

Denouncing Racism in Conservative Chinese-American News Media against African-Americans

By Edward Locke, LA Collegian

Recently, The World Journal, a conservative Chinese-American mass media, published on page A8, Sunday, May 21 issue, and online at <https://www.worldjournal.com/wj/story/121206/7178669>, an anti-African-American opinion article titled *Oppose Huge Reparation to “Descendants of Black Slaves”* written by Chen Guoming (San Francisco). This is NOT the first time the World Journal publishes racist articles against disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Descent Americans with human conscience should pay attention to what the author is saying. Chen claims that if San Francisco’s plan of reparation of 1.2 million “for the so-called ‘descendants of black slaves’ is true, “the disaster will spread to the United States.” Here, Chen simply ignores the undeniable fact that descendants of black slaves truly exist, by using such pejorative term as “the so-called” and the parenthesis. In fact, many other places in the United States have already taken actions to implement reparations. An article published online in Washington Post, Jan. 31, 2020, written by Thai Jones, curator for U.S. history at Columbia University’s Rare Book & Manuscript Library (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/01/31/slavery-reparations-seem-impossible-many-places-theyre-already-happening/>), presents valuable information about involvement with slavery in the pre-Civil War South by government, religious and business institutions alike; and gives examples of measures of reparations “as an act of repentance” by local institutions, including Protestant and Catholic churches. “One form of reparations offers restitution for living victims who suffered in the recent past. The other focuses on descendants many generations removed from the original injury. In Chicago, survivors received direct financial awards; at Georgetown, the money will be spent on charities and other indirect benefits. So far, no “disaster” has taken place or “spread to the United States,” as Chen predicts.

The fear-monger Chen next argues that after the Civil War, “the black slaves were emancipated, and all of them became free men. If there are no slaves, how can there be descendants of slaves? In addition, the United States arranged for blacks to return to Africa after the war. They went and returned because life in the United States was easier than in Africa.” This is a ridiculous argument. The reason is simple, even though all of blacks “became free men,” their descendants are still descendants of former slaves; thus, you cannot say that there are no descendants of slaves just because they have been “emancipated.” This is an illogical argument. Regarding the arrangement of the United States for blacks to return to Africa after the war, it refers to the creation of Liberia, which up to the present time is still an impoverished Third World country, and the fact that many of the immigrants to Liberia “went and returned because life in the United States was easier than in Africa” cannot be used as a viable reason to deny African-American descendants of slaves to fair reparation, for the suffering of their ancestors as well as for their suffering from racial discrimination up to the present time.

Chen next tries to instigate, among Chinese-Americans, bad feelings about African-Americans, by portraying Chinese-Americans, especially “Cantonese people,” as a so-called “model minority” who “know how to be grateful for the United States,” for the American “paradise” despite of past suffering, while suggesting that African-Americans are somehow “ungrateful.” Chen writes that “speaking of slavery and discrimination, Cantonese people sold themselves

(selling piglets) to explore gold mines and build railways in the United States more than a hundred years ago, and they were actually slaves. Chinese laborers and Chinese are discriminated against in various ways, but the descendants know how to be grateful for the United States, and they all regard the United States as a paradise where they can avoid man-made disasters and natural disasters and live in peace.” Let us make historical facts straight. First of all, “Cantonese people” came to the United States mostly through illegal human trafficking by illegal or underground secret societies (both Chinese and American); they might be exploited or mistreated by bad employers but did have the right to freely find better employers to work for; but instead, many of them work as strike-breakers and harmed the white working-class in the early days of Unionism, and thus, fell victims to discrimination; but African slaves were enslaved by the pre-Civil War legal system and had no right to escape from the bondage of bad slave-owners. Therefore, Chen’s argument is like comparing orange with apple, equating sporadic individual cases of exploitation to institutionalized enslavement, and thus is totally irrational.

