

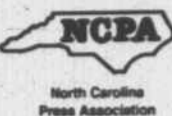
OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem Greensboro High Point

The Choice for African-American News and Information

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America shows true colors with refugees

It wasn't the racism that so surprised us. Racism is a fact of American life.

It was however, that the Clinton administration, and the general population as a whole, failed to see it when it was so prominently displayed. American racism was prominently displayed in this country's justifiable response to the ethnic bloodshed in Kosovo compared with the government's response to the ethnic bloodshed in other parts of the world, most specifically in Africa.

It should be clearly understood that we understand the government's reasons for intervening in the conflict in Kosovo. Europe is a major trading partner with the United States, where we annually send billions of dollars of American goods and receive billions of dollars of European imports, everything from cars to cheese, from furniture to food. Both our economic security and political security are threatened to some extent by any war in Europe.

A State Department official last week said more than 2,000 innocent Kosovars are believed to have been massacred by Serbian forces before NATO responded with bombs and cruise missiles.

For the United States, a major partner in NATO, to sit idly by and do nothing as Serbia slaughtered civilians in Kosovo would have been morally repugnant. The type of response could rightly be debated but a strong response was necessary.

But a response was also required following the October 1993 assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye of Burundi. The assassination of Ndadaye, a Hutu, sparked ethnic warfare between the Hutus, who make up 85 percent of the country's population, and the Tutsis, who make up the other 15 percent. As stories of entire villages of people being hacked to death with knives started reaching the West, and as pictures of rivers running red with victims' blood started to appear on our nightly news telecasts, our country's response was nearly mute.

The Clinton administration did not send Stealth bombers and cruise missiles to halt the bloodshed. It did not send cargo planes to airlift out victims. It did not consider sending in ground troops. It barked and decried the bloodshed but did little else as 200,000 people died.

Understandably, America has less strategic interests in Central Africa. But it does have interests in maintaining peace and stability in its own back yard in the Western Hemisphere. Haitian refugees fleeing death and violence on their island nation were housed in tents behind wire fences on the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, more than 100 miles from the U.S. mainland. The United States set up refugee camps on American soil for the fleeing Kosovars. No high ranking U.S. officials - such as New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman or first lady Hilary Rodham Clinton - greeted the arriving planes filled with Haitian refugees and visited them in camps, as they did for the Kosovars. With the Haitians, there were no heart-tugging stories of babies being born on U.S. soil just days after their mothers' arrival at Fort Dix. There were only pictures of acre upon acre of white tents behind wire fences.

We are not trading lives for lives here. We deplore the deaths of civilian Kosovars as much as we deplore the deaths of Burundians. But the U.S. government clearly does see a distinction between ethnic cleansing, the term for the murder of Kosovars, and tribal warfare, the euphemism for the deaths of many African peoples.

If does see a distinction between the senseless deaths of Europeans and the senseless deaths of Africans. And the distinction is clearly racist! This government is prodded into action with the deaths of 2,000 Kosovars and was not with the deaths of more than 200,000 Burundians. Other than the racism of the whole thing, what other conclusion could reasonable people reach?

We are just surprised that so few people seem to have noticed it.

— The Philadelphia Tribune

Letters to the Editor:

To the Editor:

