

# The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

A subsidiary of the Consolidated Media Group  
1531 Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203

Gerald O. Johnson  
CEO/PUBLISHER

Robert Johnson  
CO-PUBLISHER/  
GENERAL MANAGER

Herbert L. White  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

# Out of Africa

Despots should bow out — now — without African America's help

America shouldn't be supporting African dictators, nor should African Americans, who have too often been silent on the issue.

We applaud Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, for encouraging black Americans to resist the temptation of countries like Nigeria that spend "tremendous amounts of money" on public relations that have left her "constantly contacted by African American (church) ministers, heads of organizations and business people" on their behalf.

According to Waters, African dictatorships have asked her to persuade the U.S. government to end sanctions against Nigeria, receive Nigerian military ruler Sani Abacha in Washington and to recognize that "he's doing for Nigeria what nobody else could do," she told the Africa Fund, a New York-based private foundation that promotes expansion of U.S. relations and investment in Africa.

"And I almost always answer 'Yeah, in the name of dictatorship,'" Waters added.

We agree. For almost 400 years, Africa has been under the dominant thumb of the West, first as a part of the slave trade and later exploited for her vast natural resources. Although we don't always make the connection between Americans of African descent and Africa, we have a role to play in making our wishes known to governments here and abroad. Instead of turning our collective heads away from the abuse of power and human rights in Africa, we should demand democratic elections in nations like Zaire and Nigeria as we have in previously white-ruled Zimbabwe and South Africa.

"We are allowing them to advance the wrong leaders, leaders that are not about democracy, leaders that are starving people, leaders that are killing people," Waters said. As long as they run roughshod, there will be civil wars and obscene loss of life in the motherland.

We shouldn't have to stand for that. Although African Americans have enough to fight for here, we shouldn't forget that Africa holds a significant role in a changing — and shrinking — world. It's imperative that we join forces to work toward a day that African people decide the fate of their homeland, rather than have spinmeisters and political operators make those decisions.

## Can't we all just get along?

The news about a confrontation between Charlotte City Council member Malachi Greene and businessman Troy Watson points out how quickly disagreements can turn physical. It's disappointing to hear two respected city



Watson

leaders can turn a public gathering into a spectacle, especially when it happens during a meeting that brings African Americans together every week.

Although the antagonists have decidedly different views of what hap-

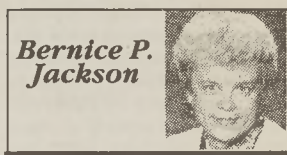


Greene

pened at the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club meeting, everyone should hold off on affixing blame or guilt until Greene and Watson have their day in court or settle the matter between themselves. Whether a gesture or words led to the confrontation is not as important as keeping a sense of fair play and respect for others. In other words, just because people say things to upset us it doesn't give us the right to retaliate physically. But because Charlotte, like the rest of the world, is becoming an in-your-face society, decorum is going to take some hits, even among people who are generally well-behaved community leaders.

In the meantime, we should take a collective lesson from this unfortunate situation and dedicate ourselves to the old sage advice of disagreeing without being disagreeable.

# Legacy of Tuskegee syphilis study



Bernice P. Jackson

Sometimes European Americans find it difficult to understand the reaction by people of color to events and believe that we overreact or are a little paranoid. But to really understand our reactions, one must know the history of people of color in this nation.

For example, one must know that Japanese Americans were put in concentration camps during World War II. One must know of the many treaty violations which have been experienced by native Americans. And one must know of the Tuskegee syphilis study undertaken by the federal government using African American men as its subjects.

Earlier this year four of the

eight living survivors of this terrible experiment gathered at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Nostalgia, Ala., to ask that President Clinton publicly apologize for the government's actions in this horrible study. The President has indicated a willingness to do so.

"It is a peculiarly American tragedy of race and medicine," said James H. Jones, author of a 1981 book on the Tuskegee study, in a recent Washington Post story. In 1932 the government began a study on the treatment of syphilis and lured 399 men, mostly poor and uneducated African Americans, to participate with the promise of free lunches, transportation and medicine. The study followed the progress of this dreaded disease in these men, some of whom were told they were being treated, but who actually were being given placebos. The subjects were told that they had "bad blood."

