



TIMELINE

This is an incomplete list of reparations demands and payments made in the United States by the federal government, states, cities, religious institutions, and colleges and universities.¹

1783: Belinda Sutton, kidnapped as a child in what is now Ghana and sold into slavery, successfully petitioned the Massachusetts state legislator for reparations from the man who claimed to own her, who was one of the major financial contributors to Harvard. Belinda inspired a movement by Harvard Law students in 2017.

1865: Union Army General Sherman issued Special Field Order #15, which gave 40,000 former slaves 40 acres each of captured land from South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The order was later overturned by President Andrew Johnson, who ordered the land returned to Confederate landholders.

1866: The Southern Homestead Act was signed into law, through which, "ex-slaves were given 6 months to purchase land at reasonable rates without competition from white southerners and northern investors. But, owing to their destitution, few ex-slaves were able to take advantage of the program. The largest number that did were located in Florida, numbering little more than 3,000... The program failed."

1870: Sojourner Truth circulated a petition requesting Congress to provide land to the "freed colored people in and about Washington" to allow them "to support themselves." Yet, Truth's efforts were not successful. Former slaves in the United States got no land or financial support after the end of slavery.

1878: Henrietta Wood won restitution for slavery. According to Caleb McDaniel, "[t]hough born enslaved in Kentucky in 1818 or 1820, Wood had been living as a free woman in Cincinnati in 1853 when she was kidnapped and re-enslaved by a white Kentuckian named Zebulon Ward; she ended up living in slavery until after the Civil War. But in 1869, Wood returned to Cincinnati and filed a lawsuit against Ward for \$20,000 in damages and lost wages. A federal court handed her a verdict for \$2,500, an amount worth \$60,000 today. It is the largest known sum ever awarded by a U.S. court in restitution for slavery."

1894: The National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief and Bounty and Pension Association was formed by a formerly enslaved woman, Callie House, and challenged the United States to pay pensions to former slaves. By 1898, it had enrolled 300,000 African Americans to demand pensions from the federal government. The Association called for \$15 per month, and \$500 in bounty for all formerly enslaved people over seventy, with staggered and decreasing benefits for younger former slaves who could still work.

1890-1903: Six ex-slave pension bills went before Congress; none were passed.

1914: Marcus Mosiah Garvey and Amy Ashwood Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association and began a movement for repatriation to Africa.

1915: When organizing efforts were consistently being stymied by federal attacks, Callie House "instigated and paid for a reparations lawsuit" that called for the federal government to pay \$68,073,388.99 to African Americans out of the Treasury that had been collected from cotton taxes between 1862 and 1868.

1957-1959: Queen Mother Audley Moore presented a petition to the United Nations demanding land and billions of dollars in compensation, as well as repatriation to Africa. She later published *Why Reparations? Reparations Is the Battle Cry for the Economic and Social Freedom of More than 25 Million Descendants of American Slaves*.

1962: Queen Mother Audley Moore formed the Reparations Committee of the United States Slaves, Inc., with Dara Abubakari. In 1962, they delivered a communiqué to the United Nations demanding that the United States government be forced to pay reparations.

1969: The "Black Manifesto" was launched in Detroit. Penned by James Forman, former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, and released at the National Black Economic Development Conference, the manifesto demanded \$500 million in reparations from predominantly white religious institutions for their role in perpetuating slavery. About \$215,000 was raised from the Episcopal and Methodist churches through rancorous deliberations that ultimately tore the coalition apart.

1988: President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which provided \$1.2 billion (\$20,000 a person) and an apology to each of the approximately 60,000 living Japanese Americans who had been interned during World War II. Additionally, \$12,000 and an apology were given to 450 Unangans (Aleuts) for internment during WWII, and a \$6.4 million trust fund was created for their communities.

1994: The State of Florida approved \$2.1 million for the living survivors of a 1923 racial massacre that resulted in multiple deaths and the decimation of the Black community in the town of Rosewood.

1995*: The Southern Baptists apologized to African American church members for the denomination's endorsement of slavery.

1997*: President Bill Clinton apologized to the survivors of the United States government-sponsored syphilis tests in Tuskegee, Alabama.

