

THE AFRICAN REPARATION CRY: RATIONALE, ESTIMATE, PROSPECTS AND STRATEGIES

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THE OVERDUE REPARATION

Given that some societies of the human race have been granted reparation, payment of reparation to the people of African descent (hereafter referred to as Africans or Diaspora), may be considered long overdue. Descendants of African slaves in the United States have raised their voices about reparation they are legally entitled to but which they have been denied for over a century¹. Under the guidance of Dr. Robert Block, African Americans have gone further to demand exemption from “US taxes and racial discriminatory laws.”² The cry for reparation for continental Africans has been going on secretly among concerned members of the Diaspora for decades, but in recent years the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and concerned heads of States of Africa have raised their voices openly. In December 1990, an International Conference on reparations in Nigeria succeeded in setting up an International Committee for Reparation (ICR). The ICR convinced the OAU to regard the reparation issue as one of its most important items on its agenda.

In February 1991, at a tripartite summit of the heads of State of Togo, Senegal and Nigeria in Lome, the subject of reparation was discussed alongside the concern for the continent’s 250 billion debt at that time. The three leaders jointly recommended that the debt “should be written off as part of the reparations due for 500 years of slavery of Africans in Western Europe and America” (West Africa, Feb. 1991). In 1993, that recommendation was followed by the first Pan-African Conference on Reparation in Abuja, Nigeria. On January 3 1997, the CBC Newsworld reported that the Presidents of the OAU member states had formally appointed 12 eminent persons including Ali Mazrui to recommend action. The call for reparation for 500 years of slavery of Africans demands an understanding of what is meant by slavery or enslavement and what is meant by reparation.

WHAT IS SLAVERY?

A *slave* may be narrowly defined as a human chattel who is the legal property of another person or broadly defined as a person who is entirely under the domination of some influence or another person. *Slave trade* is the business of procuring, transporting and selling slaves especially, in modern times, the bringing of Africans to America. The definition of a slave as a person who is the legal property of another implies that the slave trade involving the sale of Africans was legalised by the governments of those nations that engaged in it. The broader definition of slavery enables the post-independence neo-colonial phase of Africa's development in which African countries are still dominated and dictated to in the economic, political, and ideological spheres, and relegated to the position of mere price-takers in the oligopolistic world market to be regarded as another period of slavery. Hence, Africa's development history since the fifteenth century is slavery in three distinct physical forms of captive slavery, colonial slavery and neo-colonial slavery.

There are other forms of enslavement which are more subtle. If any person or a group of persons is denied equal opportunity by reason of colour, class, creed, religion, or gerrymandering, that person or group of persons may be said to be enslaved. This is *slavery by denial of opportunity* or *opportunity enslavement*. It applies to the period when Africans were said to be free but did not have the same rights as whites and to any situation when Africans are supposed to have equal rights with whites, but do not have the same opportunities as whites. The struggles against apartheid and the civil rights movements in the United States are typical examples of rebellion against the injustice of slavery by denial of opportunity.

Long periods of oppression and suffering culminate in enslavement within the psychic sphere where the victim regards the oppressor as a demi-god. This mental slavery occurs under all the forms of enslavement discussed earlier, and Africans are socialized into it continuously by the racist structures of human society. In his letter to Governor Pope Hennessy in Freetown in 1872 as cited by Eric Ashby (1966), Edward Blyden explained that mental slavery was more subversive. He wrote:

All educated Negroes suffer from a kind of slavery in many ways far more subversive of the real welfare of the race than the ancient physical fetters. The slavery of the mind is far more destructive than that of the body. (p.454)

