

## Thoughts on reparations

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April 26, 2019

I appreciate the courtesy extended by B.A. Barna, responding to my letter on reparations for slavery. I agree thoughtful discussion is beneficial.

A dictionary definition of reparations is, "Something good that you do to help improve a bad situation that you have created."

I'm familiar with Ta-Nehisi Coates' "Case for Reparations" — a devastating indictment of the Democratic Party. Slavery, Jim Crow laws, "separate but equal" were all official Democratic platforms. But Coates doesn't claim reparations from the Democratic Party.

Coates demands reparations from Americans innocent of any taint of racism, especially those who fought to end it in all its forms. That is offensive and disrespectful.

Coates' desire isn't leveling the playing field for blacks in America, but for revenge. His quote from Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion regarding machine guns makes that point crystal clear.

Revenge. The most worthless of all causes.

Israel sought reparations because Germany executed the Shoah. Israel didn't seek reparations from nations which ended the Holocaust and liberated extermination camps.

I've given thought to reparations for over 45 years. I had no choice. Growing up near Oakland/Berkeley, CA from 1959-78, I knew Black Panthers collected "reparations." At gunpoint. Money collected from blacks were "taxes."

The Cato Institute estimates the United States spent \$15 trillion on anti-poverty programs since the 1960s. Will revenge succeed where \$15 trillion failed?

Everything I taught my students and cited in my letter is designed to break the cycle of racial division in this country. By following Martin Luther King's admonition regarding the content of character instead of the color of skin.