

Non-State Actors Reparations Commission Inc.

A Chronology of reparations, racial justice, and equality: by Rev. Buddy A. Larrier

Introduction

This paper is my contribution in response to the request for submissions to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. It is written not from an established historian, an educator or an intellectual perspective; simply as a person who is convinced that he has been commissioned either by God or the ancestors to assist in the search for truth, justice, peace, healing, and reconciliation towards the world becoming a better place. The paper does not seek to address history prior to the 14th century; its primary objective is to assist in the understanding of history from the 15th century - 1492 to present.

This chronology is one aspect of the claim for reparatory justice and is based on my life's experiences and research from 1977, which has led me to the understanding that there are two dates that are of major importance to every person living in the world today and will continue to be of importance for the rest of our lives. The first is the date on which that person is born, and the second is October 12. This being a fact of life my proposal to Her Excellency Ms. E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Repporteur is that in her report to the United Nations General Assembly for 2019 the date October 12 be recommended to be observed as the International Day for Reparations, for truth, justice, peace, healing, and reconciliation.

October 12 for Reparatory justice & truth

History has taught us that for generations slavery and or servitude were common practices in many nations and among different ethnic groups and tribes for various reasons. In most cases, particularly in Africa, there were rules that governed the way such persons were treated. The biblical story of Joseph being sold into Egypt by his brothers (Gneisses 37: 12-35) is one aspect of that practice, another is the Arab slave trade, which was the intersection of slavery and trade in the Arab world, mainly in Western Asia, North Africa, East Africa, and Europe. This barter system occurred chiefly between the medieval era and the 19th century. The trade was conducted through slave markets in these areas, with the enslaved captured mostly from Africa's interior and Southern Europe. The late scholar Walter Rodney argues that the term 'Arab Slave Trade' is a historical misnomer since bilateral trade agreements between myriad ethnic groups across the proposed 'Zanj trade network' characterized much of the acquisition process of chattel, and more often than not indentured servants.

During the period of Arabs kidnapping Africans and selling them into slavery, some African Muslin Moors were ruling Spain for hundreds of years before the 15th century, when Pope Paul 11 of Spain started buying slaves from Africa in the 1440s. Another aspect of the development in trading in African people came after the battle between the Muslin Moors and the Spanish Christians. The forces of King Ferdinand II of

Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile fought against the armies of the Muslim Emirate of Granada. In the battle, the Moors stronghold city of Granada was siege for several months and finally led to its surrender on January 2, 1492. The defeat of the African Moors and their expel from Spain was of momentous consequences as Granada was the last outpost of Moorish rule in Spain and its fall brought to an end 780 years of Muslim control in the Spanish peninsula. Following the victory over the Muslim Moors, a Spanish exploration led by Christopher Columbus left Spain in August 1492 with three small ships and made landfall in the Americas / Caribbean region on October 12, 1492. This was the date that the foundation on which the present world system was built. On the date October 12, 1492 when Columbus arrived in the Caribbean he had an experience with the native black people of the island, the encounter of that historic event resulted in the legacy of structural white supremacy (racism), that produced the ideology of which has impacted on the lives of every living person today and will continue to have an impact on future generations if not adequately address by revisiting the root cause.

Chattel enslavement & struggles for racial justice

The arrival of Columbus in the Caribbean in the 15th century was a historic exploratory adventure for Europeans in their quest to find resources to help their impoverished nations following the battle of Granada. Columbus and his crew were welcomed and assisted by the native Africans of the island on which they landed. The Africans celebrated the date October 12 as a day of thanksgiving, praising their God for saving the lives of the white men. After three months Columbus returned to Spain in December with only two ships as one was shipwrecked. Some of his crew was left on the island and he took with him some of the Africans. He reported to the King that the natives were friendly people, with no modern weapons and having plenty of gold and other resources. We are informed that in 1493 Columbus was commissioned to make his second voyage to the Caribbean. This time with 17 warships and over 1200 mercenaries that he recruited from the prisons, and he had the blessing of Pope Alexander VI with instructions to Christianise the natives, and if they resisted to enslave them or kill them. The natives resisted and that started the genocide process within the Caribbean and the Americas, which subsequently led to the transatlantic trade in Africans, chattel enslavement and the colonialism of non-white people, in particular, those with high melanin content. October 12 was then glorified and promoted as both 'Columbus Day' and 'Discovery Day'. The colonized people of the region were socially conditioned to celebrate their oppression by also glorifying October 12 as Discovery Day.

