

The Reparation Movement: Greatest Political Tide of the Twenty-first Century

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Abstract: *On every continent, everywhere, the main conversation in popular culture is around the issue of reparatory justice. The Caribbean is just a part of this global movement; but, admittedly, it was here in the Caribbean that the framework and the concepts and the principles governing this movement flourished. As the Caribbean world prepares its citizens to be advocates and beneficiaries of social advancement and economic development in the 'long twenty-first century', the still unsettled relationship between historical injustices, persistent poverty and diminishing opportunities looms larger than ever before as a primary obstacle to development. Growing in academic importance on the outside is the argument that the Caribbean is solely responsible for its development failures and challenges. Emerging from this perspective is that the region's post-independence political leadership has produced 'failed states', and has run out of indigenous energy to drive progress. These arguments reject any historical perspective and locate development shortfalls and frustrations squarely at the feet of the region's political and corporate leadership. The purpose of this conceptual approach is to deny the importance of a legacy of colonial wealth extraction, ethnic and racial oppression, debilitating imperial governance, and crude infrastructural capacity as factors still shaping the region's destiny. This article rehearses why the Caribbean is so involved in the reparatory justice movement and why there is a case for Europe to answer.*

Keywords: Reparation, CARICOM Reparations Commission, CARICOM Ten Point Action Plan for Reparatory Justice, Development, compensation

Background

In 2001 at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, I was swept away by the brilliant speech¹ delivered by President Fidel Castro which invoked ideas of history and morality and the irresponsibility of imperial powers, who contributed to the plight of former colonies in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. As I followed him to the podium, I said, without pause, that the reparatory justice struggle would be the greatest political movement of the twenty-first century. It seemed clear to me that all the people of the world who had been

1 Key address by Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 1 September 2001).

colonised and enslaved by the western military-economic complex, in its surge to global dominance, would rise up and demand the justice offered as reparations. The global, hegemonic project that called into being indigenous genocide, chattel African enslavement and deceptive Asian indentureship—the three criminal Acts. Postcolonial communities, I said, would unite and rise, in varying ways, for reparations by all means necessary.

At no stage during the conference, nor subsequently, did I consider the hypotheses bordering on the hyperbolic. Neither did I contemplate that the political template would be put to the test so soon in the first quarter of the century. President Castro considered my statement bold, beautiful and very Caribbean. I understood what he meant with respect to the Caribbean. The Cuban Revolution, and, indeed, all Caribbean freedom and justice wars before and after, were conceived in the womb of the reparations paradigm. His insightful perspective on Caribbean history and politics strengthened and solidified the fragments of my thoughts.

That was near two decades ago, and elements of the fragments have taken form. The hardest nut to crack I thought would be the United States of America. They had walked out of the Durban meeting and had developed a political culture featuring the systematic assassination of prominent activist leaders of the human rights dimension of the reparatory justice movement. I could not have imagined that today, in the run up to the 2020 presidential elections, the leadership of the Democratic Party, including Senators Cory Booker and Elizabeth Warren (Adjei-Kontoh and Laughland 2019), would be seeking electoral support for reparations to be paid to African-Americans; neither could I have contemplated that the leadership of the Republican Party would be forced on the back foot in declaring its opposition.

However, the world that debated reparations in Durban is coming to the crossroads in large numbers. The global discourse is taking shape in predictable patterns guided by principles that were outlined in that African moment. It was only a matter of time, I thought, that western ideas of democracy could not continue to brush the legacies of these crimes against humanity under the constitutional carpet, knowing quite well that above it was a chandelier laden with lights. No carpet would be big enough to conceal these crimes and their legacies. No house would be big enough to contain the social silence long associated with parliamentary cover ups. The sudden eruption of the long simmering volcano that is the demand for official reparatory justice has given birth to a new earth.

On every continent, in every town and village, the main conversation in popular political discourse contains connections to the issue of

reparatory justice. In the Caribbean and West Africa (where the First Pan African Conference on Reparations was held in 1993 in Abuja, Nigeria), in particular, several organisations have sprung up, especially where the State is long considered indifferent or hostile. These include the CARICOM Reparation Commission, mandated by CARICOM heads in 2013, National Reparation Committees in CARICOM states and other entities such as the Universal Movement for the Reconstruction of Black Identity in Trinidad and Tobago and the Reparations Knowledge Institute in Suriname. In Durban, African States and civil society groups squared off on the resolution calling for an official endorsement of reparations. While Presidents Wade of Senegal, Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Kufour of Ghana were vociferous in their rejection of reparations, much to the delight of the 'West', their own civil society groups were the most vocal at the door in support of the Caribbean sponsored resolutions.

In the United States, the university sector, a respected and influential element in privileged society, has taken the lead in responding to the historic demands of the black-led reparations movement, which has been powerfully energised since Durban. Students and professors have foregrounded the emerging evidence of their institutions' engagement with slavery. While it was widely known in a general way that the most prestigious of these universities were built with and financed by enslaved labour, it was not public knowledge that their finances were specifically sustained by the monetary machinery of the slavery enterprise. They are now asking the critical question: can institutions of higher learning be considered excellent if their origin and sustainability show an unethical attachment to the unpaid labour of enslaved Africans?