THE UNIQUENESS OF BLACK AFRICAN SLAVERY

The uniqueness of the slavery of Africans stems from five reasons. Since the fifteenth century, Africans have been the only section of human society that has been subjected massively to captive slavery. The second is the construction of a vertical mosaic of racism by Western Europeans to rationalize that particular enslavement. Thirdly, it was on a scale unprecedented in human history and lasted for as long as 350 years. The fourth is that super-profits from the labour of African slaves made possible the investments that resulted in the industrial revolution which has so far benefited other human societies more than Africans. The fifth is much more humiliating, continuous, and devastating to Africans everywhere. Because captive slavery was rationalized in terms of the inferiority of the African, Africans have since been relegated to the very bottom of an *international vertical mosaic of racism*. Western imperialism was so colour conscious that the only position it could offer Africans was the very bottom of the ladder. While African scientists, sportsmen and soldiers contribute to make the United States popular, powerful, and great among the nations of the world, this vertical mosaic of racism simultaneously oppresses and perpetuates the mental slavery of Africans in that same country. Indeed, Africans irrespective of their level of education or expertise are looked down upon by other races.

The special history of captive slavery and the excruciating effect of the international vertical mosaic on the Diaspora for the past 500 years justify reparation from those responsible. But the Diaspora should not play into the hands of the perpetrators by confusing *reparation* with its plural form *reparations*.

WHAT IS REPARATION?

Reparation is often confused with its plural form that has an entirely different meaning. The plural form *reparations* is a product of power relations in which the defeated (not necessarily the aggressor) is compelled by the victor to pay indemnities. It has nothing to do with justice and might even breed injustice by encouraging aggression. The singular form *reparation*, essentially some kind of restitution aimed at compensating, appeasing and helping the victim to readjust and forget about retaliating in future is about justice and atonement after an acknowledgement of wrong-doing by the aggressor. Since perpetrators accept slavery as a crime against humanity, reparation to Africans is automatically justified. If it is paid, the Diaspora is no longer justified to retaliate. If it is not paid, then considering that reparation has been paid to other races in history, it means Africans have been denied justice or discriminated against and are justified in taking retaliatory measures against the perpetrators at any time.

REPARATION IN HISTORY AND WHY AFRICANS ARE DENIED

Reparation has been paid directly or indirectly in both ancient and modern history. In Biblical history, Moses indirectly compelled Egyptians lending jewels of silver, gold and raiment to women of Israel to provide the Israelites with the reparation due them for centuries of enslavement in Egypt. The Czar of Russia, Alexander I, after ordering the liberation of the 25 million serfs in 1863 compelled the serf-owners to pay reparation by conveying to those serfs the houses in which they lived and portions of the land they had cultivated while working as serfs.

In modern times, reparation has been paid to Jews, Korean women, and Japanese Americans for wrongs committed against them. Japan also paid compensation for the “comfort women” it forcibly obtained from Korea during that war. Recently reparation has been imposed on Iraq by the United Nations for its wrongful invasion of Kuwait. Strangely enough Africans have received no reparation for the atrocities committed against them during their 350 years of captive enslavement. Surely, the Diaspora has been discriminated against. Several reasons may be advanced to explain this conspicuous discrimination. The first is the inertia of the international vertical mosaic of racism through which demands of Africans are not taken seriously at multi-racial and international levels.

The second reason is the misconception that the African is a pliable and gullible personality always willing to forgive and forget once some nicely-worded apology has been rendered. For example, when President Clinton visited Africa in 1998, he apologized for the European slave trade in Africans but he was silent on the fact that most European slave masters and their descendants became Euro-Americans of the United States. He avoided talking about the contribution of African slave labour to the development of the United States and Western Europe, how European governments paid reparation to the slave masters and left the manumitted slaves to starve, and the refusal by successive governments of the United States, including his own administration, to honour the *reparations* Bill of 1867. He assumed that only some-nicely worded apology was necessary to appease Africans.

Another example was when De Klerk apologized to Africans of South Africa for the evils of apartheid but was silent about reparation for the wrong-doings of the apartheid system. Strangely enough, the praise-loving Mandela accepted that apology without question, proceeded to share a Nobel Peace Prize with De Klerk, and set up a Truth Commission to buy time and divert attention from the sufferings of the many. Mandela did not set up any Egalitarian Commission to address the inequalities inherited from the apartheid system. The consequence is the prevailing high rate of crime in South Africa which may have the effect of crowding out foreign investment and possibly lead to political chaos.

