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WHAT YOU CAN DO

REPARATIONS AREN'T NEW

From the first time white people landed on the shores of Africa to the current day, Black people have resisted the exploitation of their bodies, labor, and land. One of the ways this resistance has transformed itself is into the movement for reparations. The belief that Black people should be given what they are owed is not a new idea. Most have heard of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's I Have a Dream speech. But what is often left out of the dialogue is his support of reparatory justice. He said:

"We've come to our nation's capital to cash a check... America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked insufficient funds... And so we've come to cash... a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."

There are plenty of examples of reparations in the US. While these examples didn't do enough to repair the damages caused, reparations are nothing new. One of the worst examples is the fact that slave-owners in Washington DC were compensated for emancipating their slaves during the Civil War. Following the Civil War, General Sherman announced Field Order No. 15, which allotted 40 acres for Black families to live and work on, until it was revoked not even a year later by the federal government.

Our goal is to address the historic and ongoing harms caused by systemic racism and discrimination and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society for all. Join us in our mission to advocate for reparations and push for real change.

In this zine, we explain the eleven harm areas that have been outlined by the Illinois African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission and explain why Illinois needs reparations now!

The Case for Reparations



Champaign-Urbana Reparations Coalition

So, what does this look like in Champaign County?

- In the last 5 years, the gap between low and high-income households grew
 - Median incomes of White, Asian, and Black households grew in the last 5 years
 - Black household incomes rose much more slowly in absolute terms, leaving the income gap wider year after year
- In 2022, the median income for White people was nearly 2.5 times the income for Black people
- Home ownership in Champaign County
 - 84% - White
 - 6% - Black
 - 5% - asian
 - Other - 5%
- Average Mortgage Approval Values in C-U
 - Asian - 180.542
 - White - 179.222
 - Black - 158.510
- Median Income by race in Champaign County
 - White - 71.017
 - Asian - 50.328
 - Black - 29.595

3 Political Disenfranchisement

The passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments ended slavery and expanded the legal rights of Black citizens. White people reacted with often violent tactics to continue the exploitation of Black people. Jim Crow, Black codes, debt peonage, racial pogroms, and overall exclusion from white society are just a few examples.

2 Racial Terror

African Americans have resisted violent oppression since their ancestors were first kidnapped from Africa. Persistent dehumanization, violence, and fear have been used to suppress Black agency throughout every period of American history.

1 Enslavement

10 Mental and Physical Harm

Physical harm against African Americans has manifested itself through torture, beatings, lynchings, rapes, and exploitation, to name a few examples. This has created a nation where Black people are subjected to fear for their safety, leading to issues like hypertension and anxiety. This stress is compounded by generational trauma from the centuries of enslavement and stolen labor that has made the financial burden another large factor in affecting the mental health of Black people.

11 Wealth Gap

According to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, "The racial wealth gap between median Black and White households has remained virtually unchanged from 1992 to 2022". Because of systematic discrimination and unequal access to credit and capital gains, it has been almost impossible for Black people to grow wealth.

6 Pathologizing the Black Family

By blaming the systemic nature of oppression on personal flaws, like the *Moyinhan Report* did, public and private entities have continued to enact policy to tear apart Black families. Institutions like slavery, Jim Crow, and discriminatory policy contributed to the continued enslavement and exploitation of Black people, and the separation of Black families.

5 Separate & Unequal Education

Black children have historically been forced to learn in either hostile or underfunded environments. Until the 1954 decision in Brown v. Board of Education, schools were segregated by race. Today, school choice and charter schools have become a rebranding of these segregated schools.

4 Housing Segregation

7 Racism in Environment and Infrastructure

Federal and local policy forced Black families to live in segregated communities. The Federal Housing Administration refused to insure mortgages in neighborhoods that consisted of Black individuals. This practice, known as redlining, is illegal today, yet similar practices still exist to segregate communities.

8 Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunities

European abducted Africans for profit for hundreds of years. Western nations accumulated immense wealth during colonization. The wealth derived from the stolen labor of enslaved people.

9 Unjust Legal System

African Americans are routinely exposed to harmful environmental conditions, and their communities' basic infrastructure needs are neglected. These disparities, rooted in redlining and segregation, involve being forced into poor housing conditions that are located near polluting industries and hazardous waste sites, and systematically denied adequate public services like clean water, sewage systems, and reliable transportation.

Structural barriers have prevented Black individuals from building wealth and achieving economic equality for centuries. Some of the many ways this can be seen are through enslavement which generated the immense wealth of Western nations for centuries, white mobs stealing Black land, and exclusion from unions leaving Black workers vulnerable.

Black Codes, vagrancy laws, and convict leasing were the basis for today's legal system. An example of the explicit bias against Black people today is over-policing in Black communities. This has meant that crimes committed at an equal rate across communities result in Black communities facing the worst state repression.

Champaign-Urbana Reparations Coalition



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Enslavement

European colonization abducted Africans at gunpoint for hundreds of years. Western nation accumulated immense wealth during colonization. This wealth was the stolen labor of enslaved Africans.

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Racial Terror

African Americans have resisted violent oppression since their ancestors were first kidnapped from Africa. Persistent dehumanization, violence, and fear have been used to suppress Black revolutionary activity throughout every period of American history.

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Political Disenfranchisement

The passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments ended slavery and expanded the legal rights of Black citizens. White people reacted with often violent tactics to continue the exploitation of Black people. Jim Crow, Black codes, debt peonage, racial pogroms, and overall exclusion from white society are just a few examples.

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11 Wealth Gap

According to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, “The racial wealth gap between median Black and White households has remained virtually unchanged from 1992 to 2022”. Because of systematic discrimination through housing discrimination and unequal access to credit and capital gains, it has been made almost impossible for Black people to grow wealth at the same capacity.

So, what does this look like in Champaign County?

- **In the last 5 years, the gap between low and high-income households grew**
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Lastly, it must be remembered that there are plenty of examples of reparations that the US has given to communities or states for the damages it was complicit in. While it can extensively be argued that these examples didn't do enough to repair the damages caused or created issues in their own right, we must acknowledge that the idea behind reparations is nothing new. One of the worst examples is the fact that slave-owners in Washington DC were compensated for emancipating their slaves during the Civil War. Following the conclusion of the civil war, General William T. Sherman issued Field Order No. 15, which allotted 40 acres for Black families to live and work on, until it was revoked not even a year later by the federal government. Decades later, the Mexican government was paid a few million dollars in reparations for the slaughter of Mexican nationals in Texas at the start of the 20th century. Lastly, Japanese people were given reparations for their displacement to internment camps during WW2.

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