US Ivy League universities, including Brown University, Georgetown University and Princeton Theological Seminary (Berry 2019), are now exposing their domestic data revealing how they survived and thrived on the basis of significant grants and endowments from enslavers. In fact, when Georgetown acknowledged that it had sold 272 enslaved people to solve its financial difficulties, its students, rather than waiting on the university administration to act decisively, voted to increase their tuition in order to finance a fund that would benefit the descendants of these 272 enslaved people (Hassan 2019). Universities are revealing how, as investment participants, they constituted a vibrant part of the enslaver class, providing not only support for the ideological and intellectual framework of enslavement, but strongly endorsed the economic system of enslaving. The emerging inference is that such universities cannot be considered excellent if their unethical identity goes unrepaired.

In Europe the issues are essentially the same though Britain has taken the lead in two aspects of the discourse. It is now common for British universities to establish committees in order to research and reveal their participation and benefitting from the enslavement crime. At the top of the list are the ancient universities: Oxford, Cambridge (including specific colleges of Jesus and Kings) and Glasgow. Both the Universities of London and Hull have established research and advocacy institutes around their slavery legacies, and have received substantive grants from the home government to implement their scope of work. In recent times, as well, the University of Bristol has appointed a black history professor to examine the role that the city of Bristol played in the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans (Mohdin 2019). However, none of the three has made a commitment to reparatory justice. In fact, in the aftermath of their research, both the Universities of London and Hull turned their backs on the reparations movement. ‘Research and run’ therefore, now typifies the actions of most slavery enriched British universities. The immoral movement from ‘stone silence’ to ‘research and run’ is now as typically British as ‘fish and chips’.

The University of Glasgow has been the exception. In breaking the mould, they opted for a reparation approach that seeks to atone for their substantial benefitting from the wealth of unpaid enslaved labour. In 2015, the university committed the findings of its research team to the reparations test and reached out to the University of the West Indies in order to explore what a reparations strategy would entail. In 2019 the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in which Glasgow agreed to invest £20 million in a jointly owned research centre dedicated to confronting and eradicating the legacies of slavery in the Caribbean. Since then, no other universities have declared their intentions to participate in this approach in search of an ethical solution.

The Caribbean, meanwhile, has been building on its historic reparations movement with the creation of an institutional framework and research agenda that seek to sustain its legitimacy and relevance to the future. Following Durban, the dialogue began and blossomed into the creation of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, illustrating a powerful commitment by heads of government to pursue reparatory justice.² This development empowered the University of the West Indies to establish in 2017 a Centre for Reparation Research,³ mandated by governments to provide the evidentiary basis of the region’s claim

2 See <http://caricomreparations.org/about-us/> and also CARICOM’s 10 Point Action Plan for Reparatory Justice: <https://caricom.org/caricom-ten-point-plan-for-reparatory-justice/>.

3 See <http://www.reparationresearch.org/about/>.

for reparations from European countries who established and managed the criminal slavery complex.

These developments are just a part of what has become a global movement, but it was in the English speaking Caribbean that the concepts and principles governing the movement first took institutional form. The English imported into their Caribbean colonies three million enslaved Africans. At the end of 300 years of slavery the English could account for just over half a million. These survivors of the British holocaust began their active campaign for reparations for genocide and enslavement. The demographic data suggest that less than twenty percent of the British Africans imported survived. Today the African Caribbean community is populated with holocaust survivors. The genocidal dimension of slavery speaks to the multifaceted aspects and legacies of this crime against humanity.

The argument is often made that the enslavement of Africans was nothing special within the context of human history, and that most ethnic groups have experienced the legal institutionalization of social domination and unpaid labour. Invariably, this perspective is advocated by persons with an interest in minimizing or denying the distinguishing features of African enslavement in the modern era. Also, they are mostly motivated against the politics of reparations and seek to illustrate that African enslavement in Europe's Atlantic colonies was consistent with, or similar to, other forms of traditional social and economic domination. None of this is historically accurate.

Chattel slavery is the unique, most extreme form of human oppression. As an elastic body of relations that constitute the institution, slavery had in its shallow end many forms of exploitative relationships. Children working in households without civil rights and living at the complete mercy of parents or employers, and husbands having totalitarian relationships to wives, have been defined as forms of domestic slavery. At the deepest, extreme end, however, remains chattel slavery. Europeans developed and introduced chattel slavery into the colonized Caribbean during Columbus's colonial enterprise of the 1490s. At this time there was no similar institution in Europe or Africa. It was not an outgrowth or modification of any existing social institution. Neither could it be found in Asia or in Indigenous Americas.

