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UNEXPECTED RACIAL ASSERTIONS: A COUNTER-REPLY TO DAVID HOROWITZ

David Boyle

Thanks to Mr. Horowitz for his lively and astoundingly imaginative reply. I shall try to answer many of his points, in a brief fashion, and in roughly “chronological” order.

First, though, I appreciate his following at least the female members of the Bush family in trying to spread literacy and able speaking of English (“Boyle should learn how to read.”¹). As for my reading abilities: while the title *Uncivil Wars: The Controversy Over Reparations For Slavery* does, as he says, focus on the “controversy,” there’s much more to the controversy than Horowitz’s own travail. If he’d said “*My Controversy*,” the title would be more honest. The debate antedates Horowitz by centuries, going back to the “40 acres and a mule” proposal, and it is wrong to over-focus such a massive issue on one person—yes, even a person who claims to have marched so much for civil rights. If Horowitz respects “Movement” icons such as Dr. King so greatly, he might want to pay more attention to the M.L.K. quote I cited in footnote 140: “[t]he moral justification for special measures for Negroes is rooted in the robberies inherent in the institution of slavery.” If Horowitz wants to join folk like King, and myself, in taking a reasoned, and non-bitter, look at whether those robberies have been fully restituted yet, he is welcome.

RE: “When are black Americans like the reverend and David Boyle going to take ‘yes’ for an answer?”² Hilariously enough, I am not in fact black and/or African American! Not at all! For Horowitz to, indeed, “stereotype” me by assuming I’m black, just because I support reparations, makes his charges that I “racially slander” *him* look less convincing. It’s like the pot calling the kettle . . . well, you know.³ He also labels my style that of a “weasel” (at least he

¹ David Horowitz, *Unsavory Black Insinuations: A Reply to David Boyle*, 105 W. VA. L. REV. 699, 701 (2003) [hereinafter Horowitz, *Reply*].

² *Id.*

³ My Celtic (“Boyle”) and other “lily-white” ancestors would be intrigued with their new “black” status.

didn't call me a "gorilla in our midst" or such . . .), "hiding in the verbal bushes" (fortunately not "in the jungle"!).

. . . If any protesters were black, Horowitz should avoid the term "savage." Period.

As for "censor or censure," it is true that Horowitz has (it seems) not burned anyone else's newspapers or shouted others down. However, even if not quite "hate speech," his insults to blacks border on intimidation. (His book can, arguably, be boiled down to five words: "Shut up, you black ingrates!") While I support fully his right to advertise or speak *sans* having papers filched or set afire, or being harassed down from a microphone, he should consider that others, "even" blacks he disagrees with, should too have their speech respected. Not all blacks have their own books, columns, or websites, after all, unlike Horowitz. And note Horowitz's claim in his response: "a person's constitutional right to free expression isn't worth much if his reputation can be destroyed by slander and invidious comparisons . . ." ⁴ This is why I decry Horowitz's slanderous dismissal of black, and other, pro-reparationists as being idiots, ungrateful whiners, or even proto-traitors.

. . . Some blacks do reject reparations; then again, some fought for the Confederacy.

. . . Claims made for the dead, which Horowitz decries, haven't prevented reparations – which I very strongly support – for dead Jewish Holocaust victims' live descendants.

As for the "10 points against reparations":

1. Arab nations, or the current Sudan, are free to pay reparations for slavery too, but that doesn't exempt *us* from doing so.
2. I stated that all Americans, even blacks, may have benefited, minisculely, from some of the wealth produced by slavery, ⁵ but still, whites were the main beneficiaries.
3. The sacrifices of Union soldiers are noble and appreciated, but they do not *ipso facto* mean that slaves' descendants are owed nothing. That's why, as I said in the text, the government proposed "40 acres and a mule" in the first place.
4. Again, most living Americans didn't intern Japanese Americans in World War II, either, so that they (technically) "aren't

⁴ Horowitz, *Reply*, *supra* note 1, at 700.

