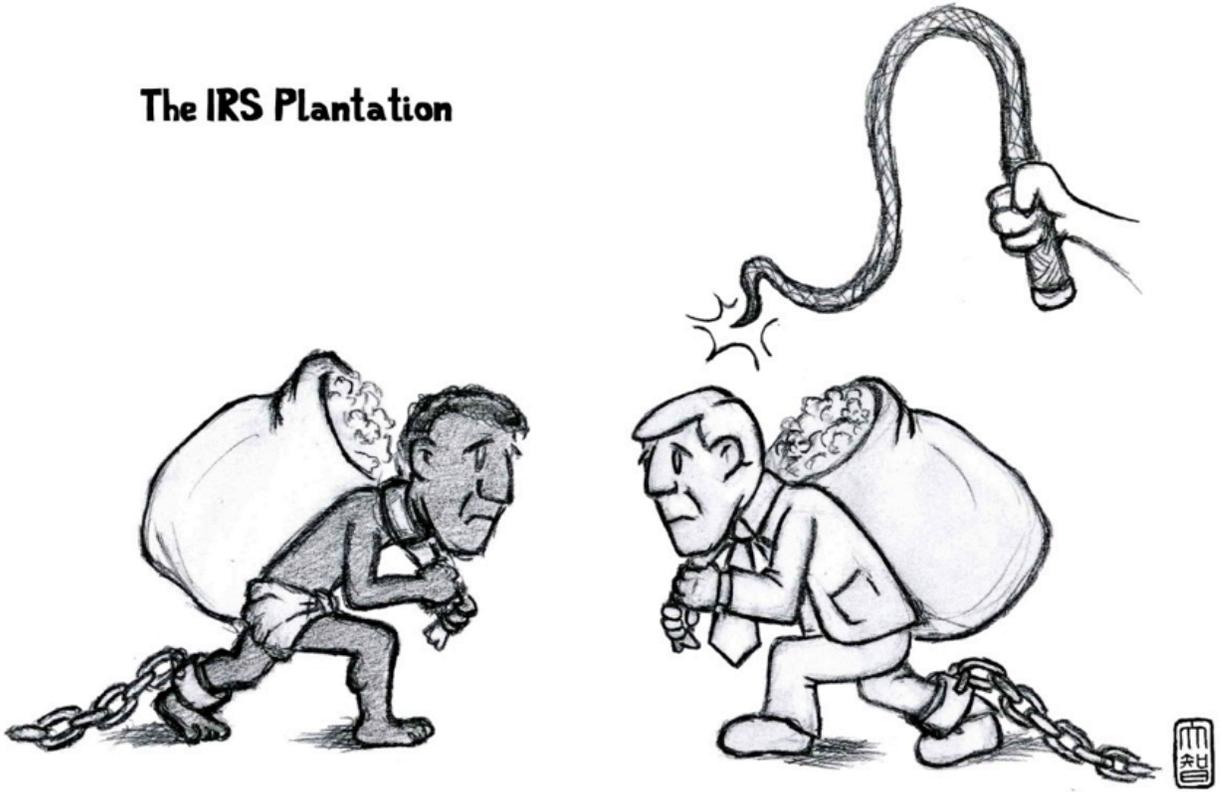


The IRS Plantation



SLAVERY, REPARATIONS AND THE FAIR TAX

The linkage of Slavery and Reparations is obvious on an intellectual level, although it is – for equally obvious reasons – extremely problematic from a political level, and is at best unclear from a moral level. The alchemical combination of these elements with the notion of the Fair Tax may, however, contain within it the metaphorical political and moral analogue to the actual medieval Alchemists' mythic "sperm metal." This was the elusive and mysterious substance that would permit an alchemist to transform "base" metals such as lead and iron into pure gold.