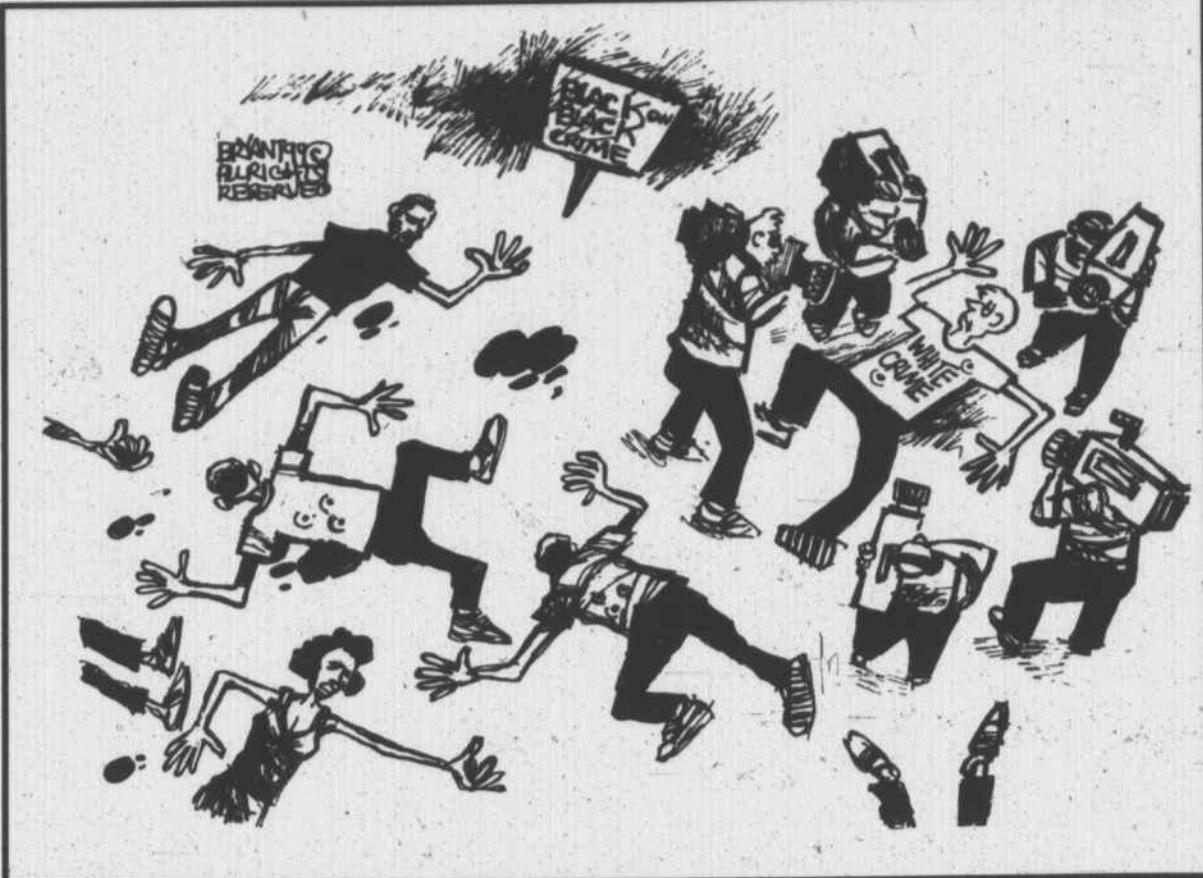
Hundreds of mostly very credible people who are concerned about the resegregation of our schools went to a rally on May 24 and heard Dr. Maya Angelou make an inspiring delivery.

The Winston-Salem Journal quoted Donald Martin, school superintendent, the next day as saying those people could have found better things to do with their time. He suggested they might try to convince white parents to send their kids to primarily minority schools.

In (last) week's Winston-Salem Chronicle, Dr. Martin wrote a column in which he criticizes those who oppose his budget request, which includes money for theme schools. He states, "No one has yet to explain to me how taking \$50,000 from a school will improve academic achievement."

Dr. Martin seems to not quite get it, although at some level he surely does. The redistricting plan is a failure and a lie. We know parents are not willingly going to send their kids out of the neighborhood to school if they can avoid it. We have always known it, as has Dr. Martin and the school board.

The rally and opposition to the budget are the ways to let them know we aren't lending credibility to the farce. The emperor has no clothes. Hopefully, Dr. Angelou's remarks will give more of us the courage to continue to point this out. Maybe those who attended the



rally could better spend their time getting a new school board elected, a board who wants a superintendent to lead our system to a plan which does not segregate our children.

Bert Grisard

To the Editor:

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the wonderful write-up you did on The NRG Stop. Being a novice at marketing and advertising, I am certain the abundance of new customers we are serving daily is directly related to your article.

Several of my customers men-

tioned the article, and some brought the article with them. Please extend my appreciation to the staff.

Sincerely,
David Griffin
Operations Manager
The NRG Stop Inc.

The 2000 census: Why does it matter?



Melvin Watt
Guest Columnist

When 13 percent more African American men registered for the World War II military draft than the 1940 census indicated were living in the United States, the Census Bureau must have sensed that something was not quite right. There was special irony in the fact that these men were willing to go to war for a country that didn't even acknowledge that they existed.

Since World War II the Census Bureau has made a concerted effort to improve the method and accuracy of its counts. Unfortunately, the census has continued to be inaccurate. Reliable estimates indicate that over 26 million errors were made in the 1990 census and over 8.4 million people were missed, most of them minorities, children and poor people. More than 129,500 of the people missed were in North Carolina, the state with the seventh largest undercount in the nation.