There were four distinguishing features of chattel slavery that took root throughout the Caribbean and the colonised Atlantic:

1. It was a system of power relationships applicable only to Africans. It was race specific and carried with it a hyper-developed body of ideas and ideologies that constituted an ecosystem within which it flourished. Indeed, the multitude of laws and regulations designed to originate and reproduce the

- chattel system were explicit in attaching the status of chattel exclusively to Africans.
2. It was designed to exclude white and Indigenous persons from its grip and grind. The legal status of a child at birth was derived from that of the mother. African women were the legal carriers of the status of slavery. Since a white woman could not be legally enslaved, she could not give birth to an enslaved child, even if the father was enslaved.
 3. Africans were legally deemed to be 'chattel' and 'real estate'. In this legal identity they assumed all the known forms and expressions of property. They could be bought and sold, leased and mortgaged, and used as cash and currency.
 4. Africans were defined by law as non-human, constituting a special form of property, and in this regard had no right to assume a human identity (Beckles 2013, 56-67; 2016, 19-22; Turner 2017).

In their legalized, non-human existential form as property, Africans had their social reality defined at every level of community engagement, and, like all forms of property, they depreciated in commercial value and were taxed. The loss of financial value was accounted for by bookkeepers who maintained the commercial records of enterprises. An examination of the financial records of slave-based businesses would show how the legal status of enslaved Africans as property was presented. They were listed alongside sheep, horses, cattle, machines, and buildings as assets subject to both fiscal and financial rules and regulations. The estimates of returns on investment on all performing assets were presented to show the financial health of the enterprise, and to provide government with a basis on which to levy property taxes.

Investors in enslaved labour, therefore, made fiscal and financial calculations on replacement costs of their property. In most colonies it was expected that enslaved Africans would provide at least ten years of labour in agricultural or mining productions. Less than 20 percent were expected to perform hard labour beyond ten years. The majority of people over the age of 40 years were classified as 'old and infirmed'. This high mortality and replacement programme drove the Trans-Atlantic Trade in Africans (TTA). Enslavers were profit-maximizing capitalists who expected a competitive return on investment. The enslaved represented, in most cases, the main investment of businesses. The investment returns on slave property, then, was the core object of businesses. This, in large measure, explains why focus on the brutal policing of Africans was the norm (Beckles 2016, 23).

The Spanish were in the Caribbean a century before British, French and Dutch colonizers, and did not develop the chattel model. They wanted enslaved labour but needed them Christianized, and their humanity recognized. They wanted the old familiar format of slavery and were not sure if they could deal with the new chattel form introduced by their competitors.

It is necessary to discuss reparations for chattel enslavement in this context. It took the Spanish a while to come around (Beckles 2016). By 1700 they were fully on board as chattel enslavers. There is now a specific legal understanding of chattel slavery as a crime against humanity. For centuries, enslaved Africans were denied their right to be human. There has been no greater crime. The chattel model began as a calculated business proposition. Profit maximization was its financial calculation. The denial of African human identity was unique, a new and seminal development. The consequences of this denial was race hatred and extreme brutality, as well as genocidal attitudes about enslavement. No other race has ever been subjected and degraded to the non-human form of chattel.

The unique chattel enslavement experience of African peoples in the Caribbean and elsewhere was understood to be the most financially attractive business enterprise in the modern world. It persisted for over four hundred years because of its reputation for being lucrative. Eric Williams's classic book, *Capitalism and Slavery*, published in 1944, sets out an analysis of the rise and demise of the chattel option. The first generation of sugar planters in the English, French and Dutch Caribbean (from 1640 to 1660), proved the effectiveness of the chattel model over other forms of slavery. They mastered every aspect of its operation. They were the progenitors of global capitalism. The profit motive drove them to import over 3 million Africans to these islands in order to produce sugar and other commodities, which were exported around the world, generating massive revenues, and transforming this generation into the richest people in the Americas. Never before has such wealth been made from such an inhumane, criminal system of social oppression.

Reparations

The concept of reparation is not new and is part of the theory of equity known as 'restorative justice'. This concept of justice emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal action, and clear precedent exists in the form of apology and monetary compensation to affected peoples. It is well-known, for example, that in 1952, Germany agreed, at the World Jewish Congress in Israel, to pay \$65.2 billion to Jews for

genocidal atrocities committed against them. The United States paid reparation of \$1.2 billion to Japanese-Americans interned illegally in camps during World War II.

The policy and practice of reparatory justice has been a feature of European and Caribbean jurisprudence for over two centuries. In the Caribbean, the pioneers of the reparation movement were enslaved Africans, who knew their illegal capture and forced relocation to the Americas was a violation of their human rights and struggled against it. In the 1820s, for example, the British Parliament debated and rejected a proposal calling for the enslaved people in its Caribbean colonies to receive compensation for their criminal enslavement and the illegal use of their labour (Beckles 2013, 194).

While abolitionists such as William Wilberforce, Thomas Fowell Buxton and Thomas Clarkson were discussing the idea of general emancipation in the British House of Commons, the enslaved people of the Caribbean, suffering at the scene of the crime, were asking the pertinent question, “how about our compensation?” Their demand was not just for emancipation, but emancipation with compensation, which, for them, equated to justice. This suggests that it was the enslaved people of the Caribbean, not the enslavers and the British State, who initiated the idea of reparations (Beckles 2013, 194, 213).

