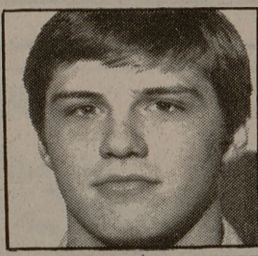


Opinion

Whites uneasy with impending minority status

Nearly two years ago I wrote a column about the hooded antics of the Ku Klux Klan in Houston. The piece sparked a response from a self-proclaimed "White Patriot," warning me of the white race's impending extinction. Minorities, the letter writer warned, were taking over.



Loren Steffy

"There are 30 all-black nations, 20 all-yellow nations, and 60 all-brown nations. One all-yellow nation alone, China, has over one billion people!" a piece of the reader's propaganda warned. And in the words of Neil Diamond, they're comin' to America.

"Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia... Washington and numerous other large cities used to be almost entirely white..." The flier illustrates the paranoia whites have about being in the minority. As the reader pointed out, in the world population, we already are. While most fears of a declining white population aren't as fanatical as those in the propaganda, there is a national discomfort with the idea.

To an extent, my racist reader was right — the white population is on its way out of the majority status. A recent study by the Population Reference Bureau found that by 2080, whites will be the largest of minority groups. No one race will have a numerical majority.

But those who fear the eradication of the white race don't need to start training Boy Scouts to use assault rifles just yet. Numerically, the whites will account for less than 50 percent of the U.S. population, but only by one-tenth of a percent.

It will take more than numbers, however, to

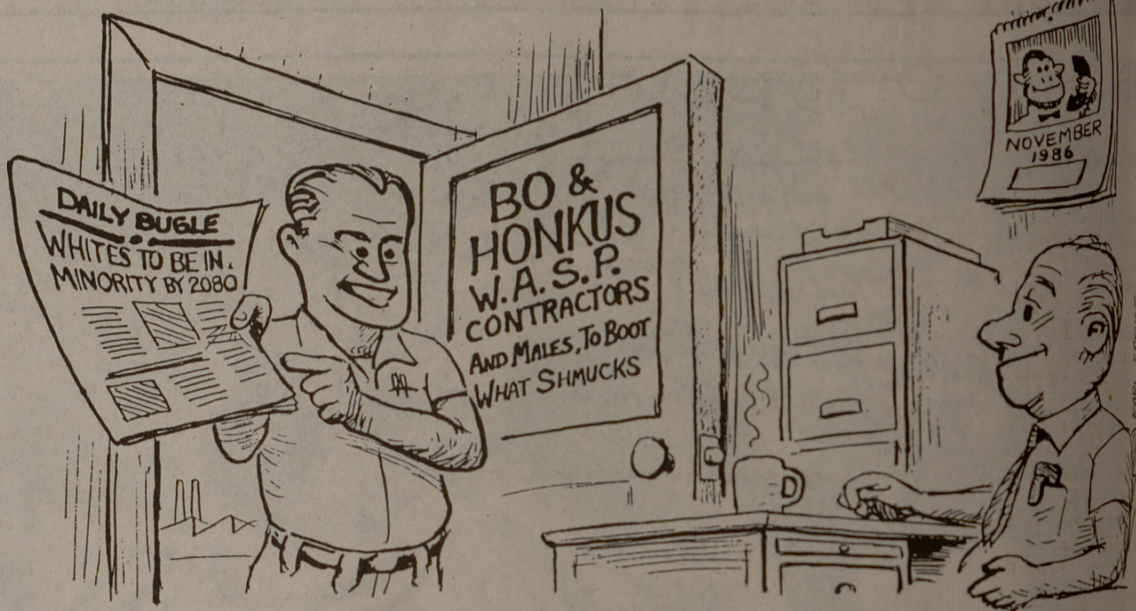
bring other minorities to the level of social control that whites currently take for granted. As we have seen in South Africa, numbers alone are not enough to make those in power release their stranglehold on the social power structure.

Immediately fingers are pointed. A dwindling white population is looked at as a national crisis. Immigrants, as they always have been, are seen as stifling "true" Americans. Blaming all on illegal immigration is unfair and inaccurate, but it's easy. Immigration — legal and illegal — helps keep the population from decreasing. If the current fertility rate of 1.8 births per woman is maintained, the U.S. population — 242 million last summer — would fall to less than 100 million within two centuries without the influx of immigrants. Still, immigration is seen as an invasion.

Instead of seeing the impending total cultural assimilation as a culmination of our much-lauded melting-pot society, it's viewed as a loss of national identity. The melting-pot recipe was fine as long as one ingredient was noticeable among the rest, but now it's time to put a lid on it.

Social integration always has been difficult for this country, which prides itself on upholding the rights of minorities. We fought and somewhat conquered the Indians, enslaved the blacks and harassed the Jews and Catholics. It took the Supreme Court, battling the tidal wave of public opinion, to make us let blacks attend the same schools, drink from the same drinking fountains and sit in the front of buses.