2001: The Oklahoma legislature passed, and Governor Keating signed, a bill to pay reparations for the destruction of the Greenwood, Oklahoma community by white supremacists in 1921 in the form of low-income student scholarships in Tulsa; an economic development authority for Greenwood; a memorial; and medals to the 118 known living survivors of the destruction of Greenwood.

2002*: Governor Mark Warner of Virginia issued a formal apology for the state's decision to forcibly sterilize more than 8,000 of its residents.

2002: Edward Fagan filed a class-action lawsuit in the name of Deadria Farmer-Paellmann and other people in similar situations. Fagan's lawsuit requested a formal apology and financial reparations from three United States companies that profited from slavery. Among these corporations was Aetna Insurance Company, which held an insurance policy in the name of Abel Hines, Farmer-Paellman's enslaved great-grandfather. Although the case was dismissed in 2004, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit later allowed the plaintiffs to engage in consumer protection claims exposing the companies named in the lawsuit for misleading their customers about their role in slavery.

2005*: The United States Senate approved, by voice vote, S.R.39, which called for the lawmakers to apologize to lynching victims, survivors, and their descendants, several of whom were watching from the gallery. No financial reparations were given.

2005: Virginia, five decades after ignoring Prince Edward County and other locales that shut down their public schools in support of segregation, made a rare effort to confront its racist past, in effect apologizing and offering reparations in the form of scholarships. With a \$1 million donation from billionaire media investor John Kluge and a matching amount from the state, Virginia provided up to \$5,500 to any state resident who was denied a proper education when public schools shut down. More than 80 students have been approved for the scholarships and several thousand were potentially eligible.

2008: The United States House of Representatives issued an apology to Black Americans for the institution of slavery, and the subsequent Jim Crow laws that discriminated against them.

2014: The State of North Carolina set aside \$10 million for reparations payments to living survivors of the state's eugenics program, which forcibly sterilized approximately 7,600 people.

2015: The City of Chicago signed into law an ordinance granting \$5.5 million in cash payments, free college education, priority for city employment, and a range of social services, including the creation of a healing and organizing center on the South Side of Chicago, to 57 living survivors of police torture. Explicitly defined as reparations, the ordinance includes a formal apology from Mayor Rahm Emanuel and a mandate to teach the broader public about the tortures through a memorial and public school curriculum.

2016: The State of Virginia, one of more than 30 other states that practiced forced sterilizations, followed North Carolina's lead to award \$25,000 to each survivor.

2016: Georgetown University acknowledged that the school profited from the sale of slaves and "reconciled" by naming two buildings after African Americans and offering preferred admission to any descendants of slaves who labored at the university.

2017*: Congressman John Conyers, D-Michigan, introduced a newly revised bill H.R.40, Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, which was initially proposed to the House of Representatives in 1989 and every year since. The bill was introduced "[to] address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent *de jure* and *de facto* racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies, and for other purposes."

* the asterisk denotes apologies from government institutions and other organizations

REPARATIONS PAID BY OTHER COUNTRIES

1952: Germany: \$822 million to Holocaust survivors: German Jewish Settlement

1988: Canada: \$230 million: Japanese Canadians

1990: Austria: \$25 million: Holocaust Survivors

2008: Canada: Reparations to survivors of Indian Residential Schools

2014: France: More than 700 claims have been filed under an agreement between the United States and France in which French officials have agreed to pay out \$60 million for the deportations of World War II prisoners to Nazi death camps carried out by SNCF, France's railway system. In exchange, the United States government agreed to ask courts to dismiss any lawsuits against SNCF or the French government.

2015: Japan: \$8.3 million to provide elder care to Korean "Comfort Women" survivors and a renewed apology.

2016: France: The State Department paid or approved 90 claims for a total of \$11 million in reparations by France to former WWII prisoners who were carried to Nazi Death Camps in French trains—the first French reparations paid to Holocaust survivors in the United States.

2017: Canada: Reparations for abduction of Indigenous children into the child welfare system.