There is evidence that, more often than not, when an African became free through one means or another, a claim for reparation was made. Such claims are documented in the colonial records. For example, after the suppression of the 1760 war led by Chief Takyi of Jamaica, some enslaved collaborators who had demonstrated their loyalty to the colonial order managed to secure freedom after which they demanded pecuniary rewards. The records show that their freedom was granted “at no small cost to the colonial government” (Bollettino 2009, 228.). In another instance, in the Vale of Luidas in St Catherine, three enslaved men, Foster, Pembroke, and George, were deemed by the Jamaican Assembly to be entitled to freedom. The sum of £5 a year each was paid to them for the rest of their lives.

In addition to such individual cases, one can also argue that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anti-slavery wars, which were fought in the Caribbean, represented a search for reparatory justice. The war of General Bussa in Barbados, 1816; the 1824 Argyle war in Hanover, Jamaica; the 1823 Demerara War in Guyana; the 1831 war in Guyana and the 1831/32 War in Jamaica, to name a few (Craton 1982).

In the immediate post-slavery period, the emancipated community took up the struggle, protesting unjust taxation and calling for a moral economy in their efforts to secure land and for decent wages. A century later it was Marcus Garvey who spoke for full and complete reparations

for the crime committed against these Africans in slavery and under colonialism (Ewing 2013, 23-45). The 1930s labour protests that called for the popular franchise and independence consolidated this search for reparatory justice (Høgsbjerg 2011, 24-42). Anti-colonial leaders insisted that reparatory justice was part of their claim (Lewis 1939, 44).⁴ Popular support for the West Indian Federation focused on the need for a regional compensation package from Britain.

The post-1930s advocates for freedom, democracy and reparatory justice foregrounded the Rastafari, whose claim was for African redemption and repatriation (Chevannes 1994). They were joined by academics, human rights activists from civil society, elected politicians, and, since 2013, by the governments of the region. The establishment of the CARICOM Prime-Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparation, the CARICOM Reparation Commission, National Committees on Reparation and the Centre for Reparation Research at the UWI are recent developments that testify to the effectiveness of the twenty-first century movement.

Despite the rapid recent growth of the movement, and promotion of the just nature of the demand, approaches for dialogue made to European nations, who have a responsibility to clean up their colonial mess, have not been successful. They reject the notion that their transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans was a crime against humanity. It 'should' have been, they conceded, but it was made legal by their parliaments. Regardless of the 'politics of should' articulated in the outcome document, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, African people have always insisted that their enslavement by Europeans was a crime against humanity and that those who committed this crime are obliged to make reparatory amends.⁵

Context and Justification

The trading in enchained, enslaved African bodies to the Caribbean was conducted over three centuries by European nations, notably Portugal, Spain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Germany (Hanse Towns Brandenburg). The United States also participated as an independent nation. One estimate is that 3.2 million enslaved Africans were traded by the British, with 2,633,008 million disembark-

4 See also the 1964 comment of Sir Ellis Clarke, the Trinidadian Government's United Nations representative to a sub-committee of the Committee on Colonialism in 1964 (quoted in Lewis 1968, 385).

5 To see the entire Durban Declaration, please see this link: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Durban_text_en.pdf

ing in the British-colonised Caribbean between 1662 and 1811 (Eltis 2009).

The largest English trading companies in the formative years, The Royal African Company (RAC), was at its most active between 1672 and 1692. The remit of the RAC was to supply thousands of Africans to Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. It was granted a legal monopoly by the state, but private traders were allowed from 1698 onwards and made enormous profits from the trade. (Davies 1957; Eltis 2009; Pettigrew 2013). Other countries, like Switzerland, may not have been direct traders but participated as investors and suppliers of goods and material that serviced enslavement.

It may be impossible to arrive at an accurate figure for the numbers imported and who were alive in the Caribbean at the time of emancipation. Figures are calculated based largely on enslavers' inflated claims for compensation. According to Kris Manjapra, enslavers' calculations included dead and absent Africans (Manjapra 2019). Still, it is known that, even with a conservative estimate, at the end of three centuries of enslaving black bodies, there were about 700,000 enslaved and freed Africans remaining in the British-colonised Caribbean in 1834 (Thomas 1997, 805; Higman 1995, 72).⁶ The difference between the numbers imported and those alive at the time of Emancipation suggests that less than 25 percent survived.⁷

Barbarity Times

A detailed study of chattel enslavement would reveal its genocidal nature. Laws were passed specifically to brutally manage and control militarily the enslaved people. The major laws passed to ensure black subjugation were the *Siete Partidas* in the Spanish colonies, the *Code Noir* in the French colonies, and the Master and Slave Acts in English colonies. Elsa Goveia has outlined the similarities and differences among these three sets of laws. While in theory the Spanish laws appeared to have legislated some social rights for the enslaved, in practice, 'Catholic slavery' was as brutal and violent as 'Protestant slavery'. Indeed, as chattel slavery became more entrenched in the Spanish Caribbean, especially in Cuba, characteristics of the English, French and Dutch model became the norm (Goveia 1970).