The third reason is associated with the objective situation at the time of the abolition. Despite the rhetoric of the abolitionists that slavery and the slave trade were morally bad; they simultaneously did not accept these as constituting any heinous crime against humanity for the Bible itself sanctioned it. Unlike the Czar of Russia, the abolitionists did not consider any reparation for the slaves but for the slave masters. The British Parliament proudly insulted

justice by approving reparation of 20 million pounds to slave owners already rich through the labour of the slaves. That attitude was emulated by the other European powers that legalized slavery. France, Denmark, and the Netherlands paid reparation to the slave masters but nothing to the slaves, and United States government cleverly labelled the meagre compensation of “40 acres of land and a mule” *reparations* instead of *reparation* and has so far refused to honour it.

The reparation payment to the slave-owners by European governments and the failure of the United States to honour its reparation promise to African Americans are rooted in the international vertical mosaic of racism. Even if Africans had in mind to request reparation after their emancipation they did not have the required voting rights and influence. Furthermore, it was not long when the same abolitionists joined forces with imperialism to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the so called emancipation of slaves was not intended to end slavery but to convert it into another form and label it a civilizing mission of colonialism.

The recent call for reparation by the Diaspora sends the message that Africans do not accept that they are inferior, pliable, and gullible beings to be denied reparation after the incantation of some clever apologies by the perpetrators. History has identified those involved and the institutions of government who legalized slavery. If those same institutions of government can endorse or approve reparation to Jews, Korean Women, Japanese Americans, Kuwaitis, and even to rich slave owners why cannot they extend the same to Africans? If Saddam Hussein’s Iraq can be pronounced guilty and be held responsible for reparation for attempting to occupy its former province of Kuwait, what about countries that not only attempted to occupy Africa but also turned Africans into commodities for 350 years and later occupied the continent, colonized and neocolonized Africans? Surely, they should be held responsible for the payment of reparation.

INSTITUTIONS TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE

The literature on slavery in Africa including the works of Fage, Ivor Wilks, Paul Lovejoy, and Eric Wolf all identify certain countries in Western Europe, the United States and Muslim Arabs as those who enslaved Africans through the captive form of slavery. The identified nations of Western Europe include the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, the French and the British. Although the enslavement of Africans was legalized by the governments of these societies and buttressed by the religious institutions of Christianity and Islam, it should not be forgotten that in both Europe and the Arab world, it was elites who occupied the high offices in the religious, economic, and political spheres. Because the elites were relatively few, they legitimised their domination and control of the masses through the creation of various myths.³

Some of these myths were created by twisting the doctrines of the Bible or the Koran and even science. They included the infallibility of the Pope; the Reverence of the clergy; the King, Queen, Emperor or Caliph as the direct representative of God on earth; the Saracens as the enemies of Christendom; Islamic notion of infidels; Christian notion of unbelievers; and the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. The myth of infidels provided Muslim Arabs with a

labelling instrument for justifying the enslavement of non-Muslims. The myths of Saracens as the enemies of Christendom and the infallibility of the Pope as the head of Christendom and heir of Saint Peter provided Catholics with a justification for enslaving those labelled as Saracens by the Pope. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination enabled Protestants to label Africans as predestined to damnation and fit to be enslaved. It is through these elites of European, American and Arab societies and their myths that enslavement of Africans was initially legalized to provide labour for the gold trade.

Long before the industrial revolution, gold from West Africa had been moving for centuries across the Sahara to the Maghreb, Egypt, the Mediterranean in general, and to Europe.⁴ During the fifteenth century, the requirement of gold as a means of exchange stimulated and increased European demand for West African gold and in 1484 Pope Nicholas V, acting like the deceitful serpent of the Garden of Eden created the myth that the Negroids of West Africa were Saracens (the Islamic Arabs and Turks at war with Christendom) and authorised the Portuguese to enslave them. This authority was renewed successively by Pope Calixtus in 1456, Pope Sixtus in 1481 and Pope Leo X in 1514. (Maxwell, 1975, pp52-54)

