

The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

A Consolidated Media Group publication
1531 Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203

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Reparations will empower us to control our own destiny

By Mikal Muhammad
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The issue of reparations has been gaining momentum since the late '90s and its "full steam ahead" now. But what is reparations?

Webster's Dictionary defines reparations as (1) the state of being repaired. (2) the act or process of making amends - compensation! Reparation could also be the fourth stage in the eight stage process of atonement outlined by the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan at the 1995 Million Man March on Washington, D.C. At that historic gathering of black men, he asked us to initiate the principle attributes of atonement with out family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc. Atonement is the criteria that can lead us towards equality, humanity and peace.

Some may ask, "Why so much talk about giving black people Reparations?" "Slavery happened over 200 years ago, They need to get over it and move on." "Besides, they would squander that money on Cadillacs anyway." Who do they think they are?

To them and to some of us I say, let's reason together and rationally, although briefly into why compensation should be afforded to black people, considering our present mental, physical, social, and emotional condition as it relates to and is a result of slavery. Lincoln emancipated the slaves in 1865, not freed as commonly believed. To emancipate, is to free from ones hand, but not from his control.

The holocaust of black people started in 1555 when the first slave ship called "Jesus" delivered a cargo of human beings from Africa to the new world. In order for this strong, proud, and industrious people to made less than human and subservient to the whims of the wicked task master, their spirits had to be virtually and totally destroyed and replaced with fear, ignorance and eventually self hatred. Spirit is that which feeds the will and your will is what gives you power to create a new reality with the strength and conviction of God moving inside of you without fear of reprisals.

Now, of course, the natives to this land were robbed of their land, labeled as savages and mercilessly killed on their land by the invaders, and yes the Japanese and the Jews suffered during WW II in the concentration camps of America and killed in the camps of Germany by the hundreds. But these people retained a great deal of their culture, their religious beliefs, and some can even speak their native languages. America has halfheartedly offered just compensation to the indigenous and Japanese people. Germany and others have done the same for the Jewish people, and war criminals are still being sought today to punish them for the atrocities incurred by the Jews 60 years ago.

Black people, on the other hand, had and have been systematically stripped of any knowledge of who and what we are from day one of our sojourn here in America and all over the world. No one was seeking out those who benefited from evils perpetrated against us and bring them before the bar of justice until recently.

This "class-action suit" for reparations seeks to address the elimination of all that identified us as productive and viable people, our names, our culture, our language, our religion our God, our history that was temporarily erased is now to be relearned in order for us to come face to face with destiny, and prophecy. We, who have suffered the most cruel and inhumane hardships and atrocities known to man.

Black youth are encouraged to be gangsters, thugs, pimps and players while they're being played and re-made by the rulers of the game who want the brother from the east to be at odds with the brother from the west so that he will conquer both brothers. He mandates that you depict your woman as a filthy sex kitten in your videos instead as the woman of God, and that your primary reason for existence is the booty of this world, and that human life has no value.