Spanish slaves in the islands, then, evolved into the form that was the norm in the English islands, to other parts of the Caribbean. The

6 However, the numbers on which planters claimed compensation in 1834 was 669,973.

7 Using 770,000 as the numbers that survived and 2,633,008 as the numbers traded from 1662-1811 by the British, the mortality would be about 25%.

English islanders had exported their chattel model first to Virginia, then South Carolina, and other parts of the American South (Beckles 2016).

Investors and Participants

In addition to citizens and states, institutions such as private companies and churches were active investors and participants in the crime against humanity. The Church of England, for example, invested heavily in Caribbean slavery and slave trading. In 1834, one of the largest applications for compensation came from the Bishop of Exeter, the Reverend Henry Phillpotts, who was once an elite enslaver in the Caribbean.

In Antigua, Barbuda, and Barbados the Church of England acquired the Codrington Sugar Estates by will from the Codrington family. In 1834 it received £8,823 (or £500,000 in today's equivalent) in compensation for its enslaved Africans (University College London 2020). The banks that are seen today on the high streets of London—NatWest, Midland and Barclays—were participants and beneficiaries in the transatlantic trade; so was the Bank of Scotland.⁸ African enslavement was defended as being in the national interest, which is always cause for concern as the greatest crimes against humanity in history were committed by those persons who were able to persuade society that their actions could be so defined. This argument assumed hegemonic status for centuries despite opposition on moral, political, legal and philosophical grounds that this was ethically wrong, criminal and sinful.

The major royal families of Europe were deeply involved in the slavery enterprise. For example, the English royals invested in and managed the RAC. King James II was the Chairman of its Board of Directors (Davies 1957; Pettigrew 2013). The wealth generated from these investments was passed down through generations to the current royals. Other Monarchs, such as Louis XVI (France), King Christian IV (Denmark) and King Gustav (Sweden) profited from the trade. State-sponsored companies, from Portugal's Cacheu, Maranhao, and Pernambuco Companies, to Holland's West India Company, and Britain's South Sea Company, were granted exclusive licenses to operate in the trans-shipment of millions of enslaved Africans. With royal patronage, and the need to ensure an attractive return on investment, the detailed level of organisation that went into the capture and subsequent enslavement of Africans was unmatched (Beckles and Shepherd 2007).

⁸ For a breakdown of the commercial legacies, see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/commercial/>.

In March 2007, British member of parliament Diane Abbott reminded colleagues in the House of Commons that fifteen lord mayors, twenty-five sheriffs and thirty-eight aldermen were shareholders in the RAC; and it is estimated that, in 1776, forty members of the British parliament were making their money from investments in the Caribbean.⁹ In fact, well over 100 MPs in the Britain's House of Commons had a direct link to slavery and the trade in Africans (Draper 2010). The rich families were not all from England. In his contribution to the same March 2007 debate, member Malcolm Bruce reinforced the evidence of Scotland's benefits from slavery, stating:

... it is worth recording that in 1796, 30% of the estates in Jamaica were owned by Scots. In 1817, 10 years after the abolition of the slave trade, 32% of the slaves in Jamaica were owned by the Scots... On the back of that trade, Glasgow claimed to be the second city.¹⁰

The recent study of how the University of Glasgow benefitted from slavery acknowledges that, whilst it played a leading role in the abolitionist movement, the University also received significant financial support from people whose wealth at least in part derived from slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It estimates the present-day value of all monies given to the university, which might have been fully or partly derived from slavery, to be in the order of tens of millions of pounds, depending on the indexation formula (Mullen and Newman 2018).

Harvard University's Law School began its journey with a significant endowment from an Antiguan enslaving family who created a business in which one brother stayed in the Caribbean running the sugar plantation, and the other managing the slave trade out of Boston. The slave trade made the greatest share of the money. The Boston brother set up a fund to establish the Harvard Law School (Walsh 2017). The children of enslavers would go to college and enslaved Africans accompanied them to classes carrying their books and bags. When Georgetown University ran into financial difficulty (they had a cash flow problem trying to compete in the 1840s and 1850s) the president decided to liquidate some "assets": the 272 enslaved people on the books. Liquidation involved putting these enslaved Africans on the market, selling them and getting the cash to expand academic programming (Georgetown Slavery Archive 2016)

9 Dianne Abbott, Member of Parliament, Debate on the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, House of Commons, 20 March 2007.

10 Malcolm Bruce, Member of Parliament, Debate on the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, House of Commons, 20 March 2007.

The CARICOM Reparatory Justice Project

It is against this background of terror, barbarism and injustice against human beings, perpetrated by Europe, other complicit states and their citizens, that the demand for reparatory justice has become a priority. A major strategy being used to negotiate with Europeans for reparation is the CARICOM Ten Point Action Plan developed by the CARICOM Reparation Commission. The Plan suggests an official summit with Europeans around a development plan for communities still suffering harm. Rastafari brother, Sam Clayton, put it this way in his 2002 letter to Queen Elizabeth II on her visit to Jamaica: “Colonisation has disfigured us and we deserve some response to what we have been through” (Shepherd et al. 2012, xii).