European colonization of the Caribbean was very effective, in particular for England. In the 17th century, in 1625 the small island of Barbados was claimed for the King of England, and two years later on February 17, 1627, it was colonized by England and it has never change colonial hands. The island was said to be uninhabited at the time. Therefore, Barbados is the only known colony that started its development with both the oppressors and the oppressed arriving together 70 Englishmen and 10 African men that were captured on the route from an enemy ship. In 1649 there was a battle in England between the army of King Charles 1 and Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary supporters, the King's army was defeated and the King was executed, and England

then became a Republic Nation. By 1651 the population of Barbados had increased significantly, and there was a battle between the Royalist and supporters of Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary group. The battle was short and led to the signing of the Barbados Peace Charter on January 11, 1652, that event subsequently influenced the formations of Navies around the world. By 1661 the oppressed persons were in the majority on the island with indentured persons mainly from Ireland and Scotland and Africans as a result of the Atlantic trade, both of whom were treated harshly and felt they had a common objective, that of rebellion. The English administration realizing the threat to their authority decided to make a distinction between the indentured Europeans and the enslaved Africans; they enacted two legislations the Servant and Masters Act for whites, and the Barbados Slave Code for blacks, which codified for the first time the ideology that an ethnic group could be legally considered as not being human, but chattel. That ideology of white supremacy (racism) subsequently underpinned the British Empire on which the sun never set. With the legalization of racism from the 1661 Barbados Slave Code, the ideology of racism spread rapidly and influenced all European colonizers and their institutions including the church. Both the Barbados Peace Charter of 1652 and Barbados Slave Code of 1661 influenced the drafting of the constitution of the United State of America (USA), with the idea that black people were only 3/5 human. The legality in the idea of chattel started with the British colonial administration in Barbados that subsequently became a transshipment point for enslaved persons to other colonial countries.

Reparatory Justice in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1787 a group of Africans in Philadelphia USA who had bought their freedom from slavery established an organization called the 'Free African Society' (FAS) the first organizations of its kind, later to become known as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. The action of those formerly enslaved persons inspired the enslaved people of Saint Dominique in 1791, resulting in Haiti becoming the first free African led country in the Western Hemisphere on January 1, 1804. However, to be recognized as a nation state by imperialists' nations Haiti was unjustly forced to pay France reparations of 90 million gold francs for the loss of its property – enslaved Africans. The successful slave rebellion of Haiti inspired the enslaved Africans of Barbados, and under the leadership of Bussa, who was born in West Africa, Barbados had an inspirational slave rebellion on April 14, 1816. The Bussa rebellion was unsuccessful but inspired other major slave revolts in Guyana 1821, Jamaica 1831, Antigua 1831 and the Bahamas 1832-1834. These slave rebellions influenced the emancipation of enslaved African in the British Empire on August 1, 1838. The slave owners were paid reparations and the former enslaved were victimized for obtaining their freedom. Fifty years after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire Europeans turned their attention on the continent of Africa to colonize it and to enslave Africans in their homeland while continuing to exploit the Caribbean. The plans of that endeavour were developed at the Berlin conference of 1884-85. Under support from the British and the initiative of Portugal when Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, called on representatives of 13 nations in Europe as well as the United States to take part in the Berlin Conference in 1884-85 to work out joint policy for governing the African continent, and European nations met and carved up Africa and shared it among themselves. Sixteen years after that Berlin conference the first Pan-African conference

was held in London in July 1900. However, Africans have not as yet addressed fully those divisions of the continent. *H.E. Dr. Arikana Chihombon Quao the AU Ambassador to the USA, whose mandate is to promote Africa in the Diaspora and to galvanize African Diasporians to take an interest in Africa is best articulating the carved up in speeches given in the USA.*

Visions to Right the Wrongs

From the first act of kidnapping and selling African persons into slavery and of genocide in the Caribbean the survivors of those atrocities and or their descendants have been seeking to right the wrongs done to them. There are many ancestors that can be recognized by their name that made contributions of which I shall name only four, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, His Excellency Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, and Dr. *Frances Cress* Welsing. There are others we don't know their names, but we do know that they lived and died for causes inclusive of truth, justice, peace, healing and to be reconciled with their families in the motherland. This desire was to be made clear and reinforced in 1963 when the late Ben Ammi an African American had the vision to lead some African Hebrew Israelis back to Israel.

In 1977 I also had an epiphany while living in England, a vision; *'as one chosen as a medium for a message to the community that needed to be communicated from the spirit realm to African people of the world', similar in reference to the book of Jeremiah 1:4-9;* it took me over a decade until 1990 before I gained the confidence to pen a proposal to over 170 world leaders. After receiving many positives responses, the proposal was published in a booklet 'to the people of the world' recommending that October 12 be designated by black led countries as a Universal Day of Hope for truth, justice, peace, healing, and reconciliation and that Europeans nations should apologize and make right the wrongs they did and are doing.