This essay will discuss (a) West African / New World slavery and its similarities to Devil's Island and Concentration Camps, (b) East African / Old World slavery and its similarities to America today, (c) a logical case and Voucher payment mode for Reparations for the needy among today's descendents of America's slaves of yesterday -- together with an algebraic formula for the amount -- and finally (d) how the Fair Tax would likewise constitute a similar restitution from bondage for America's slaves of today.

With a leap into the abyss of extreme Political Incorrectness, one might observe that the rectification in (d) above actually has a higher moral imperative than (c) because the Fair Tax redresses unjust enslavement going on in America today, not enslavement which ended over 150 years ago. But, for political and moral reasons the linking of the two is alchemically vital, because this linkage best approximates *justice for all*, from the perspective of both the Right and the Left.

Devil's Island, Concentration Camps and Slave Ships

Rene Belbenoit was a French petty criminal sentenced to Devil's Island early in the 20th century. He attempted roughly half a dozen escapes, and experienced multiple aspects of this infamous prison colony's horrors, including the ghastly punishment cells depicted in the Steve McQueen / Dustin Hoffman movie "Papillion."

Unlike the more well-known "Papillion", Bebenoit's story* is 100% accurate, and after his amazing final (and successful) escape attempt the French government tried desperately to extradite him for revenge, since his story was so embarrassing to them. (In his escape Belbenoit walked up through the jungles of Central America, catching rare butterflies along the way to sell to collectors and scientists seeking specimens, in order to survive the journey. He finally secured his freedom when he reached the USA). During part of Belbenoit's time in Devil's Island he worked as a clerk in the governor's office, and got to see the mortality statistics of the prison colony.

**Belbenoit's amazing Autobiography is entitled "Dry Guillotine," and it is one of the all-time most harrowing true stories. I strongly recommend the hard-cover version which includes the haunting illustrations by an artistic fellow inmate, which are unforgettable and which Belbenoit carried out during his final trek to Freedom.*

They were shocking. Roughly 50% of new inmates died in their first year.

West African / New World slavery had a similar or worse first year mortality rate, which is actually not at all surprising because of the comparably horrific conditions attached to both institutions. According to The National Geographic, roughly 25% of the captured slaves died on the miserable trek to the slave ship, roughly 25% of the remainder died on the equally or more miserable trip across the Atlantic, and roughly 25% of the re-remainder died in their first year in the New World due to overwork, unfamiliar climate, disease, etc.

Not only was this mortality rate consistent with Belbenoit's statistical findings for Devil's Island, it was also a lot like that in some of the Nazi's Concentration Camps during the early years of WW2. According to numerous sources regarding the Nazi's regime (such as William Shirer's "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich", The Nazi Encyclopedia, Daniel Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners", Robert Conant's, Telford Taylor's or Joseph Persico's books on the Nuremberg Trails, etc) these mortality rates were remarkably consistent with the mortality statistics of the non-extermination Concentration Camps such as Belsen, Dachau, Buchenwald and others*

**Technical amplification: this mortality rate in New World slavery was more-or-less similar to that of these non-extermination camps until the last few years of the war, especially the last few months when the mortality rate skyrocketed due to unimaginable overcrowding, severe lack of food and water, and rampant Typhus, (which is what killed Anne Frank in Belsen just before the end of the war). The horrific extermination camps like Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor, etc had, of course, an extremely higher mortality rate throughout the entirety of their satanic existence.*

One is also struck by the similarity between housing in the camps, where inmates often had to sleep three to a bunk, sometimes with skulls for pillows, and the ghastly spectacle of a slave ship, with the "cargo" stacked in the stinking, slimy hold like human sardines.

East African / Old World Slavery

Slavery as practiced in East Africa and elsewhere in the Old World certainly had its horrors to rival any of the above, however, unlike slavery in the New World some of the slaves in East African and other Old World societies often had positions of power, influence and importance, even though they were still slaves with no freedom. Owned by others just like New World slaves, these "atypical" slaves enjoyed a high standard of living to match their economic, political or military contribution.

Three outstanding examples come immediately to mind.

