

COMMUNIQUE
SPECIAL SECTION



**REPARATIONS:
REPAIRING THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM?**

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In August 2001, the American Psychological Association sent a 6-member delegation to the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Other Related Intolerance (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa. (For more related information, review back issues of the *Communique* at: www.apa.org/pi/oema/publications/pubs_brochures.html.)

As previously reported, much of the conference's content was shaped by its "hot button" issues, including: (a) Palestinian self-determination, (b) the spelling of Holocaust/holocaust, (c) Zionism as racism, (d) trans-Atlantic slave trade as a 'crime against humanity', (e) reparations, and (f) rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"These essays reach a very clear bottom line: Reparations fundamentally is not about money — it is about justice; reparations is closely linked to issues of mental health status, psychological well-being and behavior; reparations is both a political/economic and psychological/ cultural issue".

— Bertha Holliday & Alberto Figueroa-García

Consistent with APA's NGO (Non Governmental Organization) status with the UN and related obligations of attendance at the WCAR, OEMA decided to further explore and educate others on one of the above issues. This **Special Section on *Reparations: Repairing the Psychological Harm?*** consists of eight (8) brief essays — each authored or co-authored by a psychologist who has previously engaged in research related to the psychological effects of oppression and colonialism. To each we posed an identical challenge: To draft a brief essay on reparations for a specific ethnic minority group and address at least three major issues, including (a) the historical context, nature, and legacy of the psychological and other harm resulting from a group's enslavement/colonialism/ imperialism, etc.; (b) the history of that group's claims for reparations; and (c) the benefits that may or may not result from reparations — that is, the significance of reparations to repair of the harm. We also asked the authors to list some suggested readings for more detailed information on the subject.

The special section begins with an essay by **Raymond Winbush**, who was one of the leaders of the African Descendants caucus at the WCAR and helped produce a wonderful documentary of that caucus' efforts. His essay focuses on the reparations claims of African descendants in the U.S. and throughout the world, and describes how those claims are centered not only in the effects of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but also in broader principles of international law and justice, which link all reparations claimants. This essay is followed by seven others that describe the

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specific reparations claims of African Americans, Alaska Natives, American Indians, Filipinos, Indigenous/Aboriginal Peoples, Japanese Americans, and Mexican Americans.

All are informative and poignant. For example, **Kevin Washington** cogently notes, reparations may be monetary or nonmonetary; they may be compensatory (to individuals) or rehabilitative (to communities). Both **Carlota Ocampo & Le'a Kanehe** and **Mary Clearing-Sky** suggest that in acknowledgment of processes of dispossession, reparations may take the form of honoring treaties, sacred sites, land rights, sovereignty, language and culture.

Similarly, Ocampo & Kanehe suggest a standard for the appropriateness of reparations: "When adverse consequences of a grave past injustice affect present-day well-being of victims and their descendants". They also articulate the functions of reparations in a multicultural society": Reparations serve as atonement for past wrongs and as means of economic empowerment; psychological benefits result either way". These authors also note that indigenous peoples who seek to maintain their cultures, often are not part of a multicultural society.

Collectively, the essays provide not only a wealth of history and information that should be incorporated into psychology's multicultural training curricula; they also remind us of the significance of history, culture and behavior. The essays encourage what **Lisa Thomas** calls "ellangeq" – enlightened multiple and changed perspectives: We are reminded that what is viewed as material acquisition by some, is viewed as a loss of spiritual and group identity by others; what is viewed as history by some, is viewed as a continuing contemporaneous experience by others. Mary Clearing-Sky and others movingly confront us with the deepness and pervasiveness of the wounds and grief of disrupted lives and cultures associated with imperialism, colonialism, enslavement, and oppression.

The essays also emphasize the unanimity of the need for reparations (repairing the harm) among various oppressed/colonized people, as well as the differing concepts of the appropriate nature/character of reparations and their actual or potential significance. Again, these differences are rooted in differences of culture and history. These essays reach a very clear bottom line: Reparations fundamentally is not about money – it is about justice; reparations is closely linked to issues of mental health status, psychological well-being and behavior; reparations is both a political/economic and psychological/cultural issue.

