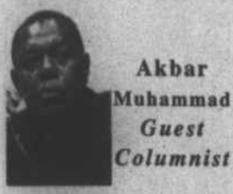


FORUM

In Flint, Michigan, "We Charge Genocide"

-- Six questions and past actions in the U.S. that give precedent to why such a charge is conceivable



Akbar Muhammad
Guest Columnist

Nationwide (BlackNews.com) -- I first saw the term "We Charge Genocide" on the cover of a book given to me in a New York City restaurant called "Ararat," off 36th Street and 5th Avenue. It was an Armenian restaurant where the owner got to know Minister Louis Farrakhan, his family and staff who dined there from time to time for dinner. It was from the owner that I heard about the struggle of Armenia, which was not an independent country at that time.

In recent years, Armenia has become familiar to the American public from the notoriety of the reality television family, the Kardashians, who are from there.

The tragedy in Armenia was a case of systematic liquidation of a minority people struggling for freedom, self determination and justice by the old Ottoman Empire which is now Turkey.

It was carried out during World War I between the years 1915 and 1918. The Armenian people were subjected to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation, said www.armenian-genocide.org that documented the struggle and

history.

Although the violations happened years before the United Nations Convention on Genocide, the world condemned the action. But perhaps because of time and Armenia being a distant place and a world away, the American people may not remember much of what happened there. However, right now inside America, we are facing a tragedy in Flint, Mich. with lead poison contamination of the water. According to experts, the whole ordeal could have been avoided but was allowed to fester by city and state leadership.

In Flint, we too can charge genocide; the city is predominately black and poor with a high rate of unemployment.

The poor black, brown and poor disenfranchised communities have suffered from lead poisoning over the years and the long-term effects have been documented. One example was Freddie Gray, who died in the hands of Baltimore police sparking unrest and protests during 2015. Recent reports disclosed a high level of lead was found in his body. Mr. Gray is not the exception and according to a black doctor I spoke to, the establishment has clear methods to eradicate most of the lead poisoning these communities.

The situation in Flint is not new and with a cursory glance at history, lessons can be drawn to help in the analysis of the crisis as a

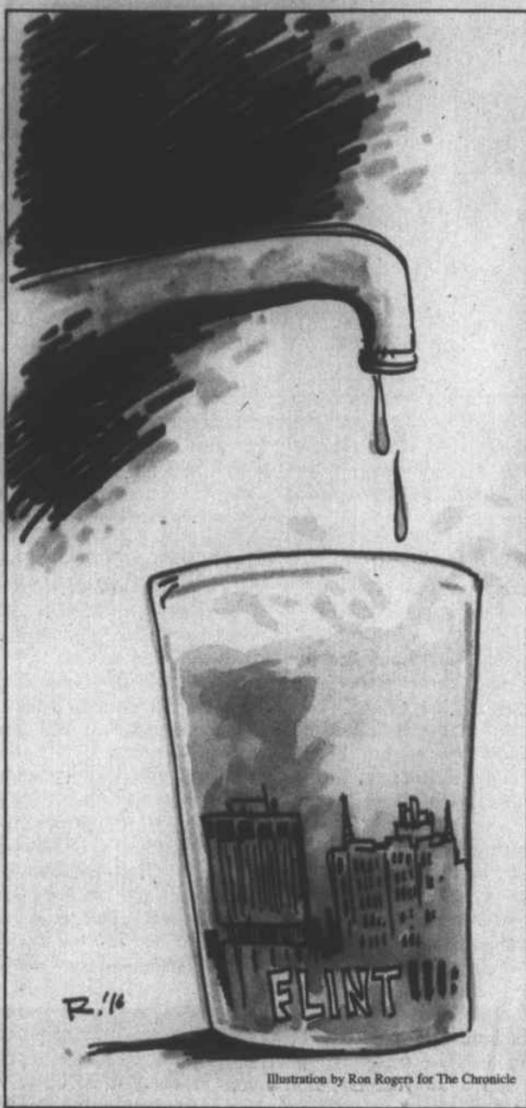


Illustration by Ron Rogers for The Chronicle

possible case for genocide. Here are six questions and past actions in the U.S. that give precedent to why a charge of genocide in

Flint is conceivable: We should ask why isn't the Federal Government working in conjunction with the state

and city governments to relocate the people of Flint, Mich., as was done during the March 1979 nuclear meltdown at the Three Mile Island reactor in Pa. where citizens were relocated because of the danger of staying in the area?

The notorious acts of germ warfare against the indigenous people by European settlers here in North America such as the intentional spread of disease like small pox to weaken and kill Native Americans. It was a common method and was sent through small pox contaminated blankets.

Another note of history is the famed Tuskegee experiment where black men were injected with syphilis and purposely denied treatment. This went on from 1932-1972 and was called the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male." The study initially involved 600 black men, 399 with syphilis, 201 who did not have the disease. The study was conducted without the benefit of patients' informed consent.

Then there was the question of eugenics and forced sterilization of predominately black women without their consent, mainly in the Southern states. These were acts of genocide under laws such as the South Carolina Sterilization Bill passed into law in 1935.

In the case of criminal behavior and mass incarceration where America

houses two million mostly black and brown inmates; maybe these should be tested for lead poisoning to see if it too is an underlining impact within their thinking.