Catholic Church

Papal apologies for the Catholic Church's behaviour are a relatively recent phenomenon. Pope John Paul II, who held the title between 1979 and 2005, was the first to issue apologies; among them was one made on the 500th anniversary of Columbus' second voyage of 1493. In 1993 John Paul II addressed the Church's behavior in past centuries by issuing an apology for the Church's role in the African slave trade. Pope Francis apology in 2015 to indigenous people in the Americas is similar to that of John Paul's to Africans. His was regarding the Catholic Church's role in colonialism. Pope Francis has also turned the symbolic apology into something of a masterstroke, helping to shift the Church's atonement from only a focus on historical wrongs that happened long ago to accept moral responsibility for more current events that continue to negatively affect communities today.

Church of England

The Church of England was not to be left out, two hundred years after Anglican reformers helped to abolish the trade in Africans, the Church of England apologized for profiting from it. In 2006 the General Synod acknowledged complicity in the trade after hearing that the Church had run a slave plantation in the West Indies and that individual bishops had owned hundreds of slaves. It voted unanimously to apologize to the descendants of the slaves after an emotional debate in which the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, urged the Church to share the "shame and sinfulness of our predecessors". The Church's missionary arm, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Foreign Parts, owned the Codrington plantation in Barbados and slaves had the word "Society" branded on their chests with red-hot irons. Although the motion was passed unanimously, the synod stopped short of endorsing a specific call for financial or other reparations.

Action in Support of Reparatory Justice

In May 1995 the proposal that I made to world leaders in January 1990 was presented to the Barbados Government as a draft resolution for consideration and possible submission to the United Nations (UN) on behalf of CARICOM. In November 1998 the government of Barbados established an agency within government called the Commission for Pan-Africans Affairs under the portfolio of the Prime Minister's Office. In addition, between 1999 and 2000, the government commissioned a national consultation on racism that resulted in recommendations including one supporting the call for reparations to African people. Following the Barbados consultation, in 2001 the UN held a World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related in Durban, South Africa. This was the first world conference of the 21st century and it resulted in a watershed consensus on slavery and colonialism as crimes against humanity and for reparations to people of African descent. The draft resolution that was submitted to the Barbados government was also presented to that UN world conference. The same was also endorsed at the first follow-up to the Durban conference - the Afrikan and Afrikan Descendants World Conference against Racism - held in Barbados in October 2002. During this period the president of Haiti Jean-Bertrand Aristide made a call on France to repay the 90 million francs that they extorted as reparations from Haiti. It was also during this period that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in advancing the liberation process was transformed to the African Union (AU) with the African Diaspora being included as the sixth region of Africa.

In 2010 the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD) held its 8th session in Geneva to plan activities for 2011 - the International Year for People of African Descent, during discussions the WGEPAD recommended that there be an International Day for People of African Descent (IDPAD). There was only English speaking Caribbean delegation in attendance at this session; it was an NGO – the Universal Day of Hope Trust (UDOHT) that had made the proposal for October 12 to world leaders in 1990 and to the UN World Conference on Racism in 2001. The UDOHT made a presentation for October 12 to be considered as the IDPAD.

In 2012 - the 520th anniversary of Columbus making landfall in the Caribbean - an event of significance in the liberation struggle took place. As part of commemorating

May 25 African Day, the African Union (AU) in partnership with the South African Government hosted the Global African Diaspora Summit with the theme; 'Towards the Realisation of a United and Integrated Africa and its Diaspora'. The summit was attended by 64 heads of state. On that occasion, my proposal for October 12 was tabled but deferred. However, within five months of that historic event on October 12, 2012, the Barbados Government established a National Task Force on Reparations (TFoR). In December that same year, the history of the people of West Papua and their present colonized experience of enslaved conditions by Indonesia was brought to my the attention of the people of Barbadian by Mr. Benny Wenda, Chairman of the United Liberation Movement of West Papua who was visiting Barbados for the first time to lobby for reparatory justice for the people of West Papua.

In September 2013 following the establishment of Barbados' TFoR, CARICOM established a Reparations Commission and selected Barbados as Chair of the Heads of Government Sub-committee, also in 2013, the World Social Forum proclaimed October 12 as the International Day for Reparations. The Non-State Actors Reparations Commission Inc. was formed also on October 12, 2013. On December 10, 2014 - Human Rights Day, the UN designated the years 2015 to 2024 as the decade for people of African descent for Recognition, Justice, and Development.