It is to be noted that the Atlantic slave trade was not born out of the desire of Africans to sell their fellows, but out the desire of Europeans nation, Portugal, to obtain gold from African soil. Secondly, the character of the process was European raid of African villages to obtain captives for sale to fellow Europeans in Africa, Europe or the Americas. Europeans in Europe, Africa and the Americas created the demand, and Europeans in Africa created the supply through a combination of their superior military might and trickery. Before the demand was created, there was no epoch of slavery in Africa. When that demand was killed, the European slave trade in Africans died. How can Africans be blamed for this except that when the aggressor or his agent writes a history of Africa, it is to be expected that the facts may be twisted to give an impression that African cannibal rulers refused to eat Europeans, but most willingly and readily sold their own strong people and kept the weak? This twist makes no sense.

The Arab slave raids and trade in West Africa germinated out of the Atlantic slave trade that was started by Portugal⁵ and was minuscule compared to the Atlantic slave trade which, in later years, developed into an enormous trans-Atlantic slave trade in which the African was reduced to the status of a commodity to be sold in the same manner as cattle, table or chairs. Greed and commitment to the institution of private property swallowed up the rationality the elites completely in both the religious and scientific spheres. The various Christian Churches not only condoned or connived at this crime against humanity but also endorsed, encouraged, were deeply involved in institutionalising it and thereby disqualified Africans from the salvation of the Christian God.⁶

In the competition among European nations that ensued, the English so dominated the trade from 1701 to 1810, that the number of slaves imported to England was about double that of the rest of Europe with that gap was still widening. A. G Hopkins (1973) writes about England's supremacy in the slave trade:

England's supremacy is clearly demonstrated: she alone was responsible for about two-thirds of the total number of slaves shipped by the three leading powers. (p.91)

The atrocities committed against Africans by both Arabs and Europeans were so horrifying that only substantial reparation can appease the Diaspora. Sir H. H Johnston cited by Batten (1964) described a typical atrocity rooted Arab racism and enslavement of Africans when he wrote about an expedition in 1822 - 1823 as follows:

After they got past the more settled areas of Fezzan into the desert country, where lived Negro Tibus, they began to see signs of the slave trade across the desert. Round most of the wells they stopped to get water there were numbers of human bones lying about in the sands. Denham counted a hundred persons bones round one well, with the skin still on them. The Arabs with him however laughed at his pain at this sight and said: "They were only blacks". Denham was told that these slaves often left Bornu with very little food, so that more died of hunger than tiredness or even thirst. They were made to march with heavy chains round their necks and legs. (Pp.131-132)

This typical atrocity committed by racist Muslim Arabs against black Africans demonstrates how powerful the international vertical mosaic of racism was and is today. It shows that it is only misguided Africans ignorant of their history that may call themselves *Nation of Islam* instead of *Nation of Africans*. David Livingstone, cited in Batten (1964), provided an illustration of the similarity between Arab and European atrocities when he described a typical Portuguese slave caravan he helped to free. Livingstone writes:

The prisoners knelt down and, in their way of giving thanks clapped their hands together with great joy. Our knives were soon busy at work cutting the women and children loose. It was more difficult to cut the men loose as each had his neck in the fork of a heavy stick, six or seven feet long, and kept in a piece of iron which was fastened at both ends across the throat. Many of the children were about five years of age and under. Two of the women had been shot the day before for attempting to untie their ropes. One woman had his baby's brains knocked out, because she could not carry her load and it. (p.43)

THE GAINS OF THE PERPETRATORS AND DIASPORA LOSSES

Assessment of what the perpetrators gained at the expense of Africans adds some weight to the demand for reparation. If Europeans were hardworking, they would not have required the services of African slaves or the labour of colonized Africans. African labour made the West rich! If the resources Europeans required for their development were available in abundance in their own continent, they would not have ventured into Africa. African resources made the West rich and great! If Europeans were not greedy, Africa would have had the peace to develop on its own without being underdeveloped by anyone. While Africa was plundered to make the West rich it, became underdeveloped! As generally expected in response to enormous super-profits, various banks sprang up, grew, and expanded their activities in Europe and, particularly, in England.⁸ The expanded activities of the banks enabled the financing of manufacturing experiments, ventures, and industries of all types which increased their profit volumes.⁹ Slave labour earned enormous profits which were repatriated to European metropolises and the cotton and other plantations worked by slaves constituted the backbone of the North American economy.