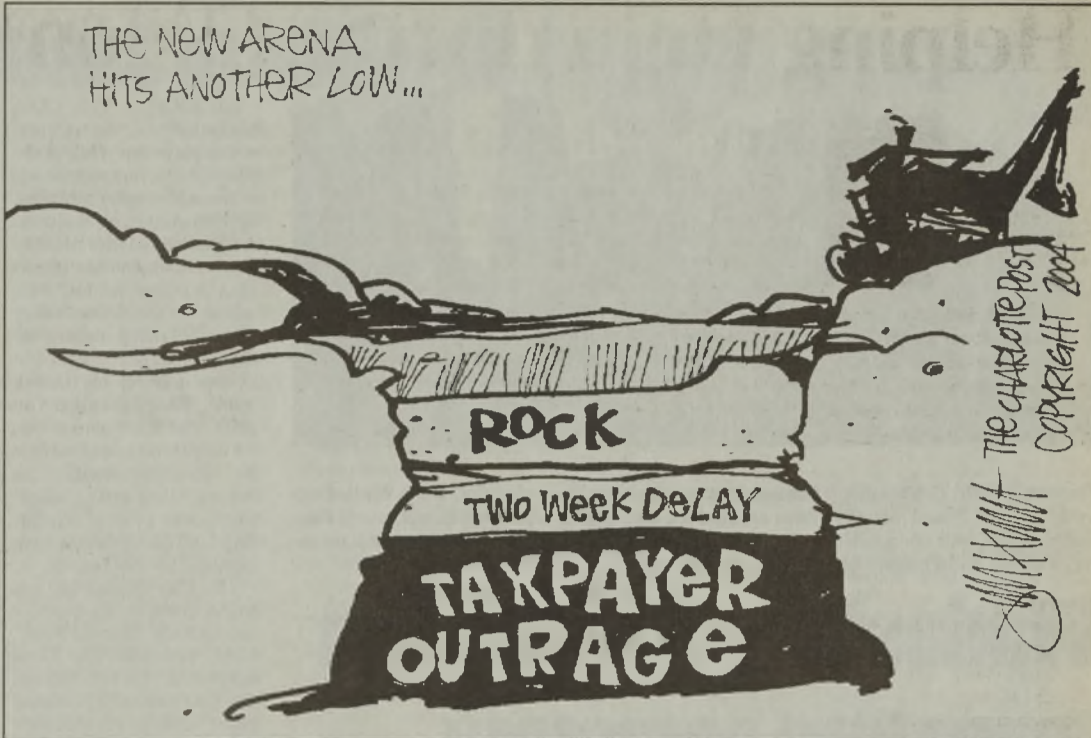
We joined and were drafted into a microcosmic military of a macrocosmic segregated society to fight and die on the front lines of a country that wouldn't allow us to eat together, sleep together, go to the movies together, go to the hospital together or even be buried together. Fighting, killing and dying for the ideology of a non-existent democracy that is still eluding us until this very day.

We are painted in the media and the minds of the citizenry with the brush that we are presumed guilty until proven innocent, thus blind justice can find us nowhere.

We were the Tuskegee Experiment and now the major victims of the AIDS epidemic. We are the poster children for crack in the 'hood, and the perpetrators of the indiscriminate killing amongst ourselves. We are the casualties of our own circumstances but not by our own design.

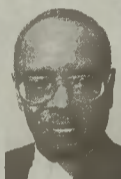
On Sunday at 1 p.m., the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan will deliver his keynote address for Saviours' Day '04. He will outline who, in fact, owes the black man and woman of America for the crime against our humanity and residual self-hatred for the past 400 years. Please join us at the First Ward Recreation Center for the crowning event to Black History Month.

MIKAL MUHAMMAD lives in Charlotte.



Distorting tests results mask problems

As I See It
GERALD O. JOHNSON



The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system has put together an aggressive vision for ensuring the system becomes and remains a premier urban school system.

To help monitor and track the system's progress, "Goals 2005" was developed. Goals 2005" is used to rate schools on CMS' Balanced Score Card (BSC) and the School-By-School report card. Parents rely on these school evaluations to determine where they want to send their children.

One crucial goal for parents of college bound students in High School is the

Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) scores.

The goal reads:
• 50 percent of all graduates will complete at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB), and 75 percent of those students will perform at the level required for college credit (a level 3 or above for AP exams and a level 4 or above on IB exams.

Recently, I received a letter from a parent of a CMS high school that basically stated that teachers had the right to deny AP students from taking the AP tests. The letter went on to state that classroom performance and other criteria could be used to deny students from taking the test.

After reading the letter I contacted officials at CMS

who oversee the administration of AP. Not only was I told this was not suppose to be happening, I was further informed that students who take AP courses and don't take the test automatically fail that course.

Obviously, this school is trying to skew the results of the evaluation process. By hand picking who will take the test will automatically distort the results in the school's favor.

If this school was bending the rules for AP testing, what else where they doing to distort their School rating? Moreover, if this school is doing it, how many other schools are bending the rules? If this is happening, then how reliable are the school evaluations?

The bigger question begs to be asked. Is all of this testing really necessary?