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These are brief essays – but not breezy reading. They involve strong language and complex concepts. A thorough reading will require a bit of your time. We encourage you to take the time. We have learned so much while putting together this section. We hope you will also – and please share these essays with others.

OEMA extends its deepest appreciation to the authors of the special section essays. We asked many, but you were among the few who embraced the challenge. Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge so richly with others.

Bertha G. Holliday, PhD and Alberto Figueroa-García, MBA
January 5, 2005



Reparations for Africans: A Brief Overview of their History

Raymond A. Winbush, PhD - Morgan State University

“Reparations - Payment of a debt owed; the act of repairing a wrong or injury; to atone for wrongdoings; to make amends; to make one whole again; the payment of damages; to repair a nation; compensation in money, land, or materials for damages.” — National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America.



Raymond A. Winbush, PhD

Overview of the Reparations Movement.

The reparations movement, historically considered a “fringe issue” in the American black nationalist community, is now firmly established among various constituencies in the United States as well as in African communities around the world. Its ascendancy as an important social movement — I would argue the most important since Civil Rights — is confirmed by the amount of print space and air time the media devote to it. Though the movement is picking up speed, compensatory measures for Africans have been elusive because of the entrenchment of white supremacy in world politics that

provided legal sanction for this crime against humanity. Africans around the world have watched groups such as the Japanese, Jews and others receive reparations for government sanctioned crimes against them, while eyebrows are raised and arguments dismissed as “nonsensical” when similar justice for Africans and their descendants are made. Table 1 illustrates examples of payments made to various groups during the past sixty years. It is clear that the payment of reparations is not only a common occurrence but is firmly rooted in international law that the United States recognizes. It is also important to note that while many view reparations as a “radical solution” to alleviate a historic wrong, conservative heads of state, e.g., President Ronald Reagan, have endorsed them for victims of crimes against humanity.

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Table 1: Some Examples of Reparations Payments*

1952 Germany	\$822 Million	Holocaust Survivors
1971 United States	\$1 Billion + 44 Million Acres of Land	Alaska Natives Land Settlement
1980 United States	\$81 Million	Klamaths of Oregon
1985 United States	\$105 Million	Lakota of South Dakota
1985 United States	\$12.3 Million	Seminoles of Florida
1985 United States	\$31 Million	Chippewas of Wisconsin
1986 United States	\$32 Million, 1836 Treaty Violations	Ottawas of Michigan
1988 Canada	\$230 Million	Japanese Canadians
1988 Canada	250,000 Square Miles of Land	Eskimos and Indigenous People
1990 Austria	\$25 Million	Jewish Claims on Austria
1990 United States	\$1.2 Billion	Japanese Americans
*Source: <i>Black Reparations Now! Part 1 40 Acres, \$50.00 and a Mule</i> by Dorothy Benton-Lewis, 1998		

Many people are unaware that the discussion of reparations for African people has a long history in the United States, going through three distinct stages with a nascent fourth beginning in 2002. *Stage I* from 1865 to 1920 included the United States government’s attempt to compensate its newly released three million enslaved Africans from bondage. This period also saw Callie House’s heroic efforts at establishing the Ex-slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association where she organized hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves for repayment to the government. *Stage II* from 1920 to 1968 saw Marcus Garvey, Queen Mother Audley Moore and numerous Black nationalists press for reparations by educating thousands of persons about the unpaid debt owed to Africans in America. This is the period where the reparations movement was seen as a black nationalist endeavor and civil rights organizations saw its goals as being “unrealistic” and “extreme.”

Stage III began in 1968 and continues today. The founding of several black nationalist groups including the Republic of New Africa (1968) National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (1987) and James Foreman’s (1969) *Black Manifesto* which demanded \$5 billion from Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, served as catalysts for launching what some have called the “modern reparations movement”. Randall Robinson’s 2000 book *The Debt* aided in moving the discussion into even wider circles as did the continuing attempts since 1989 by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI) to appoint a committee to study the effects of slavery upon the United States. I believe that *Stage IV* of the movement began

in 2002 with the filing of several lawsuits against corporations and ultimately the government. This legal stage was temporarily discouraged by the Cato decision in 1995 where a liberal federal court in California ruled that suing for reparations occurred “too long” after the incident (slavery) had happened.