Slave labour was used to construct the infrastructure of roads, railways, harbours and buildings necessary for a buoyant economic development and it is not by coincidence that the industrial revolution began in England whose volume of trade in slaves was about double the volume of all European countries put together.. Indeed, the roots of the economic success and power of Western Europe and the United States today might be traced to the very productive labour of slaves obtained from Africa. The sky scrappers of North America and Western Europe, the big banks and the productive industries located there, the Boeings that glide the skies, the might of America and of NATO are symbols and images of the blood of Africans, the exploitation of their labour, and the plundering of the resources of the African continent for 500 years.

On the other hand, in Africa, the slave raids and slave trade rendered any orderly development process almost impossible. African populations were not safe enough to invest or concentrate on the development and retention of acquired skills. Millions of Africans were killed in the slave raids, millions died on the long march to the slave ports, and millions perished in the voyage from Africa to the destinations. That is what principally created the gap in population between Africa and the Asia, for Africa being largely polygamous and a land endowed with curative herbs cannot be expected under normal circumstances to be less populated than any other continent.

Millions of black Africans were deprived of their property and many beautiful African cities comparable to those of Europe at the time were destroyed together with the capital, knowledge, technologies and techniques of production accumulated over several centuries. Indeed, some European eye-witnesses did testify that some cities of Africa were in no way inferior to those of Europe of that time. Fage (1969, p.98) refers to a description of typical African city, Benin City, by the Dutch author Olfert Dapper to the effect that most black African societies were civilized and valued hygiene and sanitation before the advent of Europeans. A Portuguese, Duarte Barbosa cited by Shinnie (1965, p.108) described the

beauty of the ancient city of Mombassa on the East African coast which Vasco da Gama and his gang of Portuguese fortune seekers destroyed. The evidence confirms that European colonization of Africa was not a civilizing mission.

Through the total destruction of all such cities together with the capital, knowledge, technology, technique and experience accumulated for centuries, Africa suffered reversed development. In other words, during the era of the European captive slave raids and trade, Africans were propelled by European exogenous forces in a direction of development 180 degrees out of phase to that of Europe and at a rate several times the development of the West. While Western nations were in a train moving in the direction of successful auto-centric development, African peoples were in another train driven by Europeans and European-Americans over-speeding in the opposite direction into utter darkness. The labour and resources of Africans made Western nations rich and great while Africans sank deeper and deeper into poverty and disrespect everywhere. Just as commodities have no history and do not create history, Africans were taken completely out of history. They became mere tools for the creation of American and European history.

Moreover, the colonial conquest and colonial enslavement that followed subjected Africans to processes of underdevelopment in which their human and material resources were exploited for the development of Europe and America. Thus, under colonialism, most African economies were transformed into mono-crop economies that were vulnerable to the world market, and colonial government policies of domination and exclusion prevented the development of indigenous entrepreneurs who might have continued with the development processes immediately after independence.

Colonialism turned out not to be a civilizing mission at all but another form of slavery. Does a nation become more civilised after it has been conquered and its riches exploited to the benefit of the conquerors and their allies? Considering the character of the colonial conquests and the character of the colonial enslavement itself including problems of : European settlers of Eastern and Southern Africa; the institutionalization of apartheid in South Africa by European settlers; the exploitation of the wealth of the continent on a very large scale to the benefit of the colonizers; the very parsimonious character of the infrastructures of present-day African nation-states; the colonial strategies of stifling the development of African capitalists and entrepreneurs; the institutionalisation of the colour bar in Europe and America; and open discrimination against African populations by the colonizers, the mission might correctly be described as banditry. Consequently, on the eve of nominal independence African economies were so weak that true de-colonisation was not possible. The inherited colonial structures assisted by the oligopolistic world market perpetuate the same colonial domination and exploitation.