⁵ See, e.g., Vincene Verdun, *If the Shoe Fits, Wear It: An Analysis of Reparations to African Americans*, 67 TUL. L. REV. 597, 638-39 (1993) (observing benefit to African Americans from slave-produced wealth).

connected” to that event—but their taxpayer money still goes to pay reparations, as Chrisman & Allen noted.⁶

5. Reparations are not for “race” in the narrow sense of skin pigmentation, but for race-based injury that is still inflicted today, to folk such as James Byrd Jr. (R.I.P.) and others.

6. Though there are wealthy black Americans, maybe they would be even wealthier but for slavery (and even wealthy blacks get racially profiled and stopped if driving fancy cars . . .): and there would be fewer poor blacks, too.

7. While no “price” can fully heal slavery, some compensation and an official apology could help the healing. Again, Japanese Americans, whom Horowitz apparently wants *not* to have received reparations (“The decision to pay reparations to Japanese-Americans relocated for security reasons during World War II is a cautionary tale of what happens to issues of justice in an inflamed political environment.”),⁷ seem to have appreciated these gestures.⁸

8. Admittedly, *unlimited* reparations, with no stopping point or defined figure, would be bad and might even bankrupt the country. But reparations in some limited amount could help provide closure to the issue.⁹

⁶ See Robert Chrisman & Ernest Allen, Jr., *Ten Reasons: A Response to David Horowitz by Robert Chrisman and Ernest Allen, Jr.*, at <http://www.umass.edu/afroam/hor.html> (Apr. 2, 2001).

⁷ HOROWITZ, *supra* note 1, at 106 n.187.

⁸ As that “crazed leftist” Ronald Reagan noted on August 10, 1988, “[M]y fellow Americans, we gather here today to right a grave wrong. [W]e must recognize that the internment of Japanese-Americans was . . . a mistake. . . . The 442d Regimental Combat Team, made up entirely of Japanese-Americans, served with immense distinction Yet back at home, the soldiers’ families were being denied . . . freedom” *Ronald Reagan on Redress Act: Remarks on Signing the Bill Providing Restitution for the Wartime Internment of Japanese-American Civilians*, at <http://history.wisc.edu/archdeacon/404tja/redress.html> (last checked Apr. 17, 2003).

Recently, Howard Coble, a Congressman (R-N.C.), called war-era Japanese Americans “an endangered species” (!), and said that the internment was for their own good. Janet Hook, *Internment Remarks by Lawmaker Anger Peers*, L.A. TIMES, Feb. 7, 2003, at http://www.house.gov/honda/InCongress/Coble/02.07.03_latimes_coble.pdf. However, Michael M. Honda, also a Congressman (D-San Jose), and an internment camp veteran, “said his father told him as a child that it was absurd to believe internment was for their own protection. ‘He said, ‘Mike, if it’s for your own protection, you have to wonder why you’re inside barbed wire with machine guns pointed at you.’” *Id.* Does Horowitz support Coble?

⁹ If indeed there were “transfer payments of \$2 trillion to African Americans,” that “fact” should be noted, perhaps as a reduction from the figure of any reparations that would exceed \$2 trillion. Then again, some might call the \$2 trillion just the interest on the principal for hundreds

9. Of course blacks may owe something to America, but America may owe them even more; and

10. As for pro-reparations extremists: in my review I quote Horowitz's own "FrontPageMag.com" website, on the reparations rally where a rapper says, "Show me the money, or I'll show you my Glock."¹⁰ I too condemn violent extremists, but I doubt most reparations advocates act in that provocative way.

. . . Southerners may have wanted slaves to count as a "whole person," merely to get more Southern votes, but it is vile that slavery occurred *at all*, so that the compromise of "3/5" even "had" to take place. Criticizing the "3/5" figure does not support the South or the Confederacy; the criticism merely attacks the way slavery warped our Constitution.

Once more, I happily support Horowitz's freedom of speech. I just wish that free speakers would use their freedom in a more fair and socially beneficial manner, lest they be mistaken for Trent Lotts in sheep's clothing. (Which is what "W." Bush appears to be, trying to destroy affirmative action, *pace* Colin Powell's wise advice; Bush unsavorily omitting to mention his own "Andover access" or "alumni action" regarding Harvard and Yale.)

of years of slavery and segregation.

¹⁰ David Boyle, *Unsavoring White Omissions? A Review of Uncivil Wars*, 105 W. VA. L. REV. 655, 694 n.156 (2003).