

Reparations: A White Conservative's Biggest Act



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[Reparations. Campus Protests. Free Speech and the role of the press. Morality of slavery.] American History - 1800s

Reparations: A White Conservative's Biggest Act

By Lee Hubbard

It's a mid-March night on the **campus of UC Berkeley** and the place looks like a protest scene out of the 1960s. A crowd of 200 has gathered in front of the Life Sciences Building, while behind them a group of maybe **20 aging white protestors** walk in a circle chanting "**down with capitalism**" and holding signs that proclaim "**David Horowitz is a racist**".

[The first thing we notice is are in a university setting and we have 20 older white guys protesting.

Why are they older?

May we presume they are not students?

If they are not students, is it permissible for people to come onto campus to protest?

Do you consider 20 people a sizable crowd?

In a campus setting, how many people would you set as a minimum before you gave protesters any free press coverage?

Is a protest the normal way to discuss ideas and disagreements in your community?

Are protests the preferred or 1st option you should choose to work out disagreements?

You've not read far, but just the same, do you suspect the 20 people tried other avenues first, or was a protest their initial response?

Before we go on to other issues, what are the objectives of a protest anyway (*generally speaking*)?

How does a protest differ from a petition?

How does a protest differ from a discussion?

How does a protest differ from agreeing to disagree?

How does a protest differ from telling others what to do?

How does a protest differ from a temper tantrum? :)

The protesters are chanting 2 things. "**down with capitalism***" and "**David Horowitz is a racist***". Tell me, do either of these statements seem true.

What has capitalism to do with Reparations?

If the protesters are against capitalism, does this understanding influence your opinion of the rest of their opinions?

Do you believe David Horowitz is a racist?

We can probably presume David Horowitz was the guest speaker for the

evening, which attracted the protests. Can you guess if he is going to be FOR reparations or AGAINST reparations?

I have often heard someone complain another was "closed minded" because they disagreed. Does it logically hold if we listen to an argument, and still disagree, that we are "closed minded" and did not really listen?

In the same sense, if you disagree with Reparations, are you a racist?

\$10 question. Does it matter if David Horowitz is a racist?

\$20 question. Does it matter if anyone is or is not a racist in order to discuss and come to some conclusions about reparations?

\$30 question. Is being a racist damnable in any sense of the word?]

As the protestors walk and chant before television cameras and police stand silently to the side, the larger crowd of 200 piles into the lecture hall in the Life Sciences building.

"I want to hear what he has to say," said Angel Monroe, a black student in her senior year at Berkeley. "I want to know what his stance is on the issue of reparations. My professor was a friend of his in the 1960s, and I think what he is doing is just trying to get [a rise] out of people."

He seems to have succeeded. The man Monroe is talking about, **David Horowitz, a Marxist-turned-neoconservative theorist and founder of the conservative Center for the Study of Popular Culture**, is the author of an advertisement placed in The Daily Californian, Berkeley's campus newspaper, along with a couple dozen other college papers.

The inflammatory ad, titled "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks is a Bad Idea - and Racist Too," has sparked controversy at colleges across the nation, often including heated debates over the limits of free speech, the responsibilities of the press, and the role of political correctness on college campuses. While in the past Horowitz had published attacks on reparations as editorials in various outlets, the paid advertisement has had a much more explosive impact.

[Why does an add like this have to be titled inflammatory? Isn't that tag on "AD" also inflammatory?

Heated debates.

What would be the nature of "free speech" debates be?

Would it be about the right to speak, or the right to be heard?

How about the right not to hear?

What about responsibilities of the press?

How does the press figure into the Reparations debate, since the press just "reports the facts" as an impartial observer?

Does Political Correctness have a role, or is it a function?

Can Political Correctness be effective if it is openly discussed?]

The ad lists ten reasons to oppose reparations for African Americans, ranging from "There is not a single group responsible for the crime of slavery" to "Reparations for African Americans have already been paid" (*in the form, Horowitz suggests, of welfare and other government programs*). Perhaps the most controversial "reason" listed asks "

What about the debt Blacks owe America?" -- suggesting that African Americans are better off than Africans, period.