¹ This timeline specifically borrows heavily from the booklet *Black Reparations Now! 40 Acres, \$50 Dollars, and a Mule, + Interest* by Dorothy Benton-Lewis, "Black and Blue Chicago Finds a New Way to Heal" by Yana Kunichoff and Sarah Macaraeg, YES Magazine, Spring 2017; and *Long Overdue: The Politics of Racial Reparations: From 40 Acres to Atonement and Beyond* by Charles P. Henry, 2007, NYU Press.

ACTIVITY: REPARATIONS TIMELINE

DESCRIPTION:

Create a timeline using the collective knowledge in the group. Use the timeline above to supplement the timeline you created and discuss major milestones in the ongoing fight for reparations. Once you complete the timeline, discuss the questions below.



OBJECTIVES:

To build knowledge in the room about major milestones in the fight for reparations, and to add to that knowledge.



PARTICIPANTS:

5-Unlimited



FORMAT:

Individual reflection followed by large group discussion. Draw a timeline up on a whiteboard or butcher paper that begins in 1492 and ends in the present. Invite participants to write up key moments in history that they believe are critical to racial justice in the United States.

If participants are stuck and need some inspiration, pass out the timeline from the previous pages and discuss some of the historical moments included to help them spark their own thoughts.

Next, ask participants to write down on post-it notes some examples of reparations they are aware of. Use the above abbreviated list to fill in the timeline and engage participants in a discussion of the following questions:

- ☒ Why did we begin by focusing on historical moments relevant to racial justice in the United States before discussing the history of reparations?
- ☒ Where do you see your ancestors, your family, and/or yourself represented or involved in this timeline?
- ☒ How much of the history of reparations did we know? How much did we not know?
- ☒ What does this timeline tell you about our fight for reparations?
- ☒ Are there any lessons you want to apply to our current fight for reparations? If so, what?



TIME REQUIRED:

20-40 minutes



MATERIALS:

Butcher Paper or whiteboard, post-it notes, pens



SET-UP AND

TECHNOLOGY:

Not needed



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY: APOLOGY AND REPAIR

DESCRIPTION:

This activity is an opportunity for participants to examine the apology issued from the House of Representatives in 2008 and discuss how they could use the points in the letter to advocate for reparations.



OBJECTIVES:

To articulate a case for reparations and reflect on the adequacy of the 2008 House of Representatives apology.



PARTICIPANTS:

3-Unlimited



FORMAT:

In small groups, read the below apology and discuss the questions below.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- ☒ What are your thoughts about this apology for slavery and Jim Crow that was passed as a resolution in the House of Representatives in 2008? What do you appreciate about the apology? What is missing or lacking?
- ☒ This apology does not mention a need for reparations for Black people. Write a response letter using the points offered in the apology to make a case for reparations.
- ☒ How do you think Harriet Tubman, Callie House, or Sojourner Truth would feel if they could have read this apology? What do think their responses would be to this apology?

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION:

In 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives issued an apology to Black Americans for the institution of slavery, and the subsequent Jim Crow laws that discriminated against them. The following is the text of the Resolution written and introduced by Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN):

U.S. Apology for Slavery, Jim Crow

July 29, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Chairman. It is with pride that I introduce this resolution with 120 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle. It is with pride that I serve as a member of this institution, in this building that was built with slave labor, and for which the new Visitors Gallery will be known as Emancipation Hall. It was a gentleman from this side of the aisle, the party of Lincoln, Representative Zach Wamp from my state, and this side of the aisle, Representative Jesse Jackson Jr., who eloquently spoke to a subcommittee of which I'm a member, urging the remembrance and recognition of the work of the slaves who helped construct this magnificent capitol building and have the entryway named Emancipation Hall.

This country had an institution of slavery for 246 years and followed it with Jim Crow laws that denied people equal opportunity under the law. There was segregation in the south and other places in this country, at least through the year 1965 when civil rights laws were passed. There were separate water fountains for people, marked white and colored, there were restaurants, there were separate hotels, there were job opportunities that were not available to African-Americans. There were theaters that were segregated.