Chen next talks about the temporarily imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War Two, and argues that this is “for the safety of the United States” and for “the people of the whole country” to enjoy this kind of security,” and thus, “after the war, the United States should pay compensation, and everyone should pay for it. That is, the contemporary people compensate the contemporary people for the acts of war.” Chen uses a double-standard to argue that “this is different from the compensation for the ‘descendants of black slaves’ derived from the ‘slave trade’ as commercial activities one or two hundred years ago. [...] Slave trading is a historical event that existed all over the world. It was a normal thing at that time, and it was an ancient commercial activity. Future generations do not have to be responsible for the normal commercial activities of the ancient people hundreds of years ago, and make any compensation.” Chen argues that “slave trading” is “a normal thing at that time.” Let us make historical facts straight. As a matter of fact, right before the American Revolution, the British Empire, under the pressure of progressive Britons with human conscience, already decided to abolish slave trading and the Imperial British Navy were sent all over the world to prohibit it; since the British Empire at that period of time, was the world hegemon that set rules for other nations to follow, Chen cannot legitimately argue that slave trading was legitimate “commercial activities” or “normal thing at that time,” in fact, the very existence of African-American slavery in the South was in conflict with the spirit of The Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Thus, it is against the very foundation the American Nation has been created, and eventually has been abolished. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to point out that, for Western Europe, slavery has been gradually abolished more than two thousand years ago, with the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism, and the replacement of slavery under Roman Empire by the system of serfdom in the Medieval Times. The practice of slavery in the South is a satanic and anti-biblical regression, not a humanitarian progress in history, and thus, Chen’s claim that slavery is “normal” is equally a satanic fallacy.

Chen further claims that if “future generations” have to pay for the wrongdoings of the past, then, “the land that the United States bought from Mexico in ancient times would have to be returned to Mexico.” Chen’s statement about Mexican-American relations is equally false. The United States did not “buy” (“bought”) land from Mexico “in ancient times;” the United States defeated Mexico in a military conflict because American system of modern capitalism was by far

technologically superior to Mexico's feudalistic system at that time, and because American armed forces were far superior in terms of better weapons; the United States acquired the land of California, Texas and other states after signing a peace treaty with Mexico. After seizing a large area of land, U.S. developed stronger economy in the land and has settled large number of immigrants from many countries, including Mexico. The United States has "unofficially" paid large scope of "de facto" if not "de jure" reparations to Mexico in terms of acceptance of waves after waves of Mexican immigrants, documented or undocumented alike. Therefore, for all practical purposes, territorial issues between Mexico and U.S. have been settled long time ago. Chen's attempt to link the issue of reparations for African-American descendants of slaves and U.S. "return" of land "bought" from Mexico is fearmongering, pure and simple.

Chen needs to study arithmetic and basic logics, when he is trying to compare the circumstances of African-Americans, Chinese-Americans and Japanese-Americans; he also needs to study the complicated relationships between Africa, China, and Japan on one side, and the U.S. on the other side, in order to broaden his scope of knowledge, before he ever tries to persuade knowledgeable audience to accept his personal opinions. After that study, Chen will be qualified to talk about "gratitude" and responsibility for compensation. African-Americans suffer from around 244 years of institutionalized slavery and inhuman treatment (1619-1863) and 109 years of institutionalized discrimination after Emancipation (1864-1968, through "Jim Crow" and segregation laws), plus 54 years of illegal but still widespread discrimination at grass-root level after the Civil Rights Movement (1969-2023), as witnessed by George Floyd's murder case. Chinese-Americans suffer from no institutionalized slavery at any time of American history, but from institutionalized discrimination with Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) and a few incidents of massacres (Rock Springs in 1885, Hells Canyon in 1887, and a few other places), for a duration of 61 years; but after the Civil Rights Movement, anti-Chinese attitude has dwindled significantly at grass-root level; it resurfaces in American society since Trump Administration declared Trade War on China; however, the seriousness of the damages of China-bashing since then is not comparable to what disproportionate number of African-Americans suffer from police brutality, poverty, homelessness, and others; in addition, generally speaking, Chinese-American representation in U.S. elite circles is higher than the percentage of Chinese-Americans in U.S. population. Japanese-Americans suffered from incarceration for three years (1945-1942) during World War Two, and from sporadic outburst of discrimination for similar duration and seriousness as Chinese-Americans; but for a duration of three years of suffering, Japanese-American have received reparations in 1988. If three years of incarceration is justified for reparation as claimed by Chen, then his denial of the right to reparation for the descendants of black slaves for 244 years of slavery of their ancestors, which is incarceration plus forced labor, plus more than 109 years of institutionalized discrimination, plus 54 years of illegal but still widespread discrimination that they continue to suffer even today, is ridiculously an unjustified application of double-standards.