First we have the Mamelukes, Egypt's version of today's Special Forces circa 1100 AD or thereabouts. These were slaves, generally the children of Christian slaves in the Arab world, and were the only military force which actually defeated the Mongols in their effort at expansion. They enjoyed good housing and status, but no freedom.

The Mamelukes also had high morale, and a high mortality rate as a requisite condition of their military enslavement.

Next we have the Janissaries, who were much like the Mamelukes except they rose to maximum stature roughly three to five centuries later, and were the elite military arm of the Ottoman Empire. The Janissaries' martial skill, high morale and overall effectiveness greatly helped Suleiman the Magnificent and other Ottoman rulers to expand in wealth and conquest, but like the Mamelukes they were (a) the children of Christians and (b) the Sultan's property just as much as a slave in the New World was a possession of the plantation owner, notwithstanding their far better status and living conditions.

Finally we have my personal favorite, Rudolph Slatin, both slave of and a High Advisor to the Sudan's Khalifa Abdullahi during the late 1800's.

During the second half of the 1800's the Sudan was a colony of Egypt, which in turn was a colony of Britain. Hence, the English had a sense of indirect, partial responsibility for events in the Sudan. As portrayed in the Charlton Heston / Laurence Olivier movie "Khartoum," under the religious leader the Mahdi (played by Olivier) the Sudan successfully revolted against its overlords. It was the very first successful revolt in Africa against a colonial power.

As described in Byron Farwell's riveting book "Prisoners of the Mahdi," Rudolph Slatin was an Austrian caught up in these events. He was captured and made the slave/bodyguard ("mulazem") of the Mahdi's chief follower, the Kalifa Abdullahi from Darfur. When the Mahdi died, the Kalifa became head of the Sudan for a decade or so, during most of which time Slatin lived well even amidst occasional famine, for although a slave he was also one of the Kalifa's High Advisors. Even though possible death (or at best weighty shackles) would have been the price of unsuccessful escape, so long as he remained a slave Slatin lived large, at least compared with the ordinary Sudanese (admittedly not a high comparative hurdle). Slatin did eventually manage to escape, after a number of stalled attempts.

Farwell affirms that this arrangement – where a slave might be quite well off if talented, even though he or she was still a slave with no actual rights – was in fact not unusual in East Africa and other parts of the East: "Slatin's position was to Western eyes a peculiar one, though in Oriental history not unique: he was a slave who walked in the dust beside his mounted master, and he was an advisor who sometimes counseled on the highest matters of state."

American Slavery Today

Our peculiar, so-called "progressive" tax structure confiscates a greater and greater percentage of one's earnings the more money one makes. As noted elsewhere this is an intensely anti-Skinner (but pro-Marx) punishment of the hardest-working and most productive contributors to our economy, and thus serves to diminish everyone's potential standard of living and job opportunities.

But aside from that point – which is huge – one notes upon abstract analysis that what we have in America today is effectively an exact analogue of the East African / Old World variant of slavery, whereby some of the most talented and productive people in those societies were slaves too. Granted, they were 100% slaves whose lives and well-being depended on the whim of the owner. But, so long as they clearly added value, they led relatively wealthy – albeit still enslaved – lives.

In America's modification of this tradition, today's well-off American Slaves are only half owned, in the sense that those citizens who are most ambitious and produce the most are also the ones who are forced at the point of a gun to fork over up to half (or more) of their income to The State. In effect The State owns half of their lives, so long as these modern-day slaves continue to strive and produce high economic value. Like Rudolph Slatin these most productive of our citizens live well with the portion of their lives not enslaved. **In effect they have only one leg shackled.**

These 50% (or more) Bracket Slaves are forced to provide most of The States' revenue in the US today just like the Ottomans' Janissaries and the Egyptians' Mamelukes did most of the fighting for their respective overlord States, too. They are, truly, simply a modern version of this long-established Old World variant of enslavement.