It's hard to imagine, in 2008, that such a society existed and was sanctioned by law, that the laws of the nation provided for segregation and enforced slave fugitive slave laws. In fact, the history of slavery goes not just through the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to our constitution, but as so eloquently written, just yesterday, in "The Baltimore Sun" in an editorial by Mr. Leonard Pitts Jr., that slavery existed up until about World War II, but it was a form of slavery where people were bought and sold for debts, it was slavery by another name. In a book called *Slavery By Another Name* by Douglass Blackman, a correspondent for the Wall Street Journal, when he talked about a convict leasing system in the south where in poor black men were routinely snatched up and tried on false petty or nonexistent charges by compliant courts, assessed some fine they could not afford, and then put into the servitude of an individual who bought them. This system continued up until World War II.

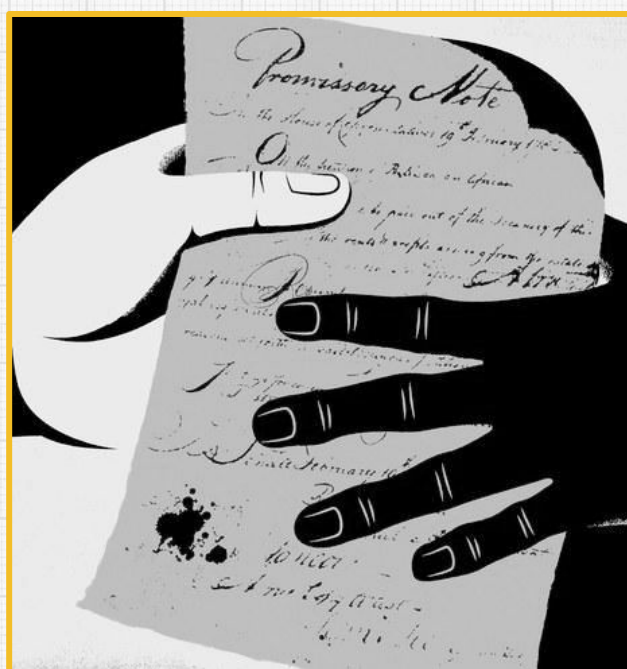
The fact is, slavery and Jim Crow are stains upon what is the greatest nation on the face of the earth and the greatest government ever conceived by man. But when we conceived

this government and said all men were created equal we didn't in fact make all men equal, nor did we make women equal. We have worked to form a more perfect union, and part of forming a more perfect union is laws, and part of it is such as resolutions like we have before us today where we face up to our mistakes and we apologize, as anyone should apologize for things that were done in the past that were wrong. And we begin a dialogue that will hopefully lead us to a better understanding of where we are in America today and why certain conditions exist.

In 1997, President Clinton talked to the nation about the problem this country had with race. And he wanted a national dialogue. He considered an apology for slavery. I happened to run into President Clinton at that time, at the Amtrak station here in Washington and discussed with him having an apology for Jim Crow as well as slavery. I encompassed that in a letter dated July 2, 1997 that as a state Senator in Tennessee I wrote to President Clinton. In that letter, I urged him to have a slavery apology and a Jim Crow apology and to mark it on the 30th Anniversary of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, and that event tragically took place in April of 1968 in my city and that the appropriate time for President Clinton to have that apology would be on that 30th anniversary.

In going through my papers as I was elected to congress, I found this letter and I thought about it and I said to myself, you're a member of congress, you don't need to wait on a response

from the President of the United States, which my friend, the president's office, failed to make a response. I can take action myself. So I introduced the resolution in February of 2007 with 120 sponsors joining me as time went on. It is important on this day that we admit our error, that we apologize. I've been in this body and voted with the rest of the body on unanimous voice vote to encourage, this past year, the Japanese Government to apologize for its use of Chinese women as "comfort women" during the war. And not a voice was raised questioning that resolution which passed unanimously on us calling on a foreign country to apologize for its use of "comfort women." Twenty years ago this congress passed a bill apologizing for the internment of Japanese citizens during World War II. In fact, subsequent to the consideration of this resolution, the distinguished lady from California, Ms. Matsui, has a resolution recognizing and celebrating the 20th anniversary of the passage of that bill.



