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SUNDAY, FEB. 14, 1960

EQUALITY IS GOAL OF RACE CONGRESS

Group Pickets Store Here
to Back Moves in South
Over Lunch Counters

By BERNARD STENGREN

Translating the law of the land and the rule of morality on integration into practical terms is the goal that the Congress of Racial Equality set for itself when it was founded eighteen years ago.

Most of the time the 12,000-member organization tries to convince store owners and business executives by quiet persuasion. But on occasion it uses picket lines and leaflets to change a practice that it feels is contrary to law or court interpretations.

Thus it put its resources behind the demonstration by college students in Greensboro, N. C., that began spontaneously against the practice of a variety store there of refusing to serve seated Negroes at its lunch counter.

Picketed Uptown Store

The congress is also backing similar demonstrations in other Southern cities, and yesterday mounted a thirty-member picket line in front of the F. W. Woolworth & Co. store at 208 West 125th Street.

And, while it did not take part actively, the congress supported a similar picket line run yesterday by the East Harlem Reform Democrats in front of the S. H. Kress & Co. store at Third Avenue and 106th Street.

It was in local outlets of these chains in Southern cities where sit down strikes by Negroes seeking service at lunch counters led to closing the counters in recent days.

The Kress store at 444 Fifth Avenue, at Thirty-eighth Street, also was picketed briefly yesterday, but congress officials said they had no knowledge of that activity.

Policy is Explained

Marvin Rich, community relations director for the congress and captain of the thirty-member picket line at the Woolworth's store here yesterday, said that similar demonstrations have been held in the past—at local airline offices and airplane ticket offices, as well as in southern and border cities—but only when discussions with officials of the companies practicing alleged discrimination fail to correct the practices.

For this reason, he said, the organization is not so well known as others working in the race relations field.

The congress was formed in Chicago in 1942 by a group headed by James R. Robinson, George Houser and James Farmer.

Mr. Farmer is now program director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Mr. Houser is now executive director of the American Committee on Africa and Mr. Robinson is executive secretary of the congress.

Influenced by Gandhi

The men had been reading "War Without Violence," by Krishnalal Shridharani, a disciple of Mohandas K. Gandhi, and were intrigued with the idea of using its basic concept of passive resistance to aid in bringing about real integration.

With the support of the N. A. A. C. P. and other groups in the field, the congress was established as a separate entity to experiment with the idea.

Since then it has grown to a 12,000-member group with branches in thirty cities and a budget of about \$60,000 a year.

All but a small portion of this money comes from individual contributions, and the rest—in sums of \$25 to \$100—comes from labor unions and similar organizations.

The National headquarters of the congress is in a two-room fifth-floor office at 38 Park Row.

Among the members of the congress's admission committee are the Rev. A. J. Muste, head of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a group dedicated to passive resistance; Roger N. Baldwin, former executive secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who organized the bus boycott in Birmingham, Ala.



SEEK SERVICE AT LUNCH COUNTER: Young Negroes at a counter in the F. W. Woolworth Company store in Rock Hill, S. C., yesterday. This one, like others, closed.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1960

Negro Sitdowns Stir Fear Of Wider Unrest in South

By CLAUDE SITTON

Special to The New York Times.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., Feb. 14 — Negro student demonstrations against segregated eating facilities have raised grave questions in the South over the future of the region's

race relations. A sounding of opinion in the affected areas showed that much more might be involved than the matter of the Negro's right to sit at a lunch counter for a coffee break.

The demonstrations were generally dismissed at first as an-

Wider Support Planned

The Congress of Racial Equality planned yesterday to widen its support of student protests against lunch-counter discrimination in the South.

Nine members of its action committee met at the group's headquarters, 38 Park Row, and decided to resume picketing next Saturday in front of the F. W. Woolworth & Co. store at 208 West 125th Street.

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NEGRO SITDOWNS DISQUIET SOUTH

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other college fad of the "panty-raid" variety. This opinion lost adherents, however, as the movement spread from North Carolina to Virginia, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee and involved fifteen cities.

Students of race relations in the area contended that the movement reflected growing dissatisfaction over the slow pace of desegregation in schools and other public facilities.

Moreover, these persons saw a shift of leadership to younger, more militant Negroes. This, they said, is likely to bring increasing use of passive resistance. The technique was conceived by Mohandas K. Gandhi of India and popularized among Southern Negroes by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He led the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala. He now heads the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a Negro minister's group, which seeks to end discrimination.

The spark that touched off the protests was provided by four freshmen at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro. Even Negroes class Greensboro as one of the most progressive cities in the South in terms of race relations.

On Sunday night, Jan. 31, one of the students sat thinking about discrimination.

"Segregation makes me feel that I'm unwanted," McNeil A. Joseph said later in an interview. "I don't want my children exposed to it."

The 17-year-old student from Wilmington, N. C., said that he approached three of his classmates the next morning and found them enthusiastic over a proposal that they demand service at the lunch counter of a downtown variety store.