Misunderstanding the Reparations Movement. Perhaps the greatest misunderstanding of reparations on the part of many Africans and non-Africans is that somehow reparations is a government “shakedown” or an “undeserved handout”. International law precludes such ideas and in fact recognizes reparations as the only *bona fide* remedy when a nation commits a crime against humanity. The internment of Japanese Americans in this country during World War II, the apology and compensation of the Governor of Puerto Rico for the domestic surveillance of its citizens in the late 1940s, the German government various compensation programs following World War II, and New Zealand’s reparations paid for the theft of Maori land by the British during the late 1800s, all support the idea of reparations being an issue of *justice* and not a “shakedown”. Detractors of reparations— both Black and white — trivialize their importance and say that it “reinforces the notion of victimhood” despite the fact that the United Nations and other international bodies contradict this false notion.

It is interesting to note how conservatives have distorted the use of the term “victim” in a way that implies helplessness, dependency and weakness. In fact the opposite is true. Rosa Parks was a “victim” of racism, but her bravery ignited the modern civil rights movement. Jews were “victims” of the Holocaust, but it did not prevent them from successfully suing for reparations in a variety of courts. The Cherokee, Choctaw and Lakota were “victims” of genocide yet they have been successful in receiving compensation for the genocidal behavior of the United States toward them. In none of these instances were the “victims” helpless and in all of them, there is an eye toward seeking long-denied justice for their people. So it is with America’s unpaid debt to its stolen people from Africa. Africans were “victims” of the longest-running crime against humanity in world history whose legacy still scar them. These “victims” of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade and their descendants have a long history of struggling for *justice* and not a media-hyped “handout” by the federal government. Arguably, the entire struggle of Africans in America for equality in the form of protests, boycotts, voting rights, legislation, affirmative action and other efforts were/are ways of *repairing* the damage done by the TransAtlantic Slave Trade. This “reparations process” continues to be at the

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heart of African struggle around the world be it in the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa, among the descendants of the Herero People of Namibia, Afro-Columbians in South America and African Americans in the United States.

The Psychological Impact of Enslavement and Reparations. The psychological damage of the Transatlantic Slave Trade is incalculable throughout the African world. Words such as “Black Holocaust” are inadequate in their attempt to describe what happened (is happening) to Africans whose ancestors were victims of enslavement, colonialism, cultural theft and exploitation. In an attempt to describe this horrific experience, Marimba Ani, author of *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* offers the Kiswahili term *Maafa* to emphasize the continuing impact of enslavement on African people’s thought patterns and behavior. Joyce DeGruy Leary coined the phrase “Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome” which also describes this impact. Black psychologists such as Wade Nobles, Na’im Akbar, Linda James Myers and others have long seen the connection between the damages of slavery and current behaviors in Black communities. Self-hatred, conspicuous consumption, the “dozens”, skin color preferences and many other pathologies are deeply embedded among Africans who fail to make the connection between history and current behavior. In this sense, the struggle for reparations is not only economic but psychological as well.

This ‘repairing of the mind’ from the “chains of psychological slavery” is as important and perhaps even more so than the reception of compensation for the damages of enslavement. This “internal repair” is a vital step and should be recognized as such by Black psychologists who work with children, adults and institutions. At the heart of his or her career, the Black psychologist should find it obligatory to repair the damage done by institutions and individuals who are the heirs of white supremacist notions that enslaved Africans both physically and psychologically. This repair process often needs to move beyond the classroom and the therapy session and become overtly political since white supremacist systems continue the legacy of damaging African people.

Current State of the Reparations Movement. A convergence of four groups provides a conceptual framework for understanding the current discussion of reparations: 1) grassroots organizers 2) legislators 3) attorneys and 4) academics. A similar convergence of cooperation occurred during the late 1940s that resulted in what we now call the Civil Rights Movement. A. Phillip Randolph’s Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (grassroots) began conversations with Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall (legal) who consulted with politicians such as

Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota (legislative) as well as psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark (academics). Together they formed national networks that led to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement. Pioneering black sociologist Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University provided research facilities and a place to discuss strategies for all of these groups with his establishment of the Race Relations Institute during the 1940s.

