

Slavery reparations without repatriation? That's greed, not justice



by Lev Tsitrin

A few times lately I came across discussions of reparations for slavery (including on these pages <https://www.newenglishreview.org/californias-reparations-proposal-is-deeply-flawed-and-racist/>). Apparently, the movement, fueled largely by the “California Reparations Task Force” is getting steam. I confess I did not deliberately study the subject – but even the casual peeks surprised me by what is *not* being part of the discussion.

It seems to focus either on who should be compensated (i.e. should all blacks be covered, or just descendants of slaves?) and the size of the monetary payment (both were discussed in a [radio segment](#)) – or on the political forces behind the reparations movement (as in “[The Soros Activist at the Heart](#)

of California's \$800 Billion Slave Reparations")

But something of obvious key importance has been missing in this debate. Given that one consequence of slavery is that the descendants of slaves now live in the US, it seems to follow with inexorable logic that the main consequence of eliminating consequences of slavery has to be repatriation. It simply cannot be any other way. Absent the history of slavery, the descendants of slaves would have been born in Africa – so how do you offset the effects of slavery without placing the descendants of slaves where they would have been if there was no slavery? Reparations without repatriation make no sense – for a simple reason that repatriation is the other side of the reparation coin, so every participant in the reparation project should have no choice but to repatriate. How can it be otherwise?

In fact, the idea that repatriation is integral to reparations is by no means original – this is how the Republic of Liberia was born in the early 19th century: it was formed by former slaves who came back from America.

And then, the question of who should be paying is not being addressed either. There were not only buyers of slaves – but sellers, too. Who is more responsible for slavery? Shouldn't the descendants of African slave traders – who were black themselves – pay the reparations to the descendants of African slaves? Should the responsibility be split between the buyer and the seller? I have no ready answer (though I personally tend to blame the seller – or at least the original enslaver – much more), but the question at least has to be discussed.

Whoever may be more at fault, the injustice of slavery resulted in the fact that the descendants of Africans now live in America rather than in Africa, and repairing the former must of necessity result in repairing the latter. For some reason, this rather obvious aspect of reparations seems to have escaped the "California Reparations Task Force."

I can already see fingers pointing at me, accompanied by shouts of “a racist! he wants to empty America of blacks!” To those folks, I suggest a different reading of what I just said – namely, “may be living in America is in itself an adequate reparation for the wrongs of slavery?” Or, “may be those who shill for reparations are driven not by justice, but by greed?” Makes sense?