From as far back as 1977 I had been seeking an audience with the Prime Minister of Barbados to share aspects of my vision of 1977. After 40 years of persistence, I finally had an audience with Prime Minister Freundel Stuart, which happened because of Mr. Benny Wenda, as we both met with Mr. Stuart on October 12, 2017. The year 2018 was another important year in the liberation process. In March the African Union (AU) Heads agreed on the 'African Continental Free Trade Area', one year later on March 22, 2019, it was ratified and implementation has started from May 30. The AU has also agreed on a 'protocol on the free movement of people'. In addition, in April 2018 the British Prime Minister Theresa May created history when she apologized to 12 CARICOM countries for the British policies of the 1950s to 1970s now refer to as the Windrush Generation Scandal and agreed to pay compensation (reparations) to the victims that were affected by those policies. History was also created in Barbados in 2018, when a General Election was held on May 24 that was unprecedented in procedure and results; whereas parliament was prorogued six weeks before the date of the election was announced. I was confident that a change would take place, so to help the process I stood as a candidate but did not even vote for himself, I was spiritually assisting in bringing about change. The opposition party won all 30 seats for the House of Assembly, and a female took office as the eighth Prime Minister of Barbados, the first woman to hold the position is Mia Amor Mottley. On July 2, I held an event to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Barbados' first International Family Reunion that was started by me in 1978, the theme was 'Let's Talk Family: Time for Unity'. On the same date July 2, 2018, the AU established the state of the African Diaspora Government to unite 350 million Diaspora Africans with their families on the continent of Africa.

Reparations Debate

Barbados continues to be in the leadership of a new world inclusive of reparatory justice. In 2007 the then Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur made a recommendation for Britain to start the debate on reparations, this was during Britain's commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the 1807 act that abolished the transatlantic trade in Africans in the British Empire. This was to contribute to the debate for reparations to African countries that were colonized by individual nations of Europe, which has been raging for generations, without any serious moves being made to call upon Europe collectively to atone for its actions. However, following the British Government's apology to CARICOM in April 2018, on March 29, 2019, the European Parliament throw its weight behind an unprecedented resolution that calls for apologies and reparations for "crimes" carried out in Africa during the era of European colonialism. The motion essentially aims to get EU constituent nations to enact reforms that will eliminate what it calls "structural racism" that are said to be experienced by Europeans of African origin. The examples given include apparent discrimination in housing and education, among other things. The resolution — given the nod of approval by 535 MEPs, with 80 votes against and 44 abstentions — also urges EU members to declassify government archives from the colonial era, a move that would reveal the grizzly details of European conduct across Africa during the age of empire. Furthermore, it calls upon those European states to issue public apologies for atrocities committed against Africans and to start the payments of reparations. This resolution coincides with the call from the President of Ghana for 2019 as the 'Year Of Return' for Africans and that of the Prime Minister of Barbados that shared her vision for 2020, calling on Diaspora Barbadians to visit Barbados in 2020 and beyond.

The Way Forward

The Global Movement on Reparatory Justice is gaining momentum and CARICOM is leading the movement. Barbados has lead responsibility for Caribbean integration and is Chair of the Heads of Government Sub-committee on Reparations. Therefore, in light of the fact that it was Barbados in 1661 that codified the ideology of white supremacy (racism) that led people of the world down a path of treating African people, in particular, those with high melanin content (dark skin) as subhuman, and in the process treating the women as an inferior being. The Non-State Actors Reparations Commission in collaboration with the Universal Day of Hope Trust considers it incumbent on the Government of Barbados with its first woman prime minister to offer an apology to African Barbadians in particular, and African people generally for what was done by a Colonial Government Administration in 1661, and thereafter through policies by successive governments and institutions worldwide that have over the years practiced racism, racial discrimination, classism and sexism. Furthermore, in light of the apology in April 2018 by Prime Minister Theresa May of the United Kingdom to people of the Commonwealth for their unjust treatment from policies of the 1950s to 1970s, and to pay compensation, and also taking into consideration the watershed resolution by the European Parliament on March 29, 2019, and furthermore the fact that the issue of reparations payment to African Americans and racism is also on the lips of persons contesting the USA elections in 2020; it is proposed that the government of Barbados with support from the Special Rapporteur table a resolution to the United Nations on behalf of CARICOM that

October 12 be the International Day for Reparations to promote truth, justice, peace, healing, and reconciliation in support of the World Social Forum proclamation of 2013.

The Non-State Actors Reparations Commission, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to submit this paper to the UN Special Rapporteur on the subject of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance with special focus on "*reparations, racial justice, and equality*".

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