Reparations have a similar history. Grassroots organizations such as the December 12th Movement (D12), National Council of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), and the National Black United Front (NBUF) worked closely with legislators in the mid-1980s, e.g., John Conyers (D-MI), and collaborated with the Reparations Coordinating Committee (RCC) consisting of attorneys such as Willie Gary, Randall Robinson and Johnnie Cochran and academics such as Manning Marable and Ron Walters. These groups conversed long and hard with each other and as you will see, these discussions were often heated and difficult. What united them however was a common goal of pressing for reparations on a global level for African people.

The fertile ground for nourishing the movement came during the early 1990s when the December 12th Movement along with other grassroots organizations lobbied the United Nations to hold a World Conference Against Racism. This followed the tradition of Marcus Garvey during the 1920s, W. E. B. Du Bois during the 1940s and 1950s, and Malcolm X during the 1960s who together encouraged bringing international attention to the struggle of Africans in America. The 2001 World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) presented an opportunity to press the issues of Reparations at the global level. The three core issues adhered to consistently by the December 12th Movement that helped unify the struggle in the late 1990s were:

- 1) Declaration of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery as a crime against humanity
- 2) Reparations for people on the African continent and in the Maafa
- 3) The Economic Base of Racism.

These were not haphazardly arrived at issues. Rather, the organizers had a steady eye on international law. Added to this list was the impact of colonialism to the first core issue — the Transatlantic Slave Trade — that allowed for even wider litigation efforts involving the former European colonial powers that divided Africa up at the 1884 Berlin Conference.

Finally, I believe that the reparations movement should deliberately provoke debate and conversation over the greatest crime in world history, the Trans-Atlantic Slave

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Trade. Until *all* people understand its causes and continuing impact on Africans throughout the world there will *never* be an honest dialogue about race and racism.

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The Deep Cost of the Maafa: Implications for Healing and Reparations

Kevin Washington, PhD



Kevin Washington, PhD

Afrikan Reparations is gaining the increased attention of the American and World community. Recently, Afrikan Americans who were traumatized by the Tulsa Riots were awarded some compensation. On the international front, the topic is also being debated by some Afrikans in America and throughout the Afrikan Diaspora through discussions with the United Nations and other tribunals about the multiple levels of damage caused by the Afrikan Enslavements process. Absent from the argument are the concerted voices of Afrikan/Black Psychologists and Healers on the psychological (spiritual) aspects of an Afrikan nation and the psychic

trauma attributed to the Maafa (Afrikan Enslavement). This article will discuss the legal aspects of defining people as a Nation (i.e. ethnic, race, culture) and the need for psychologists and healers to assess psychological (spiritual) trauma caused by the Maafa.

Critical points to Acknowledge. The Maafa Experience yielded the following for Afrikan people:

- On the Afrikan Continent- flourishing civilizations were destroyed; ordered systems of government were disordered; millions of citizens were forcibly removed; a pattern of poverty and underdevelopment directly resulted which now affects nearly every resident of Black Africa
- In the Diaspora- the enslavement system gave rise to poverty; landlessness; underdevelopment as well as to the crushing of culture and language; the loss of identity; the inculcation of inferiority; the indoctrination of whites into a racist mindset and the removal of a relevant spiritual base or God-concept
- Afrikan Collective- Forced to work in and under extremely harsh conditions with little or no compensation.
 - Loss of reproductive freedom; Forced to reproduce children for the labor; forced to nurse and care for the oppressors' children.

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- Loss of control over body because body parts were dissected (before or after death) in the name of scientific experimentation and forced into labor.

Some of the Psychological (Spiritual) Effects of the Maafa are:

- No spiritual base that respects and compliments our religions. (A.G. Hilliard)
- Learned indifference to Afrikan self and assumed significance of European other.
- Loss of identity due to a severed contact with language, social structures and theological constructs.
- Family units and governmental systems were torn apart.