The IMF and World Bank guided Structural Adjustment programs have been ineffective in changing these colonial structures principally because they are biased and rooted in the vertical mosaic of racism. Structural adjustment derives from Keynes (Cornia and Helleiner, 1994, p. 65). In order to create an orderly and balanced international economic environment, Keynes proposed sharing the burden of adjustment between surplus and deficit countries. However, what the IMF and the World Bank have so far imposed on Africa is a complete

contravention to what Keynes proposed. The burden of adjustment is entirely borne by deficit countries, and because of the mono-crop character of the economies they inherited from the colonial past African countries are more vulnerable. The harsh conditionalities imposed by the insensitive IMF and the World Bank are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Africans and the marginalization of millions of them and render those institutions international replicas of the Ku Klux Klan..

THE SIZE OF THE REPARATION FOR BLACK AFRICANS

Africans are entitled to reparation but what is the estimated size of the reparation in United States dollars? Because detailed records of captive slavery may be unreliable or unavailable, it may be tempting to think that assessment of the amount of reparation to be paid is almost impossible, and may explain the silence of the Diaspora about the minimum amount desired. On the contrary, using a combination of alternative cost and present value analyses, it is not difficult at all to estimate the minimum amount to be paid. The atrocities of captive slavery, the colonial conquest, and colonial rule cost Africans enormous amount of human life which is reflected in the total population of Africa today. As explained earlier, the labour of enslaved Africans contributed immensely towards the industrial revolution while Africa was deprived of the same labour. Under colonialism, the human and material resources of the continent were exploited to the benefit of the West, and that exploitation continues unabated during this era of neo-colonialism. Compensation for all these must include in the total reparation.

It is emphasized that there is no reason why polygamous Africa with its enormous endowment of plant medicine should have a population lower than Asia. The comparatively high population growth in Africa since independence confirms this fact. Indeed, it was precisely because Africans were comparatively healthy and strong that Europeans desired them as slaves for no slave master was interested in sick and weak people. The population difference between Africa and Asia, therefore, provides a reasonable estimate of the present cost in human life to Africa arising from the enslavement of Africans. Though this difference is more than one billion, for the purpose of underestimating rather than overestimating, one billion may be accepted. How can this cost in human loss to Africa be converted into United States dollars? Based on the Warsaw Convention for assigning value to loss of human life, compensation for each human life irrespective of race when an aircraft crashes is US\$ 75,000. There is no reason why the estimated human loss to Africa should be compensated for less, for the processes of slavery crashed the *aircraft of life* in which Mother Africa and her children were riding. Some Africans survived, others perished. Among those who survived, some were subjected to captive slavery, others were colonized and neocolonized and all were subjected to opportunity enslavement and mental slavery. Hence, the present value of reparation for human loss to Africa alone is 75, 000 billion US dollars or 75 US\$ trillion. This is the basic amount to which must be added the compensation for actual plundering of the resources of the continent and exploitation of African labour during captive slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism; the horrors of William Lynch, and the Ku Klux Klan; the humiliation of Africans everywhere because of the vertical mosaic of racism; the humiliation of IMF and World Bank enslavement through harsh structural adjustment conditionalities; slavery by the denial of opportunity to Africans

everywhere; and the demeaning effect of mental slavery. These may also run into trillions of dollars, and given that mental slavery, as Blyden explains is even worse, the Diaspora may be kind enough to settle on a compensation of about 25 US\$ trillion which is a third of the basic amount. This leads to a total amount of about 100 US\$ trillion as the minimum compensation to the Diaspora.