CARICOM Reparations

The Ten Point Plan makes the following demands: (1) Full Formal Apology; (2) An Indigenous Peoples Development Programme; (3) Repatriation for those who desire it; (4) Cultural Institutions; (5) Attention to the Public Health Crisis in the Caribbean; (6) Illiteracy Eradication; (7) African Knowledge Programme to rebuild ruptured relationships; (8) Psychological Rehabilitation and (9) Technology Transfer and (10) Debt Cancellation. That an apology is placed at number one on the plan is intentional. The first requirement of reparation is an apology. An apology has three components: an acknowledgement that a wrong was done; a willingness to make amends for the harm caused; and a commitment to non-repetition. It should be made clear that an ‘Apology’ differs from a ‘Statement of Regret’ because the latter does not accept responsibility for the consequences of the action(s). This is why the latter is preferred by perpetrators who do not wish to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions or are prepared to work with the victim to restore them as closely as possible to what is, humanely, a normal situation.

Another major call is for monetary compensation by way of the restitution in current value of the enslavers’ compensation of £20 million (which was 40 percent of Britain’s public expenditure at the time) that accompanied the British Emancipation (Draper 2010). Enslavers’ compensation was the core aspect of the British Emancipation Act, arguably the most racist act ever to have passed in the British Parliament. Having defined the people of Africa as property in order to justify their enslavement, the legislation was based on the assumption that Africans were non-human. The Act was predicated on the assumption that the over 600,000 enslaved people in their Caribbean colonies were property, hence the property compensation approach to emancipation.

The Emancipation Act proceeded on the basis that the authority of the state was being used to take away the property of the citizens of Great Britain, and consequently that the state had a legal obligation to pay compensation. The instruction from the executive to the treasury to pay this money therefore consolidated the concept of our ancestors as non-human. Of course, the usual parliamentary rhetoric was made in the House of Commons about slavery as a wicked and evil institution which was against the interest of the nation, making abolition a moral and strategic duty. But the same parliament also established a subcommittee to take a look at the financial numbers and at the value of property in slavery to be erased. The minutes of the subcommittee show that uppermost in parliament's mind was the financial viability of emancipation.

Given that the financial replacement value of the over 600,000 enslaved Blacks of the British Caribbean was £47 million, the big questions that haunted the emancipation debate in Parliament were who would pay property compensation and how much?

The British Parliament indicated an unwillingness to pay £47 million in compensation; that would have been 60 to 70 percent of the gross national income, and would have bankrupted the economy, a telling account of how enormous was this project of enslavement and compensation. Parliament decided to pay only £20 million, which the enslavers rejected. They demanded full market compensation. Parliament renegotiated and designed an act to provide £20 million in cash, and to implement a system called 'the Apprenticeship', which would force enslaved people (supposedly now free) to work off the remaining £27 million.

This apprenticeship system, under the law, was a period of four to six years to allow the former enslaved people to get accustomed to freedom and allow enslavers to get accustomed to being employers. But the records, if read carefully, make it clear that the British calculated how long it would take for the enslaved to work off the £27 million – a maximum of six years and a minimum of four. Clearly, the enslaved paid more for their freedom than the British government.

The British government was merely acting out what the French had done to the self-liberated Haitians. In 1825, as the Haitians, who had defeated the French, declared freedom, and, in 1804, gained national independence, were celebrating the twenty-first anniversary of their nation. But in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere, British, French and American gun boats invaded their territorial waters, sending a message to the government that they either pay reparations to their former enslavers, or face the prospect of military invasion and the restoration of slavery. In the midst of such a momentous celebration, the Haitian gov-

ernment convened a special meeting to decide whether to pay reparations to the French enslavers they had defeated in battle. For the sake of sustaining their freedom and the nation-building exercise, they decided to pay the reparations.

This decision also allowed the Haitians to be re-inducted into the western world economy, as they had been suffering from an economic blockade for twenty-one years. A team of actuaries came out from Paris, did a market value calculation of formerly enslaved Haitians, including members of the cabinet, and other properties, and came up with the sum of 150 million gold francs. With its back against the wall, the Haitian government agreed to pay this sum to French enslavers. The debt, later reduced to 90 million gold francs, was not paid in full until 1947; so from 1825 to 1947, Haitian governments paid reparations to French enslavers. Haitian foreign exchange earnings from exporting coffee and sugar was used to pay reparations, a process that financially bled the country.