After the ad ran at Berkeley, students marched into the paper's offices demanding an apology from the editor. They said that the ad was misleading, hurtful and racist. The next day the paper featured an editor's note apologizing for the ad, which he said he regretted running. But this action, too, caused outrage.

[Students marching on the press. This suggests to me where the "responsibility of the press" comes in. With that comes another question. Isn't the paper able to print anything it wants?

Does a paper normally have guidelines in place about what they will accept to print, where it will be in their paper, and how much it costs?

If this be true, then any long running paper has a "policy" for operation which has probably run unchanged for a long time. The "policy" was defective?

Did someone break with "Policy" in publishing the ad?

Do we have enough information to know if the ad was misleading, hurtful, and racist?

Could it be possible the ad was misleading, hurtful, and racist?

Could it be possible the ad was NOT misleading nor racist, but hurtful to those who disagreed?

We already read about Political correctness having been discussed. Would we be making an assertion if we guessed the "misleading, hurtful, and racist" accusation was at the heart of the PC challenge?

Based on your understanding so far, do you believe the editor was right to apologize for the ad?

Now might be a good moment to ask if you think you are getting a square story so far?]

Centrist, liberal and conservative papers across the country said that The Daily Californian had acquiesced to political correctness. Matthew Rothschild of The Progressive said the demonstrators "made the left look bad," while an editorial in the Christian Science Monitor admonished protestors: "those on the other side will not help their cause by trying to stifle [Horowitz's] views, rather than responding to them with calm and strong reasoning."

[Looks like others agreed that the paper had apologized for PC reasons.

Can the left and the right use calm, strong reasoning to resolve their differences?

If no, what are the obstacles to using reason?*

Is this a left vs right debate?

If no, who first injected a left vs right inference into this discussion?

If yes, then if we can agree on Reparations, the left and the right can agree on any issue?

If yes, then what would be the moderate view?]

Horowitz said the responses at Berkeley and elsewhere were akin to "censorship," and began appearing on nationally televised programs commenting on the matter. His resulting nationwide "Freedom of Speech" tour has extended the publicity-making opportunities for

confrontation with those who disagree with him, as well as **allowed Horowitz to frame the terms of the debate: free speech vs. political correctness, rather than the actual merits of reparations.**

[Does how you frame the debate make a difference?]

Horowitz spoke at Berkeley at the invitation of the campus Republican Party. Introduced by the group's president, Horowitz entered the hall through the back door and walked down the aisle before ascending the stage. **Horowitz, 62**, looked at ease as he scanned the room, plain-clothes security guards by his side. He began.

"I marched for civil rights not only before you were born, but before many of your parents were born," said Horowitz. "Thirty years ago I contributed to the atmosphere here," he continued. "And I'm appalled. This is a place of intellectual terror. Leftists have contempt for America."

[How do you react to "intellectual terror"?]

True or not?

Is the 2nd part of the statement "Leftists have contempt for America" true or an opinion which may be true, or false?

Is there any evidence in this article which may give credence to this accusation?*]

Horowitz went on to tell of a wide-ranging political odyssey. Born in the 1930s to parents who were card-carrying communists, Horowitz came of age as a true believer of Marxism. After attending Columbia and Berkeley, he went on to edit the left-wing magazine Ramparts, where parts of Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice first appeared.

"Ramparts magazine was the bible of the left, and Horowitz was a big gun for the left," explains columnist and author Earl Ofari Hutchinson.

Through Ramparts, Horowitz came to support the Black Panthers, and developed a personal relationship with Huey Newton.

"He knew Huey, and based on his relationship with Huey, he donated money to the Oakland Community School," said Emery Douglass, a cartoonist for the Black Panther newspaper in the 1960s and 70s. "None of the [other] Panthers really knew him, but after he donated the money, he tried to come and dictate what was going on in the party."

According to Horowitz, his relationship with the Black Panther Party ended after the death of Betty Van Patter, a friend of Horowitz's who worked as a bookkeeper for the Panthers, and whom Horowitz believes was murdered because she discovered inconsistencies in the Panthers' financial books. *(No one has been convicted of the crime, despite repeated investigations.)*

"After her death, that was the end of me being a leftist," Horowitz said in a phone interview. "I needed to think. I also had a personal crisis, as my marriage came apart."