Now, this is clearly a much better arrangement for today's American 50% aggregate Bracket Slaves than for the African slaves brought here centuries ago, and the lives of these modern slaves are far, far better than those of their New World predecessors. Admittedly, the high-income modern American slaves are also probably better off than the most talented and valuable among East African / Old World slaves, too. After all, they do have the freedom to ease their degree of bondage by working less, with no fear of punishment other than a lower standard of living. (Of course, this theoretically possible lessened degree of enslavement, if actually acted upon, would be harmful to The State, the economy and the individual, to say nothing of his or her employees, family, etc).

But, I defy anyone to argue that the enforced confiscation by The State of 50% or more of the fruits of one's labor is in its essence philosophically all that different from the similar enslavement of these other well-off variants of Old World slavery.

Reparation Considerations – Arguments Against

There are all sorts of quasi-serious arguments about reparations, all of which are conspicuously lacking in persuasive logic since there's absolutely no consensus at all over this matter. All sorts of conflicting details emerge and offset one another. For instance, it's true that most African Americans make less money than Caucasians or some others, but it's also true that most African Americans who go to college and get (and stay) married have an average income virtually equal to the average income of similar Caucasians. So, perhaps the difference in average income overall is more a function of lifestyle and behavior -- which cannot justify reparations -- than the residue of racism, or slavery which ended over 150 years ago.

Moreover, one must always be wary of the unintended harmful consequences of race-targeted government aid, especially when it comes cloaked with the best of intentions. For example, the “aid to dependent children” initiative of decades ago (around the time of Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” programs) was intended to provide support for single inner-city mothers. It wound up subsidizing the birth of more and more children without fathers (other than in a limited biological sense) and made black men redundant when it came to providing support to the family. In both respects this well-intentioned program marginalized African-American fathers, and undermined the inner-city nuclear family and the position of the Father as role-model. These are however critically important for success in our society and surely their having been undermined in this well-intentioned way is not unconnected to the hugely disproportionate percentage of African-American men now in prison.

Also, as noted below, although it’s very politically incorrect to say, it is nonetheless true (and relevant to the issue of Reparations) that African-Americans today are far, far better off than all but a very few of today’s Africans. West African / New World slavery was a horror for those poor unfortunates captured and enslaved, but it is equally true that their descendents in America have a much, much higher standard of living now than if slavery had never occurred. This argues against Reparations being owed, since the “net” damage today, from the slavery of over 150 years ago, is in fact positive compared to slavery’s never having occurred (i.e. life in Africa instead).

Reparation Considerations – Arguments For

On the other hand, as noted in another essay I personally doubt that I’d have survived inner-city public school, regardless of what my complexion happened to be. It is impossible for me to intellectually separate the legacy of slavery and downtrodden status that has characterized much of the African American experience from this simple existential observation.

But, the fact that we have a (50%) African-American as president does suggest, most powerfully, that we are not at all the same country that lynched around 100 black men less than 100 years ago when Jack Johnson became heavyweight champion.

Rather, what the example of President ***OhMyGod! Obama*** does show loud and clear (aside, that is, from the point that we should never have elected a socialist and self-confessed fan of Marxist professors to the White House) is how a good private school education can propel anyone, of any race, to high success. The contrast between the education – and corresponding achievements – of ***OhMyGod! Obama*** and most other African Americans who don’t get anything close to this educational opportunity is a key thing to focus on.

One can, correctly, note that inner-city African Americans – where a large percentage do live – only have available absolutely horrible inner-city public schools which effectively (and permanently) trap most of their “inmates” in the inner-city, to such an extent that even the thought of college is a joke. Most other Americans not in the inner-city have far better educational opportunities. This bifurcation in

educational opportunity has effectively created an inner-city permanent underclass with major racial aspects, and must surely be another huge contributor to our prisons' highly disproportionate racial demographics.

So, to grapple with this issue of Reparations it may be helpful to conduct two "thought experiments" which absolutely reek of extreme political incorrectness.