It's a seamier side of our cultural heritage that we'd rather not talk about, but one that those who've enjoyed majority benefits don't really want to abandon. A burning cross near Houston and a racial hazing at The Citadel military school in South Carolina remind us how our subtle facade can vanish in a wave of fear and hatred.



GOOD NEWS, BO! IN JUST 94 YEARS, WE'LL QUALIFY FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION!

The white population's identity always has been with its dominance. Sending us the tired, poor and huddled masses was fine — as long as whites could wrap themselves in the security blanket of the majority.

Like a lily-white Linus, we fear a minority of Snoopys will sneak up and steal our precious blanket. The white population will be left sprawled and bewildered while the minorities run off with everything we hold dear.

Contrary to the racism-tainted harbingers of mi-

nority-controlled doom, other races are not "running." If they're lucky, they might gain some ground in the next two hundred years — and about time.

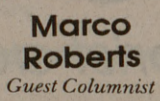
Numerical growth doesn't ensure equal rights even prominence in the society. The struggle for minority rights has been long and hard. It's time to reap some rewards, starting with the knowledge that majority rule may be more difficult to defend in the future.

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and Opinion Page editor for The Battalion.

Official language?

Bilingualism hinders Hispanic assimilation, encourages continued reliance on Spanish

Much has been said lately about making English the official state, and maybe even national, language. Speaker pro tem of the Texas House, Hugo Berlanga, said recently that the effort "smacks of bigotry and racism." State Republican Chairman George Strake said "This is meant to pull people together rather than isolate or separate people because of their language." Perhaps.



Marco Roberts

I don't doubt that the impetus for many who are behind the effort is probably based on an animosity towards people of a Hispanic background and their "foreign" ways. But this does not mean there are not some valid points to consider in their argument for a society tied together by a common language.

The issue isn't the proposed amendment, but the role English should play in our society and to what extent Spanish, and for that matter other languages, should be incorporated into our public services and operations. After all, as a Battalion editorial stated on Wednesday, it is superfluous. (Of course, the editorial then proceeded to tell us how an official language will have a discrimi-

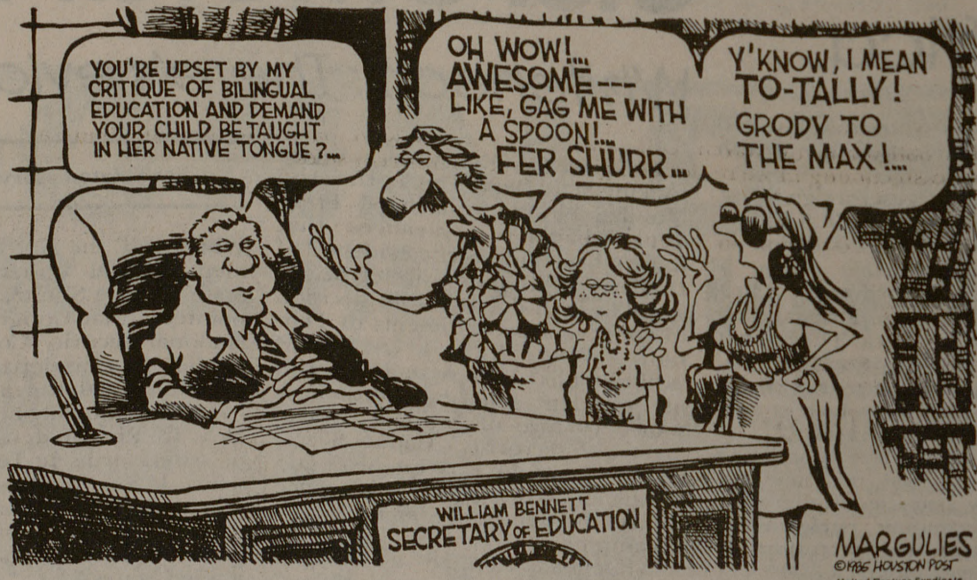
natory impact on the Hispanic minority, which sounds hardly superfluous to me.)

As implied by that editorial, the real issues are the education of Hispanics, their voting privileges and their assimilation to the mainstream of society.

Speaking as one who began life knowing only Spanish, I firmly believe that the introduction of Spanish, or any other language outside of English, into public services is a fundamentally flawed policy — a policy that will hurt Hispanics and our nation in general.

When I was seven years old, I hardly knew any English. I entered the second grade in an English-only school and was not allowed to do any work in Spanish. By the time I entered the third grade I was speaking in English without any problems.

When I lived in Mexico, I attended a private school that was bilingual and catered primarily to English-speaking foreigners (mostly Americans). I remember finding out, to my surprise, that most Americans, even those who had lived for 10 years in Mexico, hardly could speak Spanish. I felt offended that people who had lived for years in a



country I called home never bothered to learn the language. Though they were required to take some Spanish, their regular classes and their homelife were in English, thereby reducing greatly the need to learn Spanish. These people never assimilated into any part of Mexican society, but since most were American citizens who intended to return eventually to the United States, this was

not important.