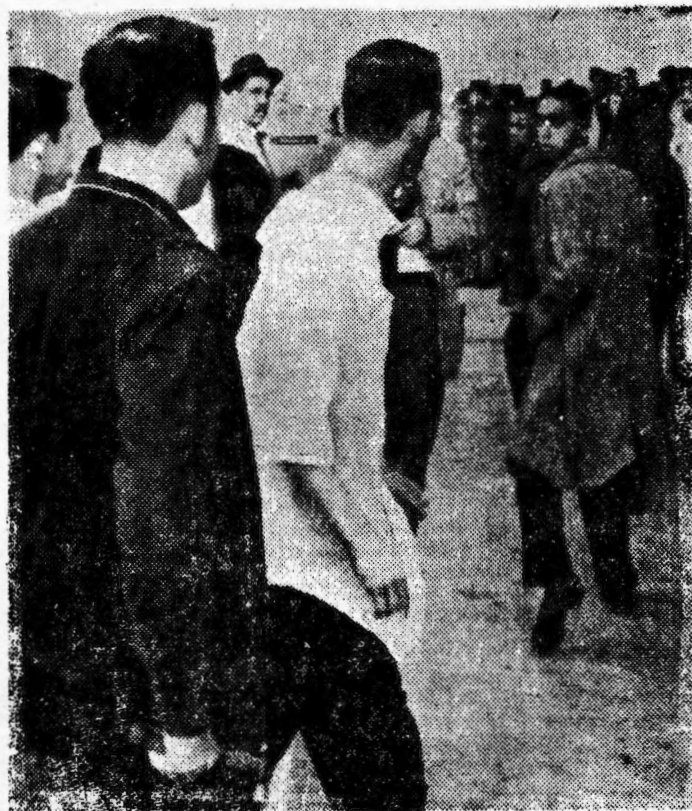
About 4:45 P. M. they entered the F. W. Woolworth Company store on North Elm Street in the heart of Greensboro. Mr. Joseph said he bought a tube of toothpaste and the others made similar purchases. Then they sat down at the lunch counter.

Rebuked by a Negro

A Negro woman kitchen helper walked up, according to the students, and told them, "You know you're not supposed to be in here." She later called them "ignorant" and a "disgrace" to their race.

The students then asked a white waitress for coffee.

"I'm sorry but we don't serve colored here," they quoted her.



THREATS IN THE AFTERNOON: Negro students move away from white teenagers in Portsmouth, Va. Negro protest against segregated lunch counter seating began fight between groups. Youth in foreground carries hammer.

"I beg your pardon," said Franklin McCain, 18, of Washington, "you just served me at a counter two feet away. Why is it that you serve me at one counter and deny me at another. Why not stop serving me at all the counters."

The four students sat, coffeeless, until the store closed at 5:30 P. M. Then, hearing that they might be prosecuted, they went to the executive committee of the Greensboro N. A. A. C. P. to ask advice.

"This was our first knowledge of the demonstration," said Dr. George C. Simkins, who is president of the organization. He said that he had then written to the New York headquarters of the Congress of Racial Equality, which is known as CORE. He requested assistance for the demonstrators, who numbered in the hundreds during the following days.

Dr. Simkins, a dentist, explained that he had heard of a successful attempt, led by CORE, to desegregate a Baltimore restaurant and had read one of the organization's pamphlets.

CORE's field secretary, Gordon R. Carey, arrived from New York on Feb. 7. He said that he had assisted Negro students in some North Carolina cities after they had initiated the protests.

The Greensboro demonstrations and the others that it

triggered were spontaneous, according to Mr. Carey. All of the Negroes questioned agreed on this.

The movement's chief targets were two national variety chains, S. H. Kress & Co. and the F. W. Woolworth Company. Other chains were affected. In some cities the students demonstrated at local stores.

The protests generally followed similar patterns. Young men and women and, in one case, high school boys and girls, walked into the stores and requested food service. Met with refusals in all cases, they remained at the lunch counters in silent protest.

The reaction of store managers in those instances was to close down the lunch counters and, when trouble developed or bomb threats were received, the entire store.

Hastily painted signs, posted on the counters, read: "Temporarily Closed," "Closed for Repairs," "Closed in the Interest of Public Safety," "No Trespassing," and "We Reserve The Right to Service the Public as We See Fit."

After a number of establishments had shut down in High Point, N. C., the S. H. Kress & Co. store remained open, its lunch counter desegregated. The secret? No stools.

Asked how long the store had been serving all comers on a

stand-up basis, the manager replied:

"I don't know. I just got transferred from Mississippi."

The demonstrations attracted crowds of whites. At first the hecklers were youths with duck-tailed haircuts. Some carried small Confederate battle flags. Later they were joined by older men in faded khakis and overalls.

The Negro youths were challenged to step outside and fight. Some of the remarks to the girls were jesting in nature, such as, "How about a date when we integrate?" Other remarks were not.

Negro Knocked Down

In a few cases the Negroes were elbowed, jostled and shoved. Itching powder was sprinkled on them and they were spattered with eggs.

At Rock Hill, S. C., a Negro youth was knocked from a stool by a white beside whom he sat. A bottle of ammonia was hurled through the door of a drug store there. The fumes brought tears to the eyes of the demonstrators.

The only arrests reported involved forty-three of the demonstrators. They were seized on a sidewalk outside a Woolworth store at a Raleigh shopping center. Charged with trespassing, they posted \$50 bonds and were released.

The management of the shopping center contended that the sidewalk was private property.

'Complicated Hospitality'

Some newspapers noted the embarrassing position in which the variety chains found themselves. The News and Observer of Raleigh remarked editorially that in these stores the Negro was a guest, who was cordially invited to the house but definitely not to the table. "And to say the least, this was complicated hospitality."

Rogers Gets Appeal

The Congress of Racial Equality said here yesterday that it had sent a telegram to Attorney General William P. Rogers protesting the use of trespassing laws to stop the sitdowns by Negro students in the South.

The organization is an interracial group that uses nonviolent methods to combat racial discrimination. It urged Mr. Rogers "to take immediate steps to protect the civil liberties and rights of the Negro students who are threatened with arrest and imprisonment under the guise of a trespass complaint."

**CONGRESS OF
CORE
RACIAL EQUALITY**
38 Park Row
New York 38, N.Y.