This Congress did the right thing in apologizing for the imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and in encouraging the Japanese Government to apologize for the use of "comfort women." But the fact that this government has not apologized to its own citizens, African-Americans, for the institution of slavery and for the Jim Crow laws that followed and accepted that fact and encouraged changes in our dialogue and understanding in the actions of this country to rectify that is certainly a mistake. And today we rectify that mistake. This is a symbolic resolution but hopefully it will begin a dialogue where people will open their hearts and their minds to the problems that face this country, from racism that exists in this country on both sides and which must end if we're to go forward as the country that we were created to be and which we are destined to be. So it is with great honor that I speak on this resolution and urge the members of this body to pass this historic resolution, recognize our errors, but also recognize the greatness of this country, because only a great country can recognize and admit its mistakes and then travel forth to create indeed a more perfect union that works to bring people of all races, religions and creeds together in unity as Americans part of the United States of America. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time and I urge my colleagues to vote unanimously to pass this resolution today. Thank you.

<http://bit.ly/Congress-Apologizes-for-Slavery>



ACTIVITY: REPARATIONS FROM THE MASTERS HOUSE

DESCRIPTION:

This exercise allows participants to apply a Black queer feminist abolitionist lens to reparations. The exercise is borrowed from our comrades in Wildfire Project.



OBJECTIVES:

Practice applying an abolitionist and Black queer radical feminist reparations lens.



TIME REQUIRED:

30-45 minutes



PARTICIPANTS:

15-20 people



MATERIALS:

Flip chart paper and markers



FORMAT:

Small groups.



SET-UP AND

TECHNOLOGY:

No technology required

The facilitator should reveal four flip charts:

- 1) white supremacy/race;
- 2) capitalism/class;
- 3) hetero-patriarchy/gender and sexuality;
- 4) picture of a house.

Give the following instructions to the participants:

- ☒ Let's engage a Black queer feminist reparations lens. For each flip chart, come up with one thing that needs to be **abolished**; one way money from an institution, the state, or a lineage/family could contribute to "repair;" or a vision of a new house.
- ☒ Break into **3 groups**: one per flip chart (or six if too many people). Each group has 10 minutes to brainstorm more examples.
- ☒ Groups have 1-2 minutes each to share back.

We will call the source of all harm "The Masters House."