In order to impact change, Afrikan/Black Psychologists must:

- Develop a systematic Measurement of the Effects of the MAAFA
- Make the connections between contemporary behaviors and past experiences of terror
- Link Afrikan/Black Mental and Physical Health Issues to the continuing stress of the Maafa
- Examine more closely the effects of living under constant war and famine conditions

The Maafa, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the Post Slavery Stress Syndrome Challenge. The diagnosis of PTSD is generally given to people who have had a traumatic encounter in one single generation. Some of the many questions that beg to be answered are: What is the diagnosis for experiencing trauma across

several generations? What behavioral markers do we expect to witness in a group of people who have lived under the constant threat of terror and the perpetual experience of trauma? What can be expected of their interactions with others in the world? What behaviors and belief systems will be passed on for generations to come if they are not treated or healed from the trauma? What should the healing for such a protracted situation look like?

“The diagnosis of PTSD is generally given to people who have had a traumatic encounter in one single generation...What is the diagnosis for experiencing trauma across several generations?”

– Kevin Washington

If the group is in denial of the traumatic event is the healing possible? The denial occurs at some level because we do not know the stories or more importantly we

have not examined the experiences that could shed some light on our current state of affairs. This denial is strange paradox in that the denial may be seen as a normal way to distance oneself from the pain of the traumatic event however; many of the behaviors that are adopted in response to the trauma are often unnatural.

It is quite normal for one to fight back that which has caused one harm; however, when there is a power differential, to fight back may be seen as abnormal. The behavior of not fighting back may be considered normal under the given circumstances; however, to not assert oneself will most often stifle the natural spiritual and physical growth of life of a people. This inability to fight back against that which is causing one great pain most often results in internal struggles first within the person and then in the group in which the person is a part of.

Due to the uniqueness of the trauma incurred by Afrikan people many, Black Mental Health Specialists are advancing terms such as Post-Traumatic Slavery Disorder and Post Slavery Stress Syndrome. It is hoped that such terms more accurately captures the essence of the struggle that Afrikan people have incurred and continue to be impacted by.

What form of reparations? Reparations and settlements can be divided into monetary and non-monetary responses. Examples of the latter include amnesty, affirmative action, and municipal services such as construction of new medical facilities or the creation of new educational programs. Monetary or non-monetary reparations and settlements can be directed toward the victims individually or collectively. A reparation or settlement directed toward the individual is intended to be compensatory- in other words, to return the victim to the status quo ante. One directed toward the group is designed to be rehabilitative of the community- in other words, to nurture the group's self empowerment or the community's cultural transformation, or at least to improve the conditions under which the victims live.

The claim for reparations go beyond a payment for money. Certainly monetary payments are necessary to rebuild the infrastructure in Africa and the Diaspora, to build Universities, hospitals, etc. and to transfer technology. We can not evaluate the price of millions of lives and even more for dehumanization, shame and suffering. There are recommended claims for an acknowledgment by those enriched from enslavement and colonization, of their guilt in this respect, and admission of their complicity: For example, an apology, a return of artifacts that were stolen from Africa.

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Psychologists and reparations. The psychologists have a major role in the Afrikan/Black Reparations Movement in light of the following factors:

- Afrikans/Blacks being declared to be inferior beings without souls (Papa I)
- Genesis and the Noah/Ham story (Ham is dark and cursed)
- Social Darwinism and the Law of Natural Selection
- Herbert Spencer, Survival of the Fittest: European the most fit and Afrikans/Blacks the least fit.
- Francis Galton and Hereditary Genius or Eugenics: Found that great men inherited not only intellectual ability but also specific types of talents. He promoted racial improvement.
- Ethnical Psychology examined the development of uncivilized races
- Samuel Cartwright, psychiatrist: Developed theories of drapetomania – flight from home, madness and dysaesthesia Aethiopica – insensibility of nerves; habitude of mind found within Enslaved Afrikans/Blacks
- G. Stanley Hall (1904): Africans, Indians, and Chinese as members of adolescent races in a stage of incomplete growth.
- John C. Calhoun in 1844 as Secretary of State: Cited the flawed Census of 1840 (which found Negroes in the North to have a higher occurrence of insanity and idiocy than Negroes in the South) to justify the annexation of Texas and the extension of Afrikan enslavement. He stated that the Negro suffers under the burden of Freedom.
- C. G. Jung a psychiatrist: Stated that the Negro has a whole historical layer less of mind development. He further posited that the primitiveness of the Negro has infected the U. S.
- Lewis Terman revised the IQ test developed by Binet of France in 1916. His basic premise was that mental retardation was extremely common among Spanish-Indians, Mexican families and Negroes.