In terms of international relations, U.S.-China relations is complicated but overall constructive; the U.S. has offered importantly vital supports to China in times of serious crises, such as opposition to European powers' attempt to divide and colonize China during the Boxer Rebellion, assisting Nationalist China to resist Japanese invasion during World War Two, helping Mainland China to confront Soviet threat of aggression and to modernize into today's second global economic powerhouse, and needless to mention, the U.S. provided substantial assistance to Taiwan after the collapse of Chiang Kaishek's government in Mainland China; therefore, U.S. contribution to China is a net positive despite of some inevitable imperfections.

After World War Two, the U.S. plays a key role to transform Japan into a fully modernized democracy with a high-tech based economy; therefore, U.S. contribution to Japan is outstanding. Regarding Africa, U.S. did help African nations to break off the shackles of European colonialism, and provide some assistance in humanitarian aid and infrastructure construction; however, the depth and scope of this assistance is not comparable to what China (Mainland and Taiwan) and Japan have received; in addition, most of African countries today are impoverished and undeveloped, and the U.S., the largest agricultural powerhouse in the world today, which benefits from the unpaid African-American slaves in its early accumulation of capital, does have a moral obligation to help African countries. Winston Churchill used to say “lies, lies, and statistics.” The above statistics and facts simply cannot support Chen’s arguments about “gratitude” of Chinese-American “Model Minority” and non-existence of descendants of black slaves, or their supposed ingratitude or no need for reparation for historical injustice.

Chen further claims that if “future generations” have to pay for the wrongdoings of the past, then, “the land that the United States bought from Mexico in ancient times would have to be returned to Mexico.” Chen’s statement about Mexican-American relations is equally false. The United States did not “buy” (“bought”) land from Mexico “in ancient times;” the United States defeated Mexico in a military conflict because American system of modern capitalism was by far technologically superior to Mexico’s feudalistic system at that time, and because American armed forces were far superior in terms of better weapons; the United States acquired the land of California, Texas and other states after signing a peace treaty with Mexico. After seizing a large area of land, U.S. developed stronger economy in the land and has settled large number of immigrants from many countries. The United States has actually “unofficially” paid large scope of “de facto” if not “de jure” reparations to Mexico in terms of acceptance of waves after waves of Mexican immigrants, documented or undocumented alike. Therefore, for all practical purposes, territorial issues between Mexico and U.S. have been settled long time ago. Chen’s attempt to link the issue of reparations for African-American descendants of slaves and U.S. “return” of land “bought” from Mexico is fearmongering, pure and simple.

Chen’s claim that “the unreasonable huge sum of money paid to the ‘descendants of black slaves’ will affect the future of the United States and the national destiny” has no supporting evidence. In the contrary, the reparation will not only provide an ethical solution to a long-term historical injustice and thus make America a much kinder and gentler society, spiritually and culturally, but also rejuvenate American economy, in terms of infrastructure constructions, improvement of education, increase in purchasing power in African-American communities, a pre-condition of sustainable economic growth.

As a last resort, Chen tries to stir up the muddy water of right-wing populism, so as to stop the legal process of reparation in California’s legislature, by claiming that “this is an important matter, and whether to pay or not should be decided by taxpayers across the state and across the country.” Well, a blatant demagogic call as such will not stop the redemptive advance of human history toward justice and fairness.