We are spending a lot of

time and money labeling schools as good or bad. We are testing kids at the expense of educating kids. The evaluation has become so critical to how we perceive schools and children that we now spend an abundant amount of time teaching kids to take these tests. Hence, the means to an end has become the end itself.

For a school to resort to underhanded techniques to distort test results is really a cry for help. We are asking (nationwide) public school systems to perform miracles with our children while we keep track of it all through a battery of testing. Oh, by the way, all of this while funding continues to shrink.

If ever a system is in need of a overhaul, it is our public education system.

GERALD O. JOHNSON is publisher of *The Post*.

Comparing the wrong war records: Civil rights histories more telling

GEORGE E. CURRY



President George W. Bush and presidential wannabe John Kerry are engaged in a tiff about who did what during the Vietnam War.

Kerry supporters point to his Silver Star, Bronze Star with Combat V and three Purple Hearts for bravery and combat injuries while noting that Bush might have been AWOL from National Guard duty. Bush supporters counter that although Kerry served in Vietnam, he joined Jane Fonda and other peaceniks in protesting the undeclared war after he returned home.

Both sides are arguing about the wrong war. What about the war at home? No, not the Civil War - neither man was alive then. Where were they during the bloody civil rights battles that changed this nation? Where were they when police dogs were let loose on elementary school children in Birmingham? Where were they when fire hoses knocked protesters to the ground? Where were they when people were jailed for asserting their First Amendment rights?

On September 15, 1963, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was rocked by a powerful dynamite blast that left four little girls dead. They had been

attending Sunday School. I was beginning my junior year at Druid High School in Tuscaloosa. Although my parents didn't know it at the time, some of us skipped school and went to Birmingham to protest the dastardly violence. What did you do Kerry? What did you do Bush?

When students from across the country descended on the Magnolia state the following summer as part of the Mississippi Summer Project, where was Kerry? Where was George W.? Three young civil rights workers - James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner - gave their lives for freedom that summer. Where is the evidence that either Bush or Kerry even gave a cuss?

The Selma-to-Montgomery, Ala. March occurred in 1965. Both Bush and Kerry talk about the importance of the ballot, but where were they that year when we were fighting to get a Voting Rights Act passed? Where were they when John Lewis was getting his skull cracked on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma?

I was a senior in high school and some of us took part in the march. I will never forget arriving in Montgomery and seeing James Baldwin and Harry Belafonte for the first time.

In such a large crowd, it would have been easy to overlook Bush.

George, can you get anybody to come forward who saw you there? If you could find time to travel to Alabama to work on a political campaign, certainly you could have come to Alabama to support civil rights. So could you, John. Did you lead your band of brothers from Selma to Montgomery? And where were George and John that last night when Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife, was killed while driving a carload of marchers back to Selma?

Okay, say that you were AWOL during the major civil rights battles. Chalk it up to what Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois called a "youthful indiscretion" when referring to an adult extramarital affair. Let's talk about your not-so-youthful years.

What have you done to repel the Right-wing assault on affirmative action?

Kerry was eloquent in his anti-war testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1971. According to news accounts, he said: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Kerry's oratorical skills were also on display when he returned to Yale to give a speech in 1992 - in opposition to affirmative action.

"...This shift in civil-rights agenda has directed most of our attention and much of our hope into one inherently limited and divisive program: affirmative action," he

said. "The truth is that affirmative action has kept America thinking in racial terms."

Kerry can produce reams of subsequent statements he made in support of affirmative action, but where did he stand before it was politically correct? He showed so much vision in his opposition to the Vietnam War but so much blindness when it came to the struggle for justice and equality at home.

No one accuses George W. of being eloquent or of being a visionary. The former Texas governor is a self-described "compassionate conservative." He was so compassionate that he announced his opposition to a pair of University of Michigan affirmative action cases last year on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. That's some compassion. And he opposed the Michigan Law School affirmative action program that even a Republican-dominated U.S. Supreme Court upheld last year.

What we have here are two rich Yalies debating about what they did during Vietnam when both of them were missing in action during the height of the war to obtain civil rights for African-Americans.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. His most recent book is "The Best of Emerge Magazine," published by Ballantine Books. He can be reached through his Web site, georgecurry.com.