PROSPECTS AND POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Payment of the reparation requires some negotiation between the Diaspora, the perpetrators and the religious institutions that buttressed them. The International Court of Justice may be requested to appoint mediators. The Court which prosecuted the Nazi criminals and is in the process of prosecuting Serbs and Hutus for crimes against humanity stands guilty of double standards if it does not throw its weight behind the civilizing and atoning mission of reparation for the Diaspora. The United Nations which supported reparation for Kuwaitis from Iraq after the Gulf War may be expected to participate in the negotiations. However, prospects for the payment of the 100 US\$ trillion as reparation depend upon, the inertia of the vertical mosaic of racism, the willingness or capacity of the perpetrators to pay, courage and the unity of purpose within the Diaspora, and the effectiveness of the strategies with which the reparation demand is pursued.

The perpetrators are the affluent countries of the West and the oil rich Arab states. However, given that the Arab slave trade in Africans was minuscule compared to the Atlantic and the trans-Atlantic slave trade by the West, the greater burden of reparation must be borne by the West. The institutions of government of Western Europe, the United States and the Arab world that legalized the slave trade shall be the primary targets of the reparation demand. Secondary targets are the rich Roman Catholic Church which was the first institution to authorise the enslavement of Africans, the Protestant Churches, and Islam. By involving these religious institutions, the Pope, the heads of the Protestant Churches, and leaders of Islam are simultaneously called upon to use their influence to convince the West and the oil rich Arab states to honour their portion of the reparation. There are many Africans who are Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Moslems and these religious institutions may not like to offend or lose them. If the religious institutions effectively lend their support to the reparation call, their influence in convincing the primary targets to honour the reparation may be considered their payment in kind. If they refuse to lend their support, the Diaspora as a whole must think seriously about saying good-bye to both Christianity and Islam for those institutions would then have demonstrated clearly that they are racist religions with no interest in the plight of Africans.

However, inviting the perpetrators for negotiation on reparation may be relatively easier than convincing them to honour their obligations. Despite their affluence, they may argue that they do not have the capacity to pay. This is not a strong excuse, however, for the perpetrators need only pay interest annually to enable them to enjoy their affluence while simultaneously supplying the Diaspora with its survival and development needs. Considering the structure of power relations in the world today, however, the chances are that the perpetrators may refuse to pay. A potential danger internal to the Diaspora is its inability to speak with one voice to avoid the divide and rule tactics of the perpetrators.

Another obstacle to reparation is the vertical mosaic of racism which can only be overcome by confrontation. Confrontation enabled Africans to be granted civil rights in the United States and independence by Portugal. Confrontation, however, does not mean violence or killing innocent people, for individuals are not institutions. However, if the perpetrators

resort to the use of violence, it means the time is ripe for the Law of Moses to replace the law of Jesus. The Diaspora should not hesitate to respond in kind for it has turned the other cheek for 500 years without much fruit.

There are other strategies available to the Diaspora. It should make its position clear without commitment to reparation President Clinton's apology regarding the European slave trade in Africans is totally unacceptable. Another strategy is for countries within the Diaspora to refuse to sign or honour any international treaties until the perpetrators demonstrate their willingness to pay annual interest on the estimated amount of reparation. For example, they should not sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and if some have made the mistake of signing it, they should rescind their decision. That treaty essentially, permits some particular section of human society to amass nuclear weapons while simultaneously denying others that right. It should not be forgotten that when that particular section of human society had the advantage of the maxim machine gun and cannons they used those weapons to colonize the African continent, to wipe out the American and Australian Aborigines and to force opium down the throat of the Chinese. What is the guarantee that after refusing to pay the reparation they will not proceed to use the nuclear weapons to exterminate Africans or recolonize the continent? Indeed, the very refusal to pay the reparation is proof of their refusal to repent and seek peace. It is dangerous to trust the unrepentant soul!

As a reparation strategy, the Diaspora should refuse to take part in the Olympic Games and organize Diaspora games in Africa, the Mother Land. When Jesse Owen won several medals at the Olympic Games in Berlin before the Second World War, which did not move the European Adolph Hitler any bit to change his mind about Nazism. Africans continue to excel in sports and have been great inventors to the benefit of the whole human race.¹⁰ None of these has been able to eradicate the racist wall. There is no point in competing in the same games with people who so look down upon the Diaspora that they are willing to support reparation to any race on this planet except those of Africans.