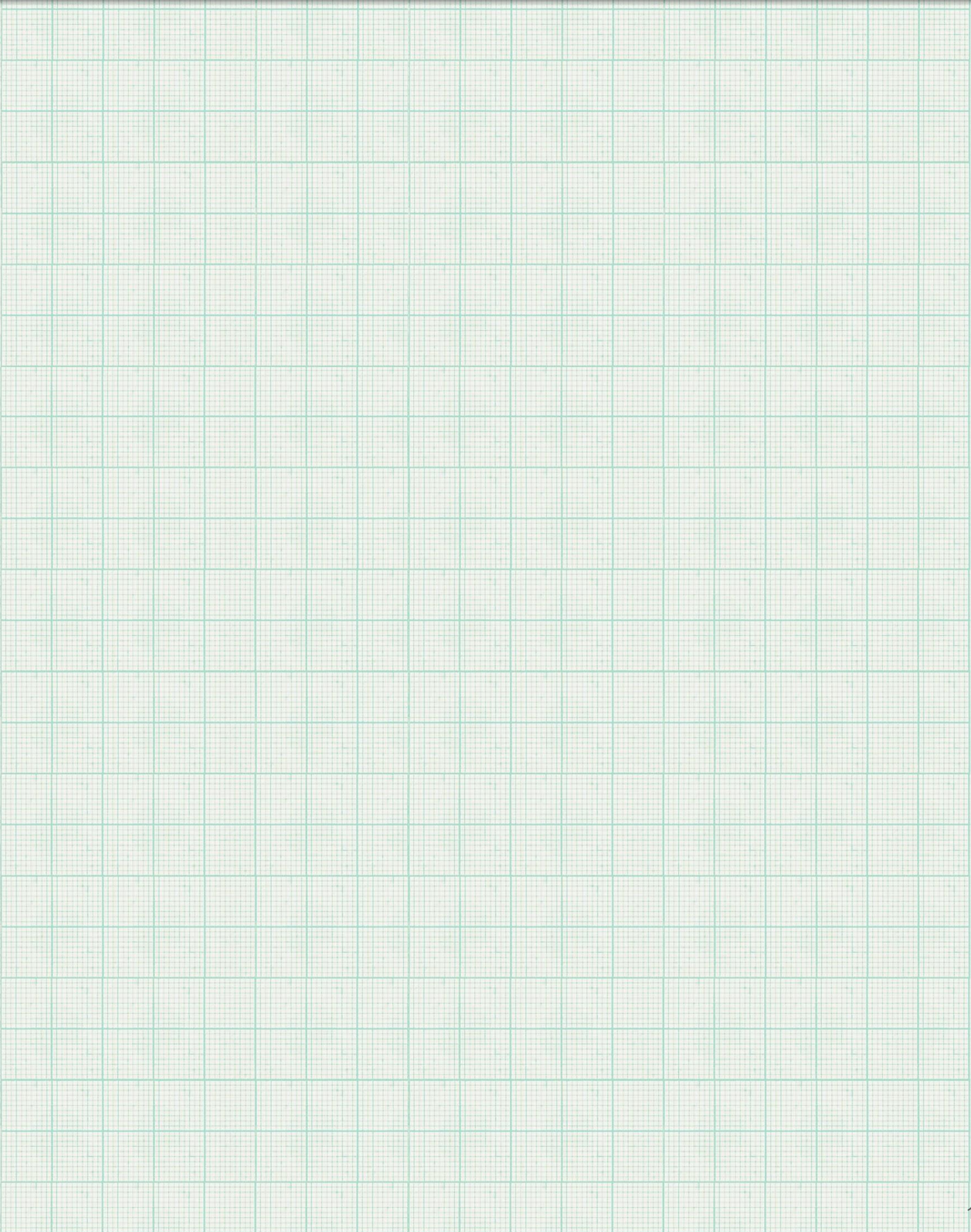
Building the master's house first required displacing people in both Africa and the land now known as the United States, through genocide, kidnapping, and enslaving people.

Then, in order to build the house on the stolen land, the intersecting oppressions of **white supremacy**, **heteropatriarchy**, and **racial capitalism** were required. Throughout history and still today this oppression continues to keep the master's house in place.

If reparations must dismantle the master's house, what are all the areas that must be addressed, repaired, abolished?









> GLOSSARY

- **ABLEIST/ABLEISM:** As defined by the Harriet Tubman Collective: a system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally-constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, and excellence. These ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society writ large determining who is valuable or worthy based on people's appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily produce, excel, and "behave." Importantly, you do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

- **BADGES AND INCIDENTS OF SLAVERY:** Ongoing perceptions, discrimination, violence, or state or private policy or action that target or taint any racial group or population that has previously been held in slavery or servitude.

- **CESSATION:** A complete, full, and final end to continuing violations.



- **CHattel SLAVERY:** An economic, social, and political system under which people are deemed to be property, or "chattel," for life: to be used, bought, and sold at the owner's will as a matter of law, and their status as such passed to their children at birth.
- **DIVEST/INVEST:** A framework that demands divestment (in the form of resources, legitimacy, and power) from exploitative forces (including prisons, fossil fuels, police, surveillance, and corporations) and investment into infrastructure and services that support our people (including education, transportation, and the health and safety of our communities).

- **DOMESTIC SLAVE**

TRADE: Once the transatlantic slave trade was abolished, the transportation and sale of enslaved people of African descent within the United States increased, resulting in the relocation of millions of enslaved people to the Deep South.

- **EUGENICS:** “Junk science” that claims the human race can be improved, and “social ills” can be eliminated, through scientific “breeding.” Popularized by the Nazis, it is rooted in the same theories of scientific racism that were used to justify genocidal colonization of the African continent, the transatlantic slave trade, and chattel slavery. Eugenic sterilization programs were explicitly ableist, targeting both individuals and racial and ethnic groups described as “epileptic, ‘feeble-minded,’ or mentally diseased.” They were also used to punish gender and sexual nonconformity, targeting women and girls deemed “promiscuous” for sterilization—including when they became pregnant as a result of rape and incest. Sterilization was also often a condition of release from incarceration in state institutions, and people incarcerated in women’s prisons continue to report sterilization without informed consent.