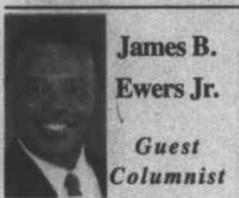
We can encourage black athletes and entertainers, especially those in Hollywood, to speak out and demand that the Federal government test young black men in this country for the effects of long-term lead poisoning, and test the drinking water in the cities across this country that are dominated by minorities.

The Flint, Mich., lead poisoning issue is one of environmental corruption and racism among other important problems plaguing America. Black leadership is mostly pushed into discussions on civil rights, but this is about the life and death of a whole nation of people that must be adequately addressed.

We want to know in straight words, what are the political positions on this from candidates vying to occupy the White House after this next national election? There may be many more Flints across America which gives us the right to say loud and clear that we charge genocide.

Akbar Muhammad is international representative of the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. He can be reached at aakbar314@yahoo.com for questions and comments.

Tournament is a gathering place for old friends



James B. Ewers Jr.
Guest Columnist

I grew up arguably in the heart of CIAA [Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association] land. Growing up in Winston-Salem gave me

a first-hand view of Winston-Salem Teachers College (now Winston-Salem State University), one of the original members of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association. Nearby were other CIAA schools like North Carolina A&T (now University), Fayetteville College (now State University), Livingstone College and my alma mater, Johnson C. Smith University.

All of these schools had and have stellar academic programs and great athletic traditions. Over time, North Carolina A&T University and North Carolina Central University moved on to another division, as did Hampton Institute (now University) and Norfolk State College (now University). In fact, Winston-Salem State University moved to another division for a few years but now they have come back to their rightful home, the CIAA.

I have been on the campus of Winston-Salem State University countless times. One of its presidents, Dr. Kenneth R. Williams, lived on our street. Back in the day it was a very big deal to go to an athletic contest featuring Winston-Salem Teachers College. The school was fondly called TC.

In my neighborhood lived one of the greatest basketball coaches of all-time, Clarence "Big House" Gaines. His coaching achievements and contributions to the game of basketball have been characterized as iconic. When young boys like me, Bishop Graham and William Earl Jr., would go over to his house, we would run into basketball players like Teddy Blunt, Richard Glover and Louis "Left Hand" Parker. Of course many would say that the greatest basketball player that he coached was Earl "The Pearl" Monroe. It did not hurt that Mrs. Clara Gaines, his wife, taught some of us Latin at Atkins High



"The CIAA Conference was something that we just took for granted and seeing great college athletes wasn't anything unusual."

—James B. Ewers Jr.

School, so we were always around their house and Skyland Recreation Center, which was across the street.

The CIAA Basketball Tournament was a staple in Winston-Salem for a number of years. Outstanding teams like Virginia State College (now University) which won this year's men's tournament, Virginia Union University and the ones that I mentioned earlier made it a treat for us as young boys to attend. Shaw University, St. Paul's College, St. Augustine College (now University) and Elizabeth State College (now University) were also members of the conference and competed in the tournament as well. During that time, the aforementioned schools in North Carolina and Virginia made up the majority of the CIAA.

While you hear basketball enthusiasts

talk about Tobacco Road and schools like Wake Forest, Duke and North Carolina, there has also been as much conversation about CIAA schools. Coaches like Steve Joyner (Johnson C. Smith University) and Dave Robbins (retired coach at Virginia Union University) are coaching legends in the CIAA. Joyner and his brother, Ed "Buck" Joyner, who was the head coach at St. Paul's College before it closed and now is an assistant coach at Livingstone College, have a basketball-coaching family dynasty. Both of their sons are basketball coaches. Buck Jr. is the head men's coach at Hampton University and Steve Jr. is the head women's coach at Johnson C. Smith University.

The CIAA Conference was something that we just took for granted and seeing great college athletes wasn't anything

unusual. However as I reflect now, I realize what a special time that was.

So if you fast forward to 2016, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association has changed quite a bit. Athletic teams within the conference are better and women's sports teams have taken tremendous strides. Student-athletes from the CIAA schools are graduating in greater numbers and the conference has added more schools. For example, the newest members are Bowie State University (Md.), Chowan University (N.C.) and Lincoln University (Pa.).

The marketing of the CIAA has certainly contributed to the overall success not only for the conference, but also for the individual schools. The Conference offices are now located in Charlotte, arguably one of the premier cities in the South.

Alumni of these schools and those who never attended one of the conference's schools plan their vacations around the CIAA Basketball Tournament. By the way, it will be held in Charlotte next year, so make your hotel reservations now.

We just returned from the tournament a few weeks ago and had a wonderful time. It was a time to see old friends and talk about the good old days. I spent a lot of time simply walking around and seeing people that I had not seen in years. This is what happens at the CIAA. You go for the basketball and you leave with renewed friendships and great stories to tell.

I often say to my friends and colleagues that the CIAA Basketball Tournament should be on your bucket list. Spread the word because next year will be here before you know it. It will be time for basketball, great fellowship and wonderful memories.

James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D. is a former tennis champion at Atkins High School in Winston-Salem and played college tennis at Johnson C. Smith University where he was all-conference for four years.

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