Peaceful demonstrations against injustice is an acceptable strategy. The Diaspora should organize demonstrations in their thousands in the capitals of the perpetrators, at the offices of the United Nations, the Vatican, the headquarters of the Protestant Churches, and around the Mosques of Islam. Countries of the Diaspora may also boycott selected goods produced by companies with their headquarters in the countries of the perpetrators.

If after all these peaceful means the perpetrators are still adamant, the Diaspora should apply harsher strategies. These may include saying *uma uma* (go away, go away in Swahili) to the white settler populations of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa and deporting them to their ancestral homes in Europe leaving everything behind except their underwear. Their lands and property in Africa should be confiscated as part of the reparation. This will make the perpetrators taste just a little bit of the slave condition, for the African captives of the European slave trade in Africans left everything including their lands behind except their underwear. Indeed, the white settler populations should consider themselves lucky for not being turned into chattels in service of Africans but allowed to depart as free human beings to begin a new life in the land of their ancestors.

CONCLUSION

The reparation call by the Diaspora is justified and long overdue. The minimum amount based upon the opportunity cost to Africa in terms of population loss is estimated as the difference in the population between Africa and Asia which is over a billion. Based on the Warsaw Convention the value of compensation for loss of human life is US\$ 75,000 per person. Hence, the minimum basic amount of reparation is 75 US\$ trillion. A third of this amount may be added to compensate for the sufferings and sorrows of the Diaspora for the past 500 years. The minimum reparation totals to 100 US\$ trillion. However, because of existing power relations in the world, the perpetrators may refuse to pay even the annual interest on this amount. Major obstacles include disunity within the Diaspora, and the international vertical mosaic of racism through which the Diaspora is looked down upon everywhere and its rights, wishes and demands not respected in international circles. However, certain strategies suggested above when applied effectively can turn things around. It is up to the Diaspora to be serious about its legitimate demand considering that even slave owners were granted reparation. What matters is the Diaspora's unity of purpose and its courage.

NOTES

1. Section 4 of the *Reparations Bill for African Slaves in the United States* of 1867 specified some meager compensation for slaves. Since 1867, successive governments of the United States have refused to honour that Bill.
2. In its paper (December, 1998, p.2) the Self Determination Committee of African Americans came out with a strategy about how blacks could seize opportunities provided in the Expatriation Act of 1868 to be free from paying US Taxes.
3. The classical theorists Pareto, Mosca and Michel propounded various theories about elites. For more information on elites see Knuttila (1987, pp 50-63).
4. For more information on African gold, its role in African culture, its trans-Saharan trade, and its quest by Europe the reader is referred to Garrard (1989).
5. Lovejoy gives an impression that the Arab slave trade in West Africa preceded that of the Portuguese but an account by John Hawkins, the English slave bandit, revealed that West Africans he came across knew very little about the concept of slavery or slave trade.
6. Fage (1969, pp 111-112) explains that Protestants twisted the Calvinist doctrine to mean that Africans were inferior to whites with whites destined for salvation and Africans destined for damnation. Nothing that a white person did to an African would affect his or her chance of salvation. The Protestant churches, including the Church of England, in their strong commitment to property rights saw nothing wrong with men buying and selling other men or owning other men just as they did own cattle. John Francis Maxwell (1975,p.10) explains why a common Catholic teaching by Popes, Councils, Church Fathers and Bishops that slavery was morally legitimate persisted for 1400 years.
8. Walter Rodney (1982, p85) explains that Barclays Bank and Lloyds Bank which financed the industrial revolution were all products of the super-profits from the slave trade and slavery of Africans, and James Watt expressed gratitude to the slave owners who directly financed his steam engine.
9. For more details about how Europe Underdeveloped Africa see Rodney (1982).

10. In his book *Blacks in Science*, Dr. Van Sertima explains in detail the spectacular achievements of blacks as inventors and scientists. The interested reader is referred to that book.

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