Attachment

World Journal (世界日報) newspaper: Racist article

World Journal (世界日報) Sunday, May 21, 2023, page A8 (World Forum, 世界论坛)

World Journal (世界日報) webpage: Racist article

<https://www.worldjournal.com/wj/story/121206/7178669>

Original text in Chinese:

The screenshot shows the World Journal website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the site logo "世界新聞網" (World News Network) and "亞太裔傳統月" (Asian American Heritage Month). Below the logo, there are links for "App 下載", "影音", and "電子報". The main navigation menu includes categories like "即時", "焦點", "美國", "紐約", "洛杉磯", "舊金山", "地方", "中國", "台灣", "國際", "亞裔月", "運動", "教育", and "生活". A red banner at the bottom of the navigation menu contains the text "快訊 香港再傳重大命案 3名女童疑似遭生母「悶死」" and "女兒和孫女在機上 侵犯華府領事館".

觀點 / 讀者論壇

反對鉅款賠償給「黑奴後代」

陳國明 (舊金山) 2023-05-21 02:00 ET



近日舊金山對所謂「黑奴後代」的賠償，現議成120萬，若真的賠成，將禍延美國。



為了解放黑奴而進行的南北戰爭，戰後黑奴得解放，個個都成自由人，無奴那有奴後代？再加上，戰後美國安排黑人返非洲，他們去了又復回，是因美國生活比非洲易。



說奴隸，說歧視，百多年前廣東人，賣身（賣豬仔）來美開金礦，築鐵路，其實也算是奴隸。華工華人百般受歧視，後代卻知感恩美，都視美國如桃源，能避人禍天災可安居。



世界二戰防日諜，將美日裔暫囚禁，妥善安置集中營。此是戰時之行為，為了美國之安全，此種安全全國人民享受到，戰後美國作賠償，大家齊賠也應該。那是當代人為戰爭行為賠償給當代人，這與為一、兩百年前的商業行為之「奴隸買賣」衍生出的「黑奴後代」賠償不同，本屬兩回事。



奴隸買賣是歷史事件，世界各地都曾存在，在當時是正常事，乃屬古代商業行為，後人不必為幾百年前古人當時的正常商業行為負責任，作任何一分一毫的賠償，否則美國古時向墨西哥買來的土地也得交還墨西哥。

不合情理法的鉅款賠償予「黑奴後代」，影響美國前途與國運，此乃大事，賠與不賠，應由全州全國納稅人投票決定。

Translated text in English:

Oppose Huge Reparation to “Descendants of Black Slaves”

By Chen Guoming (San Francisco)

Recently, San Francisco has negotiated a reparation of 1.2 million for the so-called “descendants of black slaves.” If the compensation is true, the disaster will spread to the United States.

The Civil War was waged to emancipate the black slaves. After the war, the black slaves were emancipated, and all of them became free men. If there are no slaves, how can there be descendants of slaves? In addition, the United States arranged for blacks to return to Africa after the war. They went and returned because life in the United States was easier than in Africa.

Speaking of slavery and discrimination, Cantonese people sold themselves (selling piglets) to explore gold mines and build railways in the United States more than a hundred years ago, and they were actually slaves. Chinese laborers and Chinese are discriminated against in various ways, but the descendants know how to be grateful for the United States, and they all regard the United States as a paradise where they can avoid man-made disasters and natural disasters and live in peace.

During World War Two, in order to prevent espionage by Japanese spies, Japanese-Americans were temporarily imprisoned, and properly placed in concentration camps. This is a wartime act. For the safety of the United States, the people of the whole country can enjoy this kind of security. After the war, the United States should pay compensation, and everyone should pay for it. That is, the contemporary people compensate the contemporary people for the acts of war. This is different from the compensation for the “descendants of black slaves” derived from the “slave trade” as commercial activities one or two hundred years ago. They are two different things.

Slave trading is a historical event that existed all over the world. It was a normal thing at that time, and it was an ancient commercial activity. Future generations do not have to be responsible for the normal commercial activities of the ancient people hundreds of years ago, and make any compensation. Otherwise, the land that the United States bought from Mexico in ancient times would have to be returned to Mexico.

The unreasonable huge sum of money paid to the “descendants of black slaves” will affect the future of the United States and the national destiny.

This is an important matter, and whether to pay or not should be decided by taxpayers across the state and across the country.