerous environmental groups.

The campaign against Crown Oil began in 1996 when 252 workers at its Pasadena, Texas, refinery were removed from a contract negotiation affecting the one-third minority work force. Since then, African-American and female employees have filed a discrimination lawsuit against the company. It is also being sued for environmental violations. In 1998, Crown received the largest air pollution fine in Texas history. The company denies the allegations and faults the employees' union for the negative publicity. — *Simeon Booker Muhammad*



Jackson



Sharpton

INTERNATIONAL

Malawian Army to recruit first women soldiers

LILONGWE, Malawi — According to Malawian army commander Lt. Gen. Joseph Chimbayo, most of the logistical, policy and financial issues surrounding the enlisting of women into the "army ranks" have been finalized.

The army plans to initially enlist 35 women out of the 500 recruits it wants to draft by December. According to Chimbayo, the young women will have the opportunity to work in every department except the combat division, as is the case in many countries.

To prepare for the program, the Danish government is supporting gender sensitization workshops for the men and officers in the Malawian army.

"The idea is to make sure everyone is prepared to work with the women soldiers," said the army's public relations officer, Lt. Col. Mcloyd Chidzalo.

Malawi is one of the few countries in the region whose army has remained exclusively male, 35 years after gaining independence from Britain. Several neighboring countries, including Zambia and Mozambique, have female soldiers.

Currently, the only women on the country's military payroll are nurses serving in the clinics of most army barracks. — *Haizwell Kanjaye*

Congolese rebels sign accord

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) — With the signing of the Lusaka peace accord by 50 founding members of the Congolese Rally for Democracy, the war-weary Congolese people are beginning to believe that a meaningful dialogue between the warring factions can now take place.

Late last month, leaders of the RCD, the larger of the two rebel groups which has itself undergone a split, signed a cease-fire in the Zambian capital of Lusaka, more than 50 days after the six countries involved in the DRC war already approved it.

The agreement was ratified July 10 by President Laurent-Desire Kabila and the leaders of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, who all sent troops to support Kabila, and by Rwanda and Uganda, who support the rebels.

The cease-fire accord provides for a cessation of the hostilities, the deployment of a peace-keeping force, the disarmament of the Hutu extremists responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, negotiations among the various Congolese factions and the withdrawal of all remaining foreign troops.

Among the accord's six points, the Congolese will have the right to hold negotiations among their compatriots in order to "put into place new institutions which will lead the country toward free and open elections." — *Bienvenu Mundala*

Ethiopian languages dying out

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (IPS) — Of the 80 languages spoken in Ethiopia, 22 are on the verge of extinction, according to researchers.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics, which specializes in the study of non-written languages, has identified 17 languages threatened with extinction in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's University of Addis Ababa has even added five more languages to the list.

Most of the endangered languages are found in the southern region of Ethiopia. Two of them — Gafat and Boshia — have already died, said Abebe Gebre Tsadiq, the chairman of the linguistics department of the University of Addis Ababa.

Ungota and Birale, spoken in the south of the country, for example, have only six fluent speakers, according to Tsadiq, predicting the language will die within 10 years.

Another language, Shabo, has only 150 speakers; Argoba, with 1,000 speakers, also risks dying out, according to the Map of the Endangered Languages of Africa. — *Yemisrach Benalfew*

Place of tragedy grows as civil rights museum

BY WOODY BAIRD
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — For years, the site where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated was a place of shame for Memphis.

No more. Now the Lorraine Motel is the home of the National Civil Rights Museum and a place of pride for the city. It's a memorial to King and the thousands of foot soldiers in the struggle for black civil rights.

"That is the spot where Martin Luther King Jr. died, and that's forever. So you take that ... pain and you turn it into power. That's what we've been able to do," said the Rev. Billy Kyles, a Memphis pastor and longtime civic leader.