Jack Vance's "Chateau D'If"

Jack Vance, one of the all-time greatest science fiction writers, created the above novella around the concept of a device which could permanently transfer one's conscious mind from your body and into another's body, with a vice-versa switcheroo. For a fee, rich old people could effectively obtain a new, youthful body, and the unfortunate other party to this transfer enjoyed instant decrepitude and an adventure of sorts in trying to get one's physical self back.

Here are the "thought experiments":

Experiment #1: how many Caucasian Americans would willingly transfer places at random in this fashion with an African American of similar age? Not many, is my guess, at least among those Caucasians not in prison, mortally ill, paralyzed or likewise impaired.

Experiment #2, even more heretical: how many African Americans would willingly trade places at random in this fashion with a sub-Saharan African today? Far fewer, I'd wager with even greater confidence.

These two simple but penetrating "thought experiments" seem to me to contain a sound conceptual foundation for a logical Reparations Formula.

Possible Reparations Formula

$R = XPV \text{ times } X/Y$

Where "R" equals the Reparations Value, "X" equals the difference in average income between African Americans and all other legal American citizens, "XPV" equals the present value of "X" calculated over an appropriate number of years such as an average working lifetime, and "Y" equals the difference in average income between today's African Americans and today's sub-Saharan Africans.

This fractional multiplier is necessary because it appropriately includes in the overall Reparation calculation, where today's African Americans would be had the offense of Slavery never occurred, consistent with the entire intent of Reparations in the first place. If the sin of Slavery requires redress, the effect of the sin not having occurred must be included in the calculation. Both sides of the Slavery coin need to be considered for the Reparations to have intellectual validity, as well as legal and moral validity from the standpoint of actual *net* damages to today's descendents of America's slaves of 150 years ago. Slavery was certainly a horror beyond imagining for those unfortunate individuals captured against their will and conveyed here in

deplorable conditions. Sadly, they are long dead and beyond redress. But for the descendents of these unfortunates, there have been both good and bad consequences, notwithstanding the fact that for their ancestors there was no positive consequence at all.

To illustrate how this proposed Reparations Formula might work, let's assume the average income of all Americans is \$5,000 higher than the average African-American income. Further let's assume that the average African American income is \$25,000 higher than the average income of sub-Saharan Africans. The present value of the \$5,000 per year over a working lifetime may be, at today's low discount rates, rather high at maybe \$100,000, but that would be multiplied by 20% (the fraction of \$5,000 divided by \$25,000) for a total Reparation of \$20,000.

Best Mode of Reparation Payment?

Simply providing a check will do little or no long term good in improving the plight of America's blighted inner cities and their racially-oriented emerging permanent under-class. Also, Reparations should be available only to African Americans who are truly impoverished, otherwise it becomes a racial lottery, not a good idea for long-term better race relations.

So, how to best pay?

Education achievement is probably the most conspicuous area in which the African American community is lagging most of the rest of America, which makes perfect sense considering today's miserable inner-city schools and the inner-city's overall anti-academic culture. Fixing this is probably the only way to end such permanent under-class status for most inner-city inhabitants. And, that is logically where the best benefit from Reparations would arise. The inner-city schools are not only an utter failure, they are a sink-hole for money as well, sucking it in but with little of value coming out.

So, with President Obama's superlative private school education as a living actual example, the best way to produce lasting value with Reparation monies would be as coupons for private school and college (i.e. Vouchers). This might be considered by those on the Left as a voucher masquerading as Reparations, and this would be accurate. Again, look at Obama's educational experience if you think this would be ineffective.

Let those who oppose this idea suggest an alternative mode of Reparations payment that produces comparable chance of bona-fide long term improvement, (in contrast to feel-good gestures which benefit nothing but liberals' pangs of misplaced guilt as they drop their children off at Sidwell Friends or other private school).

The Fair Tax

The above Reparation scheme is an attempt to produce the best available approximation of Equity considering both (a) today's measurable impact from yesterday's Slavery as well as (b) the measurable impact of Slavery never having

occurred at all, combined with (c) a long-term concretely positive outcome for those in greatest need of redress.

