



December 12th Movement International Secretariat

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WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR U.S. REPARATIONS 2023

The demand for reparations for African people in the U.S. can only be resolved by the U.S. government.

The reality is that Black people live in a country and under a political/economic system, capitalism, which is unwilling to repair the damage it has done and continues to do to us. No one can dispute African people's role in creating the wealth upon which the U.S. was built. The ideology of racism which "Christians" created to rationalize the indefensible – i.e. the enslavement of fellow human beings – has become an invaluable tool in facilitating capitalism's insatiable thirst for and never-ending pursuit of profits.

The reparations movement poses a mortal threat to capitalism. It demands a re-ordering of the global political economy. So we should not be surprised that the system will employ an array of tactics to disrupt, delay and destroy this inevitable and unavoidable movement. This is the context from which we must look at the contemporary movement for reparations.

Black people have fought for reparations prior to Emancipation

We are continuing a struggle begun by our ancestors. In particular, one of the most well-known warriors who came to personify the reparations struggle in the 20th century was Queen Mother Audley Moore who passed as this century began.

The Historic 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism

In 2001, the United Nations held a World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa. The WCAR (due to the strong stance taken by Africa and several Caribbean countries, bolstered by the lobbying done by the December 12th Movement, the National Black United Front, N'COBRA and other non-governmental organizations from the U.S. and the Diaspora) produced an historic document, the Durban Declaration and Program of Action [DDPA] in which the international community declared for the first time that the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery were Crimes Against Humanity and that Reparations were due the descendants of the victims of these crimes. Crimes against humanity have no statutes of limitations which means that any perpetrator of these crimes could be tried in this century for their misdeeds.

Reparations Becomes National Issue in U.S.

The WCAR and the DDPA created major problems for the U.S. and the former Western colonizers. They, along with lawsuits filed demanding reparations from U.S. multi-national corporations and the first National Reparations March held in Washington, DC in August 2002 ignited a national and international discussion on reparations.

The response of the U.S. government, down through the states, municipalities, etc, was the classic tactic of the colonizers, sow confusion and tribalize. So over the past 20 years, we have seen:

- U.S. Presidential candidates pay lip service to reparations
- Universities acknowledge a commitment to reparations and, in some cases, set up a mechanism to do so
- States and Cities pass legislation and set up Reparations task forces
- Some cities, e.g. Evanston, IL, actually pay a form of reparations.
- Organizations, e.g. ADOS, which wish to restrict reparations to those who can trace their family lineage to descendants of chattel slavery in the U.S.
- Probably the clearest indication of the U.S. government's determination to stifle the reparations movement can be seen in the history of HR 40, the legislation originally put forward by U.S. Congressman John Conyers in 1989. HR 40 called for a study on the necessity for reparations. It has recently been amended to include a study on reparations remedies. No matter what form it has taken, HR 40 has not been able to get out of Committee, even at the time when there was a Democratic President, a Democratic Congress, a Democratic Judiciary Committee, headed by a Democratic Chair (Cong. Conyers).

As the Temptations put it, we have "A Ball of Confusion." Mini-reparations bills. Mini-Task forces. Mini-checks being cut. Mini-constituencies being "repaired."

"COLLECTIVE REPAIR" OF A CONTINUING INJURY CAN ONLY COME FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT – THE KEY TO REPARATIONS SUCCESS IN THE U.S.

Our position is that reparations must address collective repair of what was and is a collective injury. This injury did not end with the abolition of chattel slavery. It was a continuing crime and continuing injury which assumed various forms through today – slavery by another name, share cropping, convict leasing, Jim Crow, KKK, destruction of Black townships, theft of Black property, red-lining, denial of G.I. bill rights, lynching, police brutality, medical experimentation,

In every aspect of Black people's lives – health, wealth, life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, employment, education, housing – ours is a different reality than whites. Over 30 years ago our presentations at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights described the situation of Black people in the U.S. as a "collectivity of underdevelopment." We were a developing country, an oppressed nation, living in the midst of history's most industrially advanced nation.

Collective repair must of necessity include post-chattel slavery inhabitants of the U.S.

National Motion to Push Reparation Forward - Presidential Executive Order

The U.S. government is the entity to provide collective repair. From President Biden's election in 2020, we began a campaign to demand that he issue an Executive Order to provide a \$50 billion downpayment on reparations. That \$50 billion downpayment would establish **through deeds** that the Government must provide reparations. We saw the downpayment as going towards provision of state of the art healthcare facilities in our communities. Health is an issue which we all deal with, either directly or indirectly.

International Motion to Push Reparations Forward- 4th WCAR

We call for a 4th World Conference Against Racism to be held in Brazil, to ensure the implementation of the DDPA, bringing the weight of the international community to our struggle in the U.S. and affixing clear responsibility on the government of the U.S. as the source of reparations.

We end with the slogan we coined for the Durban WCAR. It is as true today as it was then.

THEY STOLE US! THEY SOLD US! THEY OWE US!

REPARATIONS NOW!