Europeans Reject Claims for Reparation, but the Movement Continues

Why have enslaving countries refused to acknowledge their crime and engage in a reparatory justice conversation? There are two aspects to this. Most countries in Europe are of the view that the descendants of the enslaved have no right to reparation, and are undeserving of an apology. These are positions they would not have considered taking in respect of the Jews. Regardless of these attitudes of enslaver nations, the energised reparation movement is calling on them to do the right thing. The world has come to the realization that enslaving nations ought not to get away with such an evil past; that there has to be recognition and reconciliation of this history with the future. It is to reject European propaganda to suggest that formerly enslaved people are living in poverty on account of their historical experience. They do not accept that their economic backwardness has to do with not possessing a culture of development.

Decolonial education, and the public advocacy provided by intellectual activists and reparation advocates, are driving the message that the reason for poverty and underdevelopment is the history of genocide, slavery and colonization. The realisation is growing that people are suffering today from the consequences and harm of European exploitation. There are lessons to be learnt from other postcolonial societies of the former British Empire. In India, in 2018, the Indian parliament discussed reparations, standing in solidarity with the people of the Caribbean against Britain because they too experienced eco-

conomic ruin under British colonialism. The British destroyed Indian industries and farms, created famine, and forced Indians to import clothing and food from England in order to survive. They demanded reparation in the form of an apology from Britain, but not monetary compensation. What is interesting is that they got it, especially for the massacre at Amritsar, which took place when the Indian peasants who had been on the land for 10,000 years revolted against British occupation and were massacred (Wagner 2016).

This crime took place in the same context as the Morant Bay Rebellion of Jamaica, where Paul Bogle and his people rose up against landlessness, starvation and an unjust court system and were slaughtered for daring to rebel (Heuman 1994). So, there were two slaughters – one in India and one in Jamaica. India demanded reparations and got it; Jamaica is still in conversation. This tells us the fundamental truth, that weak disorganised people never receive reparations. Reparations is an achievement of the organised, the committed, the dedicated and those who have a high regard for the dignity of their ancestors.

In summary, then, what are the reparationists demanding? They are demanding justice. They reject the European definition of reparations as undeserving black people standing on street corners waiting for handouts from white people because they do not have an internally driven developmental culture. Reparations is about development. It is about Europeans taking responsibility for what they did to colonised people. Europe has an economic, legal and moral right to repair the harm they did and alleviate the continuing suffering. The extraction of wealth from the colonised Caribbean left the region under-developed. Jamaica is a prime example. Britain violently took Jamaica from Spanish occupiers in 1655, and ran a slave regime there for 200 years.

In 1962 Jamaicans negotiated its independence, and this did not include a development plan for the country. The country was left unprepared for sustainable development. It was estimated that 80 percent of black people were classified as functionally illiterate. With that massive colonial mess, illiteracy, ghettoisation, poor infrastructure, bad agriculture, and a public health and education crisis, it was nigh impossible for Jamaica to experience sustainable, social and economic development. But, like other independent Caribbean countries, Jamaica has managed successfully to convert a horrible colonial mess into a respected nation state with effective democratic institutions. Indeed, the region, in an effort of self-help, has built a first-class university out of the education deficiency it inherited.

Reparation is not about a handout; it is about a just deserved injection of resources to promote development: more schools and hospitals, urban modernization, the promotion of energy and food

sufficiency, and the end of white supremacy systems and practices. With respect to health needs, with a conservative estimate, about 70 percent of the black people of this region over the age of 50 years have hypertension and type two diabetes, both largely because of the high salt and sugar content of the slavery diet. As a community of people addicted to salt and sugar, most African-Caribbean people cannot metabolize these products, hence the regional chronic disease pandemic.

Conclusion

As I observed in my summary recommendations to CARICOM in 2013, “there is no model of economic development that could have assured Caribbean success within the context of this legacy of colonial backwardness.” Despite noble efforts by Caribbean leadership to clean up the colonial mess bequeathed by Europe, the weight of the past serves as a substantive drag on development efforts. Centuries of economic exploitation of the region produced a legacy of broken and backward institutions, and inadequate human and physical capacity, not suitable for the promotion of meaningful development.

Increasing levels of material poverty and social insecurity in the region at the onset of the twenty-first century is best understood in terms of the cumulative effects of this history of economic injustice and the dependency development culture it has reproduced. The narrowing of economic opportunity for citizens today speaks to the inadequate provision of social and economic capacity for nation building against this background of extractive exploitation. Having successfully fed British economic transformation the region is now unable to feed its own development. Within this context the demand for reparatory justice has now reached a crescendo in public opinion.

The demand for reparatory justice for historical crimes such as the globalisation of African enslavement, therefore, is growing daily because the contemporary effects of these wrongs continue to have an aggressive and debilitating negative impact on development. This century will witness an abundance of such claims for redress and atonement, and reparation discourses will be the dominant political movement in the international arena. One important lesson has already been posted from the study of dozens of reparatory cases in recent decades. It is this: weak and fragmented nations and communities do not receive reparatory justice because they have neither the will nor the diplomatic fortitude to press their claims. Reparation is won by states that place social respect for the rights of citizens high on the development agenda. The Caribbean is now well positioned to begin the reparatory process.