The Hispanic community here is shooting itself in the foot when it demands the inclusion of Spanish in public affairs. We keep hearing about their voting privileges being denied or restricted when Spanish is not included on voting ballots. How does an American citizen reach the age of 18 not knowing how to read English (though they apparently learned to read Spanish)? All naturalized Americans are required to learn English, so these Spanish speakers must be Americans by birth. Our public schools are open to illegal aliens, and we've had bilingual education for some years now, so how is this possible?

Learning another language is not easy, and people will simply opt not to learn one unless it's required. Just about any foreign language teacher will tell you that the best way to learn a language is to be constantly required to use it. Most of us will revert back to our native language whenever possible, simply because it is easier. This is particularly so when we are talking about children, especially Hispanic children who may not understand the importance of learning English and how it will affect their educational and job opportunities.

The Hispanics are the only ethnic group that has demanded, and succeeded to some extent in getting, their initial education and some public documents in their language. Hispanics as a whole also have been the slowest to

learn English. The point is that bilingualism to accommodate a minority retards the assimilation of that minority into the mainstream of society and enhances its isolation.

No matter what the law says, a Hispanic that does not speak English will never have the educational or employment opportunities that other Americans have. When we make it easier to get along in our society with the use of English, we simply are making it easier for a group to remain assimilated, and in fact, judging by poor marks bilingual education has been receiving in teaching pupils English, that is precisely what is happening. So despite patronizing editorials the contrary, public bilingualism retards assimilation rather than promotes it.

In addition to all this, I don't think Hispanics are entitled to special treatment that no other non-English-speaking ethnic group has received. I don't feel embarrassed by these demands from our purported Hispanic leaders and frankly, it would be chaotic if every group in the United States that did not speak English demanded a similar concession of their language.

Finally there is the issue of national unity. Throughout history, language has shown itself to be among the most powerful determinants of national identity. I believe it is to our advantage to have every American fluent in another language besides English, but it is more important to insure our ability to communicate with each other. Assimilation with a Hispanic heritage, I don't believe we are entitled to a government subsidy of our cultural heritage.

Unfortunately, our Hispanic leaders will continue to push for this public bilingualism, not because it is of long-term benefit to anyone, but because it gets more votes among their constituents and the Anglo liberals will help them the same reason. But what is just as heartening is that most of the conservative Anglos will oppose them, because of the rightness of their position (which they probably arrived at as a student), but out of latent prejudice and their constituents'. That's politics.

Marco A. Roberts is a senior journalism major and editor of The San Napiecan Times, an underground paper.

Politicians in the public eye — and they're irritating it

I often wonder why anybody would want to run for political office. It's expensive, it's tiring, and you have to kiss a lot of fat babies, and fat babies have a habit of drooling on you when you try to kiss them.



Lewis Grizzard

And after you're elected, although you do have a good opportunity to become wealthy in some instances, you still have to wear a tie to work every day, people write nasty letters about you in the newspapers and if your kid gets arrested for shoplifting you have to deny you even know the little devil or face losing when you run for reelection.

All that was bad enough, but in the recent national elections, we had a new twist known as negative advertising.

This is where you pay an advertising firm \$2 million or \$3 million to invent television and radio commercials saying your opponent has bad breath,

sleeps in his underwear and doesn't love the Lord.

I happened to be doing a great deal of traveling during the final weeks of the campaign, and after seeing negative commercial after negative commercial, I became concerned that every candidate running was some sort of dishonest muddbrain.

Began one: "Do you really want a man like Harvey Snucklehouse representing you in Washington? He cheats on his income tax, doesn't put the shower curtain inside the tub when he bathes in hotel rooms, his mother wears combat boots and he pulled for the Mets in the World Series."

Another said: "How could anybody vote for Bernice (Dingbat) Flournoy? She's so stupid she thinks Beirut was a famous baseball player, she smells like a goat herder, probably is a communist and has fat thighs."

In Georgia, incumbent Republican Sen. Mack Mattingly basically stayed out of his campaign with the exception of buying commercials that said his opponent, Democrat Wyche Fowler, hardly ever bothered to appear for votes during his term as U.S. representative.

Fowler got even, however; he beat Mattingly, who won't be making ANY appearances in the Senate anymore.

I have a friend who once ran for a local county post. He lost.

"It was the worst experience I ever had," he said. "Every time I told a lie, they caught me, and every time I told the truth, nobody would believe me."

There are lots of better ways to abuse oneself than going through the expense, turmoil and humiliation of running for and/or holding political office.

You could open a meat market in Ralph Nader's neighborhood, get a job as Frank Sinatra's press agent or become a newspaper columnist and say you think television evangelists are a bunch of crooks.

I once asked a man who was running for Congress just why on earth he would want to put himself through such an ordeal and have people say bad things about him and be mistrustful of him.

"Well," he replied, "I was already a lawyer."

In my mind, that's still not reason enough.

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