But, that only addresses one side of the overall Slavery issue. We still do have today another mode of Slavery, with its predecessors in East Africa and the Muslim world, from the standpoint of historically closest analogues. There really is not that much difference between the 50% slavery of those Americans today who pay half (or more) of their income to The State, and slaves like Rudolph Slatin, the Mamelukes or Janissaries who lived very well and even had considerable power, but were slaves nonetheless. And, escaping to freedom was roughly as difficult as not paying any taxes today -- it can reputedly be done, but it's difficult and for most of us fraught with peril.*

**It's fraught with peril, that is, unless like "Torquemada" Tim Geitner, Duke Daschle of Doubtful Deduction or Regent Rangel of [incomplete] Rental Records you are a member in good standing among the Washington Democrat Nobility, in which case the maximum apparent jeopardy may only be a somewhat lower probability of high governmental appointment.*

The end to this modern variant of this "Old World" Slavery in America today would of course be the Fair Tax, coupled with the vital repeal of the 16th Amendment (without which the shackles will surely return, eventually, in full force).

How would all this magic be accomplished? Simple.

The Fair Tax is voluntary. Nobody's holding a gun to your head. High producers driven to succeed themselves (and who in the process thereby create many jobs for others) would no longer be punished with **half their labor in perpetual thrall to The State**. This is because the Fair Tax will simply attach to purchases, which each individual is free to make or not. Philosophically this is the reverse of slavery, in that financial service to The State is voluntary, not forced and not anti-productive, in stark contrast to our current confiscatory and unfair system enforced at the point of a gun.

This would be a great step forward to the freedom which our Founding Fathers established, but which has become greatly diminished today, tragically. Also, by embracing the proven ideas of both Skinner and Adam Smith, it would most likely lead to a Golden Age in America. The numerous expert economists who have studied the Fair Tax concur it would lead to a more productive economy, and many predict a boom would result. This would only increase government revenue.

Fair Tax and Reparations Alchemical Combination

The best way to achieve our Founding Fathers' ideals of Freedom and Actual Equality of Opportunity is, in my opinion, to enhance the moral and political case for both these independently divisive ideas by alchemically linking them together as Moral Requirements. And, they should be linked, because both will redress Slavery. One is over 150 years old but the racial bifurcation in our society is still a problem, especially if one focuses on the inner-city. The clear solution is better educational opportunity, which – again as Obama's living example underscores – is

with private schools not the miserable and failed inner-city schools which do not even coming close to doing the job.

Likewise The Fair Tax would be hard-working tax-paying Americans' equivalent of Reparations, especially for the 50% (or more) Bracket Slaves who currently are forced at the point of a gun, with one leg shackled, to fork over half or more of the fruits of their labor to The State. Both forms of Slavery are unjust, that which ended 150 years ago and the 50% Bracket Slavery still going on today. The concrete moral and economic benefit that a Total Reparations / Voucher program would do for the inner city would be duplicated by the Economic Emancipation of today's Bracket Slaves via The Fair Tax. And as noted above, it would likely impel an American Golden age and vastly increased government revenue.

But, The Fair Tax would diminish the power of **Washington's Democrat Nobility** to tax indiscriminately against our most valuable economic contributors who are such a minority they have no real vote or freedom today, just like the Janissaries, Malamutes and other well-off slaves in the East African and other Old World variations of enslavement in general. Likewise a Vouchers / Reparations package would undermine the teachers' unions, who are the political foot-shoulders for the **Democrat Nobility**. (The students are the cannon-fodder, especially in the inner city).

These are the teachers unions which have so greatly helped inner-city academic performance, much like the UAW has so greatly helped the US Auto Industry.

So, let's see if these modern, subtle **Democrat Slave-Masters** prefer to continue to wield their IRS whips and chains instead of exchanging them for more revenue and a Total Reparations package where it will do the most good for all the victims of Slavery in America, both past and present.

Damocles
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