But the most horrible part of this 40 year study is that even

after penicillin was introduced as a successful cure for syphilis in the late 1940s, the study was continued until 1972 and only ended then after it was exposed publicly. Thus, men who could have been treated successfully for this disease went untreated. "It essentially reduced black men into unwitting laboratory animals," said the Washington Post story.

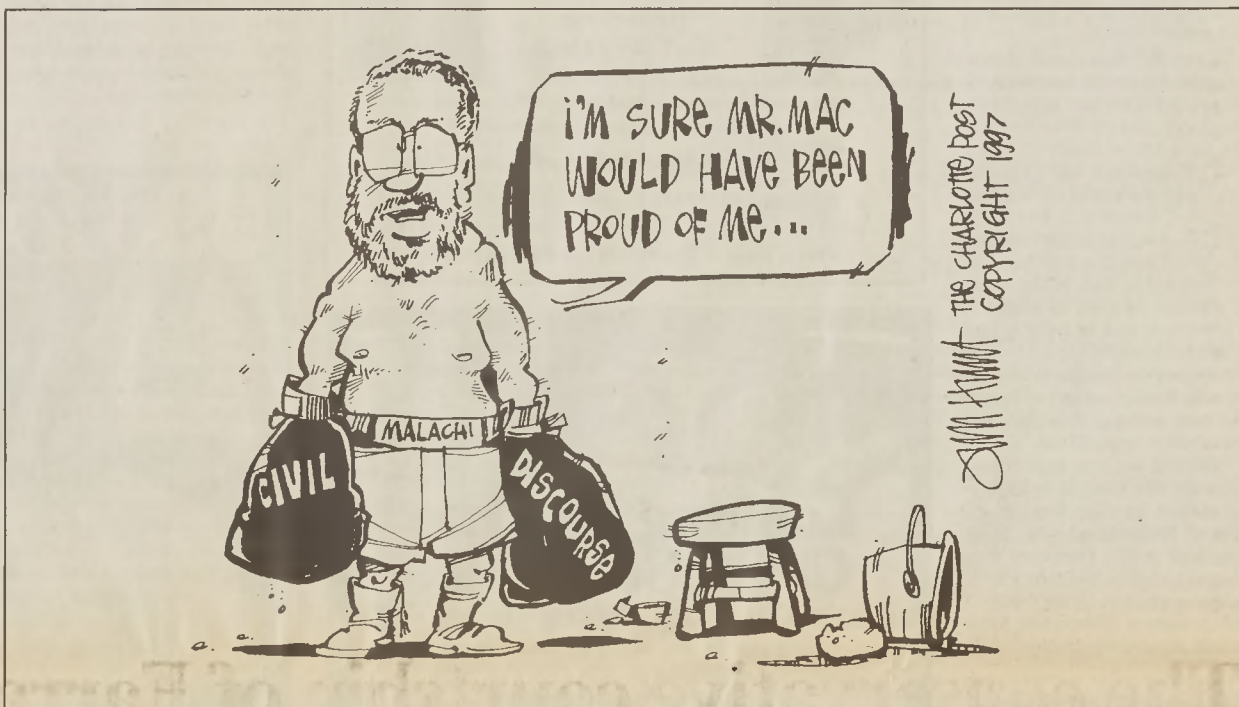
There is some evidence that some of the researchers continued the study based on the incredibly racist belief that African American men would respond differently than European American men. In addition, there is also evidence that the government got local Alabama doctors to cooperate with them by agreeing not to treat the Tuskegee subjects with antibiotics.

After the study's public exposure, the federal government did agree to pay \$10 million in compensation to the victims and their families, but it never apol-

ogized for one of the most blatant examples of racism in our nation's history. It is that apology that the survivors and their families now seek. The survivors themselves range from 87-109 years of age and there are 23 wives, 15 children and 2 grandchildren whose families have suffered because of this study.

While the suffering of the families is very real, the impact of this horrible study is far greater than those 399 families. As African Americans became aware of this government study, many now living with HIV and AIDS have refused treatment, actually citing the Tuskegee experiment as their primary reason. Some believe that it has also led some African Americans to charge that AIDS itself is an outgrowth of a government experiment.

**BERNICE POWELL JACKSON** is executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice in Cleveland, Ohio.



JIM HUNT  
THE CHARLOTTE POST  
COPYRIGHT 1997

# Church exposed with Chavis decision

By Michael Muhammad  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the N.C. Commission of the United Church of Christ for publicly acknowledging the termination of Brother Minister Benjamin C. Muhammad.