In the end, as reparation is ultimately a political process where governments interact with each other, the effort to engage the governments of the region will continue. Only an intergovernmental, inter-institutional discourse will create the context of reparatory justice. Civil society will continue to have a role to play. It must rise up and persuade governments to take a formal position. It is only in such a process of dialogue that reparatory justice will take shape. As a 14-year-old Caribbean child said to me recently, reparationists are building a pyramid and each generation is putting a block upon the structure. The reparation movement is a step along the pathway to reach the top of the pyramid. This is a fascinating concept. The epic building blocks of reparation were being laid from one generation to the next. We will complete this pyramid, even it takes another five hundred years.

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Abstracts in French and Spanish

Le Mouvement de Réparation: la plus Grande Vague Politique du XXIe Siècle

Hilary McD. Beckles

Sur tous les continents, partout, la conversation principale dans la culture populaire porte sur la question de la justice réparatrice. Les Caraïbes ne sont qu'une partie de ce mouvement mondial; mais, certes, c'est ici, dans les Caraïbes, que le cadre, les concepts et les principes régissant ce mouvement ont d'abord été articulés. Alors que le monde des Caraïbes prépare ses citoyens à être des défenseurs et des bénéficiaires du progrès social et du développement économique au cours du «long XXIe siècle», la relation encore instable entre les injustices historiques, la pauvreté persistante et la diminution des opportunités se profile comme un obstacle majeur au développement. De plus en plus, l'importance académique à l'extérieur est l'argument selon lequel les Caraïbes sont les seules responsables de leurs échecs et défis de développement. Il ressort de cette perspective que la Direction politique de la région après l'indépendance a produit un nombre croissant d'États défaillants et a épuisé l'énergie indigène pour stimuler le progrès. Ces arguments rejettent toute perspective historique et situent clairement les lacunes et les frustrations en matière de développement aux pieds des dirigeants politiques et des entreprises de la région. Le but de cette approche conceptuelle est de nier l'importance d'un héritage d'extraction de richesses coloniales, d'oppression ethnique et raciale, de gouvernance impériale débilatante et de capacités infrastructurelles brutes en tant que facteurs qui façonnent encore le destin de la région. Cet article explique pourquoi les Caraïbes sont si impliquées dans le mouvement de la justice réparatrice et pourquoi l'Europe doit répondre.

Mots clés: Mouvement de réparation, Développement, Compensation, Commission de réparation de la CARICOM, Plan d'action en dix points de la CARICOM

El Movimiento de Reparación: la Marea Política más Grande del Siglo XXI

En todos los continentes, en todas partes, la conversación principal en la cultura popular gira en torno al tema de la justicia reparadora. El Caribe es solo una parte de este movimiento global; pero, es cierto, fue aquí en el Caribe donde se articularon por primera vez el marco, los conceptos y los

principios que rigen este movimiento. A medida que el mundo caribeño prepara a sus ciudadanos para ser defensores y beneficiarios del avance social y el desarrollo económico en el ‘largo siglo XXI’, la relación aún inestable entre injusticias históricas, pobreza persistente y oportunidades decrecientes se perfila como un obstáculo principal al desarrollo. Al exterior el argumento de que el Caribe es el único responsable de sus fracasos y desafíos de Desarrollo esta ganando importancia académica. Desde esta perspectiva surge que el liderazgo político posterior a la independencia de la región ha producido un número creciente de “estados fallidos” y se ha quedado sin energía indígena para impulsar el progreso. Estos argumentos rechazan cualquier perspectiva histórica y ubican las deficiencias y frustraciones del desarrollo directamente a los pies del liderazgo político y corporativo de la región. El propósito de este enfoque conceptual es negar la importancia de un legado de extracción de riqueza colonial, opresión étnica y racial, gobierno imperial debilitante y capacidad de infraestructura cruda como factores que aún configuran el destino de la región. Este artículo ensaya por qué el Caribe está tan involucrado en el movimiento de justicia reparadora y por qué Europa tiene un caso para responder.

Palabras clave: Movimiento de Reparación, Desarrollo, Compensación, Comisión de Reparación de CARICOM, Plan de Acción de Diez Puntos de CARICOM

Les Femmes, l’esclavage et le Mouvement de Réparation dans les Caraïbes

Verene A. Shepherd et Ahmed Reid

Cet article représente une contribution au discours sur les femmes, l’esclavage et la réparation. Après avoir répété les conditions de l’esclavage qui ont provoqué la résistance à l’esclavage, comme justification de l’appel à réparation pour un crime contre l’humanité, il utilise ensuite les révélations dans les demandes d’indemnisation qui ont été déposées pour les esclaves africains pour démontrer que les femmes étaient bénéficiaires du système d’asservissement et ont partagé ses gains financiers au moment de l’émancipation. L’article sert à la fois de fondement probant à l’implication des femmes dans la misère africaine et à en tirer profit, et de justification à l’appel des femmes de conscience à devenir plus actives dans le mouvement de réparation.

Mots-clés: Femmes, réparation, compensation, esclavage, la résistance, Jamaïque, Caraïbes,

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