



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 16, 2023

## Racial-reparations Train Rolls On — Price Tag for “Closure”: \$14 TRILLION

We are making progress “in the movement toward reparations” for the descendants of black slaves, said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) last week. The week before, a Duke University economist estimated that reparations sufficient to end black Americans’ “claims for race-specific restitution” would cost up to \$14 trillion. (The U.S. economy’s total size was \$25.72 trillion in the third quarter.) In this vein, San Francisco’s “reparations committee” just proposed that each longtime black resident be granted \$5 million and total debt forgiveness. And across the Atlantic, a specific human target for reparations extraction has been identified.



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No, it’s not Kamala Harris, whose own father conceded that their ancestors were slaveholders. It’s British actor Benedict Cumberbatch, whose distant ancestors owned a Barbados slave plantation. Starting first with the total reparations price tag, MarketWatch [reported](#) Thursday that black

Americans whose ancestors were enslaved have been excluded from full citizenship in the United States for the last 247 years — and granting them full citizenship will cost between \$13 trillion and \$14 trillion, economist William “Sandy” Darity told a conference of fellow U.S. economists last week.

To see the impact of second-class citizenship on Black Americans, look no further than the racial wealth gap, Darity, a professor of public policy at Duke University, said during a panel on inequality at the American Economic Association meetings.

The “central task” of reparations policy is to raise the level of Black assets to a level sufficient to match the average net worth of white Americans, Darity said. Only this will produce the material conditions for full citizenship for Black Americans, he said.

At present, the racial wealth gap exceeds an average of \$300,000 per person, Darity said.

There’s much to unwrap here. First, black Americans *do* enjoy full citizenship and have done so for a long time; Darity’s contrary claim is demagoguery.

Second, why is whites’ average income used as the yardstick in these matters when, in fact, Asian-descent Americans earn more on average? Answer: Because speaking of “Asian privilege” won’t get the race hustlers very far.

Third, Darity asserts that \$14 trillion in reparations “could finally lead to closure” and end black



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Americans' "claims for race-specific restitution." This is at best naivete. Since even huge handouts don't eliminate racial economic disparities, and since man's nature doesn't change, there will always be jealousy and bitterness to be exploited — and demagogues such as Darity around to do the exploiting.

In fact, Darity's agitation brings to mind something author and ex-slave Booker T. Washington said more than a century ago. "There is another class of coloured people who make a business of keeping the troubles, the wrongs, and the hardships of the Negro race before the public," Washington [observed](#). "Having learned that they are able to make a living out of their troubles, they have grown into the settled habit of advertising their wrongs.... Some of these people do not want the Negro to lose his grievances, because they do not want to lose their jobs."

Speaking of which brings us to Congressman Sheila Jackson Lee. She and dozens "of House Democrats this week renewed their push for reparations and a national apology for slavery by reintroducing legislation that would set up a commission to consider these steps as way to address the 'cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery' in the U.S.," Fox News [informed](#) Thursday. How much money Lee donates personally to help poor black Americans was not reported.

But there are many "idealists" who want taxpayer money to fund their ideals — and stepping right up to the plate is San Francisco. As mentioned earlier, city wokesters are proposing \$5 million and total debt relief for every longtime black resident. This is "not for slavery, since California was not technically a slave state," Fox News [relates](#) in an article today, "but 'to address the public policies explicitly created to subjugate Black people in San Francisco by upholding and expanding the intent and legacy of chattel slavery.'"

The topic of legacy brings us to the hapless Mr. Cumberbatch, the British actor targeted for reparations. Cumberbatch, who, ironically, co-starred in the film *12 Years A Slave*, has problems because his "seventh great-grandfather bought the Cleland plantation in the north of Barbados in 1728," [writes](#) Showbizz Daily. We can only imagine what fate should befall the guy descended from Julius Caesar.

You can read more about the Cumberbatch saga [here](#) and [here](#), but it turns out the accountability story is not so simple. For example, some "of the richest Cumberbatch clan plantation owners were, remarkably, themselves former slaves," [writes](#) the *Daily Mail*. "These individuals, who were mixed-race, amassed huge fortunes as they forced slaves to grow sugar on their Barbadian plantations under the punishing Caribbean sun."

But this is always the case with slavery gripes. More points to ponder:

- According to the 2007 book *White Cargo*, [300,000 white Britons were shipped](#) to America and used as slaves prior to the [use of Africans for this purpose](#). Shouldn't their descendants get reparations, too?
- There were [thousands of American Indians](#), and some blacks, who owned African slaves. Should their descendants also be forced to pay reparations?
- Collective blame should be attended by collective credit. So if "white Americans owe reparations for past wrongs," shouldn't they also get royalties for past triumphs (their world-transforming Western inventions and innovations)? Notably, whites might not have been the first to practice slavery — but they *were* the first to end it.
- In reality, since reparations payments generally wouldn't come from individuals but the government (i.e., taxpayers), and since 40 percent of our population is now non-white, how will Hispanics and Asian-



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descent Americans react to having their money given to other non-whites to atone for “whites’ sins”?

Slavery-reparations endeavors are unjust and politically unworkable. The fixation on past wrongs also diverts attention from what actually could be remedied: today’s wrongs. That is, obsessing over economic damage allegedly caused by antebellum policies helps obscure the economic damage caused by the Covid, climate, and currency (inflating the money supply) cons and other pseudo-elite schemes, which impoverish millions of Americans of all races, creeds, and colors.

The demagogues love it when we agonize over the past — while they steal the present.



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