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## “Reparations and the Contributions of Lazy Economists”

We are often reminded of the “Chicago School” adage: “If it exists, then it must be efficient; otherwise, it wouldn’t exist.” To prove true, this saying must rest, *inter alia*, on the following premises:

- The “existence” was manufactured by economic agents for which the “existence” is efficient.
- The economic agents manufactured the “existence” in self-interested fashion using the most favorable inputs.
- There has been no significant change in the types of inputs required to produce the “existence.”
- There has been no major change in the conditions faced by the economic agents.

One can easily infer from the foregoing that it could very well be that those not among the economic agents, who manufactured the “existence,” may not find the adage to be true.

Such is the case for Black Americans, who now seek Reparations from White Americans.

But another wise adage from a former colleague also rings true! He claimed to be the laziest economist in the world. To support his prized laziness position, he advised: Never work to address a problem/topic/issue before determining, usually with just a few

finger strokes, whether other scholars have already “been there and done that.” His reasoning was that optimal benefits only come to those who plough new earth or engage on greenfield problems/topics/issues. At a maximum, one should perform very light work (reading) to determine whether it is even possible to add a novel contribution to the literature. Otherwise, one is likely to only add to useless ink spillage.

Which brings us to Black America’s pursuit of Reparations.

Over the past decade, a huge volume of work on Reparations was produced. We contributed to that production. What has that volume of work achieved for Black America?

Mainly very fragmented, frenzied, and potentially wasteful efforts to further formalize and justify the reasons or need for Reparations. The fact that most Americans know about Black America’s push for Reparations and can voice their opinions on the topic without having read a single scholarly submission is evidence that we may have produced better long-term outcomes had we all been lazy.

Meaning what? Before answering that question, let us pose ten Reparations-related questions (some annotated), which we cannot answer. Unfortunately, we do not find

through Google searches (a tool likely to be used by average Americans) that these important questions have been confronted seriously. Until answers to these questions are in hand, it does not seem logical for Black America to continue active pursuit of Reparations. On the other hand, answers to the questions should illuminate a clear path to securing Reparations—something we do not have today. Note that the list excludes certain important Reparations questions in which you may have an interest. However, answers to such questions have likely been rendered well and are in the public domain.

1. Why has Black America not pursued Reparations seriously until now? [Is Black America's failure to pursue Reparations vigorously until recently evidence of a flaw in our strategies to pursue liberty in the US?]
2. As currently comprehended, what are the **realistically** expected (not demanded) benefits (in value terms) of Reparations? [This value would likely be computed as some "realistic" amount times some probability of Reparations being received.]
3. What costs are associated with Reparations efforts? [Factor in **all** costs (physical, mental, financial, material, social relationship, opportunity, etc.)]
4. Do comprehensive Reparations "cost-benefit" analyses yield overly favorable results?
5. What is the expected timing of the receipt of Reparations? [Should Black America be concerned about "rope-a-dope strategies" that can exhaust opponents and produce their defeat.]
6. Are there more beneficial efforts than Reparations that Black Americans can undertake now—especially for the long run?
7. Would a unified Reparations effort be more effective than the current

fragmented effort? [White America's seeming approval of a fragmented Reparations effort smells of the old "divide and conquer" scheme commonly used to defeat opponents in strategic games.]

8. What are favorable features of a unified Black American Reparations strategy?
9. Where is Black America's unified, long-term, and strategic plan to secure Reparations? [Such a plan would provide systematic guidance concerning how we move from today to receipt of Reparations.]
10. Are Black Americans prepared to suffer and/or die for Reparations? [Important and seemingly favorable developments for Blacks in America have always come with suffering and death costs.]

We will make no effort to answer the preceding ten questions. They are worthy of serious and researched consideration so that answers can arise. However, we summarize our thoughts about this absence of information with the following statements:

- Black America must join the 21<sup>st</sup> century and discontinue "making it up as we go along." Also, we must be strategic in our actions and not be unduly influenced by puppeteers.
- Without well prepared cost-benefit analyses, it is difficult to convince all Black Americans that we should or should not continue our Reparations thrust. Clearly, great uncertainty remains concerning the value of realistic Reparations benefits. However, many Black Americans are more concerned about the potential physical and human relationship costs that they may incur while pursuing Reparations.
- There is no question that Black Americans deserve Reparations. But we should be strategic in our thrusts for

Reparations and careful in accounting for the elongated path to justice in America. Consequently, we should not overlook less costly efforts that we can undertake to yield very favorable results—particularly in the long run.

- Concerning a united Black American Reparations effort, we quote another wise adage: “If one wants to go fast, go alone.

But if one wants to go far and successfully, then go together.”

- If Black America decides to continue our Reparations efforts after obtaining answers to the above questions, then we need to ensure that we have a solid plan, and we should be very well prepared to suffer and die to obtain Reparations. There is likely to be bloodshed.

B Robinson  
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