There are at least three good reasons why an accurate census matters.

The legal reason: Our Constitution requires that a count of people in the United States be made every 10 years.

The political reason: The census determines how many representatives each state has in the U.S.

House of Representatives. If the population is undercounted in a growing state like North Carolina, it could mean the difference in whether North Carolina gets another representative or whether that representative goes to another state where the population may have been overcounted.

Census numbers are also used to draw electoral districts within each state (U.S. House districts, state House and Senate districts, and county commission, city council and school board districts). If low income or minority residents are undercounted, the very residents who need their voices heard most in the political process can end up with their representation diminished.

The economic reason: Perhaps the most important impact of an inaccurate census is the economic impact. More than \$180 billion in federal funds annually are distributed based on census data. Among the many important federal programs that distribute funds on the basis of census data are Medicaid, highway and mass transit, foster care, community development and many education programs (Title I, child care and development, Goals 2000, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, vocational education, employment and job training) and social services programs (WIC, social services block grants, drug abuse, rehabilitation and treatment services, adoption services and employment services).

When a state's population is undercounted (especially its seniors, children and poor), that

state simply gets cheated out of federal money it would otherwise have received for important federal programs and services funded on the basis of the census. Between the 1990 census and the 2000 census, for example, North Carolina will lose more than \$68 million as a result of the 1990 census undercount.

The impact of the undercount on local communities is dramatic. In Charlotte and Winston-Salem, for example, approximately 50 percent of those who were not counted in the 1990 census were children, 5,091 in Charlotte and 1,441 in Winston-Salem. In Charlotte the undercount is the equivalent of nine more schools and 312 more teachers. In Winston-Salem, it is the equivalent of two more schools and 88 more teachers.

Schools and teachers, of course, are not allocated by the federal government. But federal education funds are. And the economic impact of shortchanging local communities can be profound. The federal government contributes about \$650 annually to the education of each child, \$6,500 over a 10-year period between census counts. The 5,091 Charlotte children the census failed to count in 1990 will cost the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools over \$3.3 million in federal education funds by the time the next census is taken. The 1,441 Winston-Salem children not counted in the 1990 census will result in the (Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools) losing over \$936,000. We simply can't afford that kind of economic

loss. Either the children get short-changed or the part of their education costs normally paid by the federal government gets transferred to the budgets of our local communities.

Republicans suspect that a process which assures that minorities and the poor are counted more accurately could cost them seats when electoral districts are redrawn following the 2000 census. Democrats sense the prospects for political gains and throw down the political gauntlet. Unfortunately, both Democrats and Republicans have lost sight of the dramatic economic importance of an accurate census and made the debate far too partisan. Rather than being a partisan debate, if there is to be a debate at all, it should be a geographic debate between states that stand to gain from an accurate census and states that stand to lose.

The fact is that North Carolina gains from an accurate census and every North Carolinian has a vested interest in assuring that the 2000 census counts everyone. It's the only way we can prevent a major loss of federal funds for the next 10 years to states with declining populations or populations that are easier to count. If we allow this to be a partisan debate, all North Carolinians will lose. Neither North Carolina Democrats nor North Carolina Republicans can afford to let that happen.

U.S. Rep. Mel Watt represents the 12th Congressional District of North Carolina, which includes parts of Winston-Salem.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY...

The abbreviated NBA season has now rode into the playoffs. Four teams—the New York Knicks, Indian Pacers, San Antonio Spurs and the Portland Trailblazers—are battling it out for the title of world champion. We asked locals which team they think will win the NBA championship crown.



Juanita Glenn

"I think the Pacers are going to win. They have a very good team. I'll be surprised if they do not win it all."



Jamal Carpenter

"I like San Antonio. I think they match up pretty good in the paint right now. And I like Tim Duncan and David Robinson, the twin towers. They have a good front court and back court. They are going to take it."



Edward Williams

"Tim Duncan is looking real good this year and I think the Spurs are going to get it."



Daniel King

"I think the Knicks are going to win the championship. They are playing relentless defense and they are hitting their free throws. In the game Sunday they stepped up and hit eight free throws in the fourth quarter. If they keep that up, they have a shot at winning the championship"



Steve Miller

"I believe Indiana is going to win the NBA championship. I think they are a better team, they are mature enough where they can win."