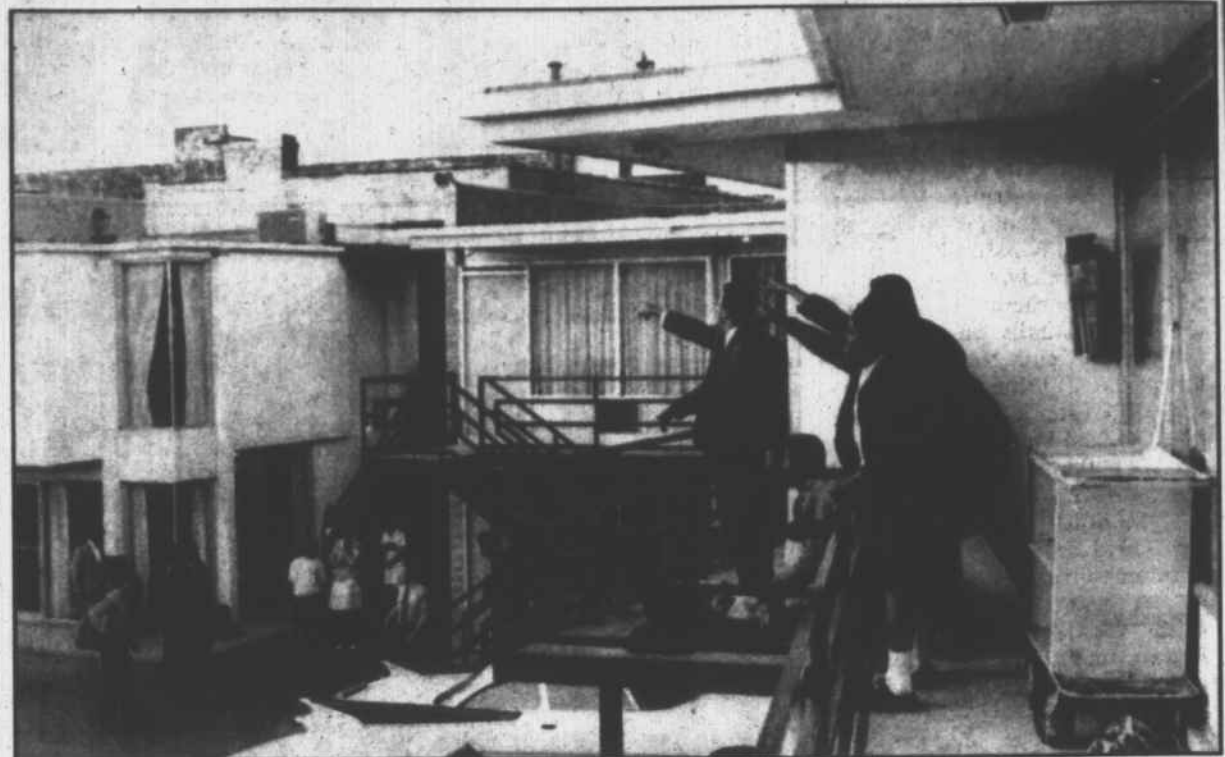
King was shot to death in April 1968 while standing on a balcony at the motel. He was in Memphis to lend support to striking sanitation workers.

The museum opened in 1991 after years of work by private citizens who wrangled financing for it from the state, county and city.

Critics argued Memphis would be better off getting rid of the Lorraine. But its backers held firm, saying it could be a monument to the human spirit and a healing balm for old wounds.

Pitt Hyde, a prominent white businessman and museum backer, said those predictions have come true.

"Everybody not only speaks highly of the museum and are delighted it's here, they've made substantial contributions for its



Aides to Martin Luther King Jr. point to the area from where they heard the shot that killed King, lying on balcony, in Memphis, Tenn., April 4, 1968. The hotel is now a historical landmark and museum.

expansion," said Hyde, the founder of AutoZone Inc. who now runs a private foundation carrying his family name. "It was the right thing to do."

Hyde is directing fund-raising for an expansion now under way that will almost double the museum's exhibition space to 25,000 square feet. More than \$7 million of the \$9 million needed for the project has been raised.

With photographs, old news reels and elaborate multimedia

exhibits, the museum tells the story of the struggle for civil rights from the '60 through King's death. It also puts on symposiums, art exhibits and youth programs.

"When they leave the museum, lots of people ask if (King's) dream is still alive or has it died. Did it work in Memphis? Did it work in other places? We want to highlight that the dream did not die but lives still," said the Rev. Benjamin Hooks, the museum board's chairman and former

director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

With the expansion, the museum will include exhibits from 1968 to the present. It also will have materials about the assassination, including much of the evidence tying confessed killer James Earl Ray to the crime.

Ray admitted killing King but spent the rest of his life trying to prove his innocence. He died of

See King on A11

Trial of second white supremacist gets under way in Byrd dragging

BY MICHAEL GRACZYK
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRYAN, Texas — Murder defendant and white supremacist Lawrence Russell Brewer was so proud of his participation in the gruesome dragging death of a black East Texas man last year that he wrote about it weeks later, prosecutors said Monday as Brewer's trial got under way.

"I'm the goddamned hero of the day," he wrote to another

inmate while being held at the Jasper County Jail for the June 1998 Byrd slaying.

In the July 1998 letter to an inmate at a state prison, he referred to "rolling a tire," with a witness describing "tire" as a derogatory jailhouse term for a black person.

"Well, I did it," Brewer wrote in the letter, which was intercepted by a deputy. "And no longer am I a virgin. It was a rush and I'm still licking my lips for more."

Defense attorney Doug Barlow, who declined to make an opening statement to the jury Monday, said Brewer was writing about sex and not a murder.

An innocent plea to the capital murder charge was entered Monday for Brewer, 32, the second of three white men charged with killing James Byrd Jr. by chaining him by his ankles to the back of a pickup truck and then pulling him for three miles along a bumpy country road.

"He sees himself as a hero, a star, that he's really accomplished," Jasper District Attorney Guy James Gray said in an opening statement to a jury hearing Brewer's case. "It's really a kind of weird mind-set."

Brewer, from Sulphur Springs, along with John William King and Shawn Allen Berry, both 24 and from Jasper, are accused of abducting Byrd, 49, and killing him the early morning of June 7,

See Trial on A11

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This Week In Black History...

- Sept. 16, 1933 — "Emperor Jones," starring Paul Robeson as Brutus Jones, is released. The film is the first Hollywood production to star a black actor and feature whites in supporting roles; it marks Robeson's first starring role.
- Sept. 18, 1850 — Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Act. The act offers federal officers a monetary reward for capturing slaves.
- Sept. 21, 1909 — Kwame Nkrumah is born in Nkoful, Ghana. A leader in the African colonial liberation movement, Nkrumah will become the first prime-minister of Ghana.