

Ten Reasons Why David Horowitz Knows Nothing About Reparations - And Is Racist Too.

This statement was composed by Doug Taylor and Kelly Navies with the assistance of concerned faculty and undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

We, the concerned African-American students of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill want to express our opposition to both the content and spirit of David Horowitz's hateful diatribe, "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks is a Bad Idea for Blacks-and Racist Too." Horowitz's polemic is not simply an attack on reparations, it is an apologia for the horrors of slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. We also wish to state our support for reparations for African-Americans for 250 years of legal slavery, for decades of Jim Crow legislation and for continued racial oppression today. We also stand in solidarity with the call for reparations by the indigenous peoples of this land and other victims of US oppression.

1. Horowitz talks about African, Arab and Euro-American systems of slavery as if they were all the same. Of course, there is no "good" slavery, but the slavery practiced by some Africans before the arrival of Europeans was fundamentally different from that instituted by the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Africans enslaved by other Africans were not transplanted to countries thousands of miles away from their ancestral homeland, they were not forbidden to speak their native language, they were not forbidden to practice their native religion, they were neither singled out nor stigmatized because of their race, their children did not automatically inherit their status, etc. Furthermore, many Africans, during the Trans-Atlantic slave

trade enslaved other Africans in order to prevent being enslaved themselves. Arab slavery was also fundamentally different from European slavery. Under the Arab system of slavery, children of slaves were born free, slaves were freed upon the death of their master, slaves could not be sold separately from their children and slaves were not used for large-scale agricultural work. The most important distinction between African, Arab, and Euro-American forms of slavery is that the former two were not dependent upon an insidious system of racial hierarchy.

2. Horowitz talks about African-American slaveholders as if they were no different from white slaveholders when, in fact, the majority of black slaveholders purchased slaves because it was against the law in many southern states to free them. Free persons of color had no other way of securing the freedom of relatives, friends and loved ones but to buy them from their white masters. Black slaveholders could also be found among the mixed-raced Creoles of Louisiana who did not consider themselves black and were not legally recognized as such by the state of Louisiana until the institution of the Black Codes following Reconstruction. Additionally, "free" blacks themselves were oppressed by the same system of White Supremacy that upheld slavery. "Free" blacks could not vote, had property stolen and damaged by whites, were imprisoned in disproportionate numbers (like "Free" blacks today), and when they tried to seek legal redress for these injustices, they were denied the right to testify against any whites under the famous Dred Scott decision, in which the Supreme Court ruled that blacks have no rights that

whites are bound to respect.

3. Horowitz claims that only one white in five was a slaveholder in the antebellum south. This statistic is not only incorrect (see 1860 census), but not particularly relevant to the call for reparations. As John Hope Franklin has written, "All whites and no slaves benefited from American slavery. All Blacks had no rights that they could claim as their own. All whites, including the vast majority who had no slaves, were not only encouraged but authorized to exercise dominion over all slaves, thereby adding strength to the system of control. Even poor whites benefited from the legal advantage they enjoyed over all blacks as well as from the psychological advantage of having a group beneath them." Furthermore, slavery has provided the South and the nation with its economic foundation.

4. Horowitz asks, "What about the descendants of the 350,000 Union soldiers who died to free the slaves?" One would think that a Guggenheim Fellow and the author of a series of highly acclaimed biographies such as Horowitz would know that the Civil War was not fought solely to free the slaves, but to restore the Union. In a famous letter to New York Tribune editor Horace Greeley, then President Lincoln wrote: "My paramount objective in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." Furthermore, violent draft riots in New York City during the Civil War were led by whites who resented the

idea of fighting for the freedom of blacks. The Irish immigrants who started these riots raided and burned a black orphanage to the ground and hung innocent blacks from lamp posts. Finally, we are well aware that while the causes of the Civil War were complex, the issue of slavery was of paramount importance to the Confederacy.

5. Horowitz suggests that it is unfair to ask immigrants, many of whom come to the U.S. escaping persecution, to pay reparations to blacks. Actually, light or white-skinned immigrants benefit from the system of white supremacy that is the direct result of slavery, while immigrants of color are its victims. Indeed, the call for reparations not only draws attention to the oppression of African-Americans, but to that of immigrants of color as well.

6. Horowitz states the claim for reparations is based on race and not injury. As Randall Robinson and others over the years have documented, the claim is for emotional, psychological and physical injury to African-Americans as a class. Kenneth B. Clark's famous experiment with children and dolls, which was one of the strongest pieces of evidence in *Brown v. Board of Education*, clearly illustrated the psychological effect of racism on the psyches of children. "Which doll {white or black} is the good doll? Which is the bad doll? Which doll is most like you?". The majority of African-American children identified the white doll as the good doll. When this experiment was repeated a few years ago, it yielded similar results.

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