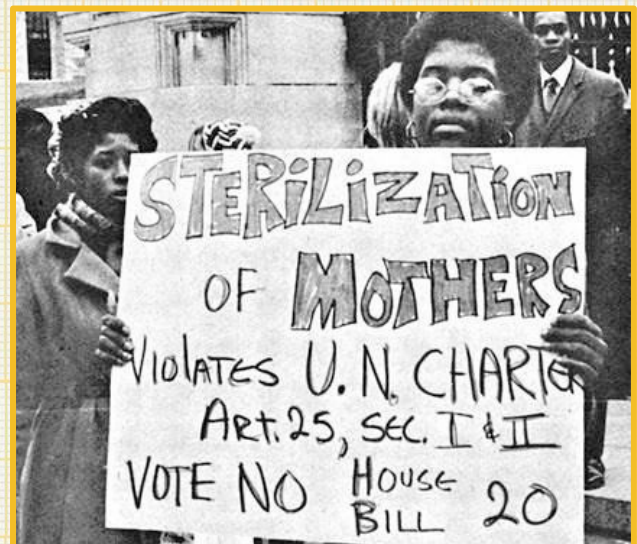
- **GREAT MIGRATION:** The migration of over 6 million Black people from Southern states to urban areas of the North, Midwest, and West, which occurred between 1916 and 1970 in response to state and state-sponsored terror and discrimination.

- **GUARANTEES OF NON-REPETITION:**

Assurances that violations will not be repeated in the future, including reviewing and reforming laws contributing to or allowing violations.

- **INTERGENERATIONAL**

TRAUMA: The transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences across generations. Evidence of the health and emotional impacts of intergenerational trauma has been shown in Black and Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada.



- **JIM CROW:** A derogatory term to refer to a Black man. The Jim Crow period (1877 to the mid-1960s) refers to the period during which segregation and other laws explicitly regulating the behavior of Black people and people of color were in operation, and enforced through policing, criminalization, and racial terror.
- **MIDDLE PASSAGE:** The portion of the transatlantic slave trade in which enslaved Africans were transported under horrific conditions from Africa to the Americas. The journey would take anywhere from three weeks to three months.
- **PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ABOLITION:** Critical Resistance defines abolition of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) as a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance, and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment. This definition recognizes that the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and control. Because the PIC is not an isolated system, abolition is a broad strategy. An abolitionist vision means that we must build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future.
- **REDLINING:** The systematic denial of credit, insurance, or loans to particular communities on a discriminatory basis. The term was coined by sociologist James McKnight in the 1960s based on how lenders literally drew a red line on maps around the neighborhoods they would not invest in based on demographics. Black urban neighborhoods were most likely to be redlined. Investigations found that lenders would make loans to lower-income whites but not to middle- or upper-income African Americans. Examples of redlining can be found in a variety of financial services, including mortgages, student loans, credit cards, and insurance.
- **REPATRIATION:** Returning a person to a place they were removed from or forced to flee due to a violation of human rights.



- **RESTITUTION:** Measures intended to restore the survivor to the original situation before the violations occurred, including, as appropriate: restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one's place of residence (repatriation), restoration of employment and return of property.

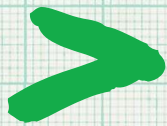
- **STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS:** A statute prescribing how much time people have to bring certain types of legal actions. Statutes of limitations restrict people's ability to sue people for violations or to indict them for crimes they may have committed if too much time has passed.

- **TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE:** The kidnapping, transportation and sale of African people in the Americas, which operated from the 1500s to 1808.



- **TRANSFORMATIVE:** Social change that fundamentally shifts structures of power, as opposed to change that does little or nothing to create long-term systemic solutions. Transformative change requires thoroughly tending to the root causes of the problems, whereas non-transformative (often labeled reformist change) does not.