Horowitz went into a political wilderness, questioning everything he had previously

believed. He lived an apolitical life until 1984, when he voted for Reagan based on what he felt was a communist threat to Nicaragua by the Sandinistas. Horowitz began to write about the left and what he had seen and experienced, becoming a watchdog from the right, now attacked as a heretic by former comrades.

"He has become as much as an ideologue on the right as he was on the left," said former Ramparts colleague Warren Hinckle, now executive editor of the San Francisco Examiner. "There is no middle ground with him."

Though his political journey has spanned five decades, the anti-reparations ad has garnered Horowitz more publicity than anything that came before. It's hard not to notice how much he seems to be enjoying the spotlight.

Horowitz says he **believes slavery was a crime, morally wrong, but that reparations today wouldn't be practical**, and that he is disturbed by the tone taken in arguing for them. "I see the reparations movement as a victim mentality movement," said Horowitz. "We have long passed the point where there is an active resistance to black progress."

[Do you agree slavery was a crime?

Even before laws were passed to make it illegal?

On what basis is it morally wrong?

If you reject Christianity, God, and Christian ethics on other issues, on what basis can you describe slavery as morally wrong?

Who is the arbitrator of "morally" wrong which is acceptable?

Does it seem reasonable the same entity which describes slavery as "morally" wrong would not consider divorce, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, abortion, vulgarity, stealing, lying, abortion, as also "morally" wrong?

Is "morally" wrong only those sins which you do not consider yourself guilty of?

Do you agree about the practicality of reparations has passed?

Remember the 40 acres and a mule? Can we really do this 150 years later?]

He says it's important to look at the great progress African Americans have made. "In 1865, after slavery, black people in this country had nothing," said Horowitz. **"They had been stripped of their language, culture, family roots, community roots and history. They had no property. They had been betrayed by Andrew Johnson, who was a Democrat, regarding the 40 acres and mule. All that is true, but you can look at this: One hundred and thirty-six years later, black people are the tenth richest people in the world, against all of these obstacles."**

[10th richest people in the world? How many dichotomies is he dividing the US up into? I presume he is speaking of cultures rather than nations?

Of the list of bad things which have happened to slaves, how many of them also happen to all immigrants who come to America for the opportunity?

In a sense, then, aren't ex-slaves and the generations after them in the same boat as immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and Vietnam?]

Horowitz considers himself an ally of the African American community, and says he worries that the reparations movement could pit African Americans against some of their natural allies, including other minority communities.

"My ad is a friendly attempt to warn the African American community about its leadership," said Horowitz. "This movement will pit the African American community against most Americans. You will tell Jose Martinez, who has been in this country for 10 years, that he will pay reparations for something that happened 100 years ago, to Jesse Jackson and Johnnie Cochran."

[Do you see reparations as pitting Americans against Americans?
By the way, are you an American or a something American?
If you are a something American, aren't you already pitted against America, in a sense?]

However "friendly," Horowitz's campaign has alienated and angered many African Americans.

"I don't care about reparations," said writer and cultural critic Ishmael Reed. But, he said, Horowitz's tactics, which "are attempts to raise white resentment against black people," are dangerous and misleading.

"Horowitz has become an intellectual Al Jolson," said Reed. "He puts black faces on different issues in order to raise money."

The controversy surrounding the ad, and Horowitz's media and campus appearances across the country, are part of the same minstrel show, Reed suggests. "He sent the ad to college newspapers to get a reaction," said Reed. "He should go out and use his intellectual gifts for positive things instead of going out and raising a ruckus against black people."

[Is Reed putting himself inside Horowitz's head in order to ascertain motive and strategy?

Presuming Reed knows more than we've gotten here in 2 paragraphs, why do you suppose Horowitz might target ads in campus newspapers? *

What causes more ruckus? A call for Reparations or someone spelling out their views on the subject?

Does this work against black people?

We spoke earlier of this being a left and right issue. Can it be seen as a black and non-black issue?

If it's not a black vs non-black issue, then Reed should have complained about this raising a ruckus against liberal people? Perhaps?]