I would like to thank you for exposing your hypocritical and arrogant misunderstanding of your own Bible. If man called man to the ministry then that minister would be preaching about man and his obvious limitations to change the human condition, but God, the one God, calls man to not only preach but to teach his word with clear understanding so that we would become doers and lovers of the word of God.

Brother Benjamin has not discarded the Bible, he's picked up the Holy Quran, such as many of you who are Masonic Shriners, to further enhance his understanding and service, not to you, but to God. There never was a prophet called by man to teach God's word. The disparaging condition of the people caused God to produce a man that leads, teaches and guides others back to God after they have strayed entirely off the path. It is this arrogance that UCC revealed that keeps oppressed people subjected to miseducation and misdirection that we are faced with today and thus do not possess the quality to change the condition of the people and to make mockery out of the term United Church.

How will you know lest you have a preacher, how could you have a preacher lest he be sent? Who's going to send the preacher? How will you know of his ministry? You will know by his works. But the arrogant and envious will both bear witness to truth and they will try to lead others who are without the power to raise them back up to stand the way God intended. When have you called one million black men to accept responsibility for their lives, family, and community?

When have you had the courage to challenge this government's wicked foreign and domestic policies when it comes to our people? When have you traveled the world and spoke to world leaders about atonement and reconciliation?

Brother Minister Ben Muhammad opted to join a man who has and will stand to do work for Jesus. Dear reverends you can't just preach Jesus, you must pick up the cross of Jesus, follow Jesus and become a little like Jesus in order to affect change. Scared to death people won't change anything but their minds depending on the whims of their masters. Therefore the public revelation, for all intents and purposes, is a form of public humiliation. Perhaps we can determine this fostering of religious divisional tactics using the mathematical equation of the letters in the United=6, Church=6, (of) Christ=6 (666): for those who have understanding.

**MICHAEL MUHAMMAD** lives in Charlotte.

# How will blacks fare with city redistricting?

By Robber Mackins  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

As I look over the map of the City Council redistricting, I am perplexed as to how African Americans will have any representation at all.

When these districts were initially drawn up, it was deliberately done in a way that would deny us representation, but after many years and much debate, the powers that be decided that it was only fair for us to have at least some representation comparative to our population. Their weapon has been, the majority rule system, and that same majority has used their power, and their numbers to not just take away sovereignty as a free nation, but to deny us our most basic human rights as well.

They say the reason for redistricting is that the districts were divided to accommodate African Americans, that we

might be represented. Now it appears that they have changed their minds, and are changing the rules again. I would like for some one to explain to me exactly what constitutes a divided district, is it an area that has a high school, and elementary school, and a middle school, with x amount of stores, or is it a piece of land shaped in a certain fashion? Which is more important, that the land be represented, or that the people be represented?

When the Caucasians decide to mess with us, they always come up with some lame excuse that even a fool can see through. The right to be represented is bigger than the City Council. This act is insensitive, unlawful, and bordering on the line of blatant racism, morals are not even a question. The law has to be based on something more than simply what the majority wants, law must be built on a solid foundation, like freedom,

justice, and equality. The law should be interpreted by morally conscious men of wisdom. We recently marched on Washington for the purpose of atonement, it appears that the march had little or no effect on the selfish Caucasians. They should be begging for forgiveness for all the inhumane acts they have the audacity to continue.

We should know that modern worldwide racism emerged in the 15th century along with capitalism, African enslavement and the decimation of Native Americans. The most interesting aspect of Colonial American economic history that I am aware of is that racism was used as a device to insure Caucasian class unity and solidarity. Rich colonial Caucasians could control the rebellious tendencies of poor Caucasians, if those poor Caucasians could be shown that they have economic and social privileges that

enslaved Africans did not enjoy. Poor Caucasians could feel better about their own pitiful conditions and could dream of better days in a peaceful, non-rebellious way.

If it were not for the on-going presence of racism, there really could be no American superpower, as we see it today. For racism fostered Caucasian devotion to the ideals of Caucasian class equality and democracy for Caucasian folks, and with little or no political empowerment for non-caucasians is a necessary ingredient in Caucasian unification under the banner of the capitalist system of exploitation.

**ROBBER MACKINS** lives in Charlotte.



Mackins