- **WAR ON DRUGS:** A concerted, militarized campaign led by the United States government to enforce prohibitions on importation, manufacture, use, sale, and distribution of substances deemed to be illegal, advancing a punitive rather than a public health approach to drug use. It is characterized by racial profiling, racially discriminatory, targeted, and aggressive policing and prosecutorial practices, long mandatory prison sentences on conviction of drug-related offenses, and a host of collateral consequences which have wrought devastation in the lives of millions of people in the United States and beyond. It has served as one of the driving forces of skyrocketing rates of mass incarceration in the United States.



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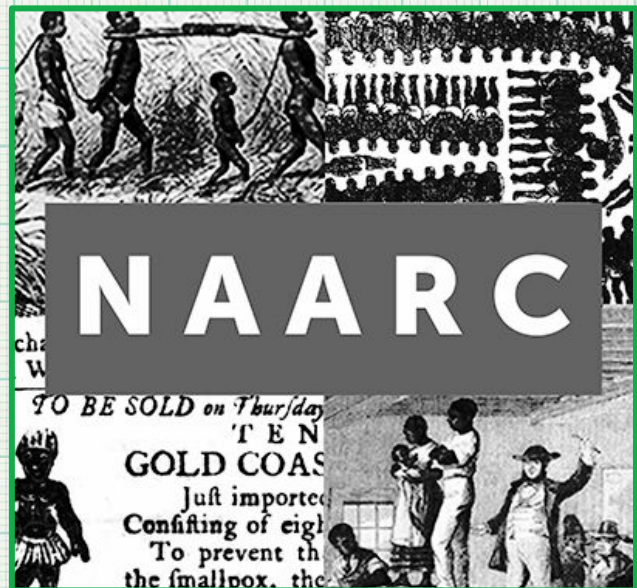
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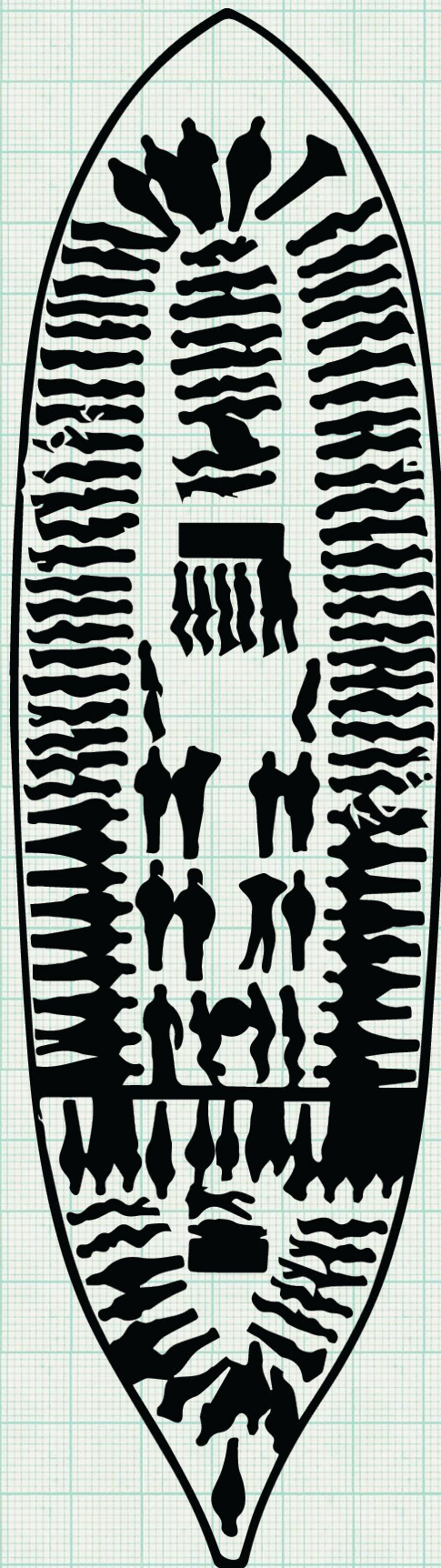
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