While the ad and its aftershocks have served primarily to raise Horowitz's public stature, it has also brought new attention to the reparations issue in the mainstream media.

"The more attention it gets is good for both sides," said Robert Smith, a political science professor at San Francisco State University. "It was good public relations for Horowitz,"

and I am sure the reparations people are not upset with this. It helps give a platform for the issue. This can only help the reparations side, because this is what they wanted."

During the question-and-answer period at Berkeley's Life Sciences building, Horowitz stood in the middle of the lecture hall, ready to take the heat.

Horowitz said he agreed with the young black woman who spoke about the **pain and suffering that black people faced**, but said that perseverance, success, and resolve had made the African American community one of the largest economies in the world.

[This doesn't sound like 136 year old slavery, but current day. Are we what we are because of what our great-great-great-grandfolks did 136 years ago? Where's the linkage? What has current day have to do with these Reparations?]

A young black man from South Central Los Angeles said he agreed with Horowitz on one point, at least: "you are right when you say that black people can achieve without any help."

Horowitz told the crowd he does support some forms of reparations. After a man named Muhammad accused him of being a **racist, and of disrespecting Africans and African Americans by "downplaying their suffering and misrepresenting their misery,"** Horowitz argued that his point of view had been misrepresented.

[Does that statement seem true to you?

If Horowitz were black and had the same view point, would he still be a racist?

Racist: 1. The belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others.
2. Discrimination or prejudice based on race.

Who has a monopoly on misery, suffering, and being a victim in this world?]

"I support reparations for the people in Rosewood, Florida," he said. "I supported reparations for the people involved in the Tuskegee experiment, and the people who experienced the Tulsa riots."

Joseph Anderson, a member of the National Council for African American Men, came prepared as he approached the microphone.

"David, isn't it true that a publication has the right to run or not to run paid speech?" he asked. After pausing, Horowitz said yes, this was so.

[In other words, "freedom of speech" is not the same thing as "freedom to be heard".]

"Thank you," said Anderson. "Then your talk of your ad being a freedom of speech issue is a lie."

[Is Anderson correct? Was it a lie?

Is this not a matter of semantics? In how you interpret the events?

If he has an ad which is either accepted or not accepted for publication at the

publishers discretion, and Horowitz makes claims of a "freedom of speech" violation, then it would be a lie.

If forces coerce the publication into not accepting an ad (*most especially if there was a policy in place which had to be set aside in the process*), in effect, censoring him, then perhaps it is a "freedom of speech" issue after all?

Can you see how two camps may take a different view on how things had played out?]

As the student tried to pose a second question, the moderator shut off his microphone and security guards began escorting Horowitz from the hall. The lecture ended with some students upset that their questions were not heard, many congregating outside to grumble. While this event ended on an anticlimactic, incomplete note, no one believes that the conversation is over.

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- * The raciest card is played with increasing frequency. Whether true or false, it puts the accused on the defensive since the accused **MUST** prove they are not and the accuser does **NOT** have any burden of proof. Meanwhile, while the accused is working themselves out of the initial onslaught, the accuser has time to heap bring up other issues. The last great example was Senator Lott who only wished to eulogize the deceased Stromm Thurman. So, considering the frequency and vindictiveness (*it is meant to destroy the opponent's character*), and considering this is the United States where we are to be innocent until proven guilty, I suggest we go against the tide and automatically reject the race cards.
 - * The liberal element in our society who are also interested in reparations, are also anti-capitalist. They are socialist in their thinking. There is no direct connection, but it is another hot issue for them so, having a platform to speak from, it seems understandable they may get off topic.
 - * Debate fails if one side injects emotion, greed, envy, guilt, or prejudice towards their desired outcome. Debate also fails if the underlying presumptions (*philosophy*) differs in significant ways. The two sides probably will not be able to agree on the basic truths.
 - * The initial paragraph had 20 people calling for an end to capitalism. That's pretty much America.
 - * It is on campus where we have "African Studies". It is on the campuses where these ideas are spread, mostly without opposition. Why not place the ad where people who are talking about Reparations can see or hear about a different point of view?



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