The Psychologist's/Healer's Role in the Maafa Relief and Reparations Movement: Healers Next Steps

- It has been suggested, there is a need to develop a Psyche (Spirit) Devastation Index to measure the residuals of the Maafa in order to address the long term present day effects:
We must consider the overall health of present day Afrikans and Afrikans of the Diaspora, that is, the Psychological Health, Physical Health and Economic Health. We must examine contemporary socialization patterns to glean an understanding of the Maafa. What words do we use to describe ourselves? How do we relate to one another? How do Afrikan men refer/relate to Afrikan women and how do Afrikan women refer/relate to

Afrikan men? How do Afrikan women refer/relate to other Afrikan women and how do Afrikan men refer/relate to other Afrikan men? What is the state of the Afrikan Community? Let us look at some of the traumatic events that have occurred to Afrikan people within the context of Maafa and let us explore their impact on our relationships with our families and ourselves.

Resources

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Ellangeq: Reparations and Healing for the Harms Done to Alaska Natives

Lisa R. Thomas, PhD



Lisa Thomas, PhD

Ellangeq is one of the “high language words” of the Yup’ik people. The Yup’ik live in southwestern Alaska, in some of the harshest and most remote areas imaginable. The language is beautiful and succinct, requiring many, many English words to translate, because everything depends on and is connected to everything else. *Ellangeq* describes both a state and a process. It means “awareness, consciousness, waking up, being more enlightened to things, seeing things in a different and more mature light, the concept of a more mature worldview as we get more wise....it means looking at something with different eyes, more carefully...after looking at an issue or

problem one can see it for showing us a new way” (M. Stachelrodt, personal communication, February 11, 2002). Many, if not all, indigenous cultures have fashioned their relationships to their world with *Ellangeq*, minimizing harm done to others and to the environment. However, colonial and imperialistic powers have historically disregarded this worldview, often destroying and damaging entire populations and eco systems in the process of domination and control.

This article will briefly discuss the impact of colonialism for Alaska Natives, the psychological harm that has resulted post-contact, and the potential for reparations and healing. However, it is essential that we understand that *what we mean* by colonialism, harm, and reparation may differ according to one’s status in the equation of power and dominance, as well as one’s culture, values and worldviews. According to the Webster’s dictionary (Gove, 1993), colonialism is defined as “the aggregate of various economic, political, and social policies by which an imperial power maintains or extends its control over other areas or peoples”; harm is defined as “physical or mental damage: injury”; and reparation is defined as “the act or

“...Those enduring the colonial process, experiencing the harm, and seeking the reparations may have an entirely different understanding of what these processes are.”

— Lisa Thomas

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process of amending or restoring... for a wrong". We must keep in mind that those enduring the colonial process, experiencing the harm, and seeking the reparations may have an entirely different understanding of what these processes are. Additionally, the colonizing nation must acknowledge that wrongs have been committed, and have resulted in harm in order to truly make amends and reparations that will be critical for healing to take place.

Colonization and historical context. The earliest known human sites in Alaska date back to 10,000-9,000 BC, with evidence of the use of pottery, fishing tools, and whale hunting implements also dating back to pre-BC. The first contact between Alaska Native people and Russian boats, is dated to 1732. This early contact introduced the beginning of rampant disease and the use of alcohol to Alaska Native people. Subsequent contact included Russian fur traders, Russian missionaries, British traders and whalers, and later American missionaries, traders, whalers, gold miners and settlers. In 1867, the U. S. "purchased" the Alaska Territory from Russia. In actuality, Russia only "sold" its holdings of the Russian American Fur Company and did not claim title to any land, occupied or otherwise, in Alaska. However, with statehood in 1958, both federal and state regulations began the precipitous degradation of access to land, resources, and a subsistence lifestyle, which Alaska Native people lived. This was devastating to Alaska Natives as subsistence provided food and commerce, but more importantly, was a spiritual and cultural tie to one's land, one's community, one's ancestors, and one's heirs. In addition to this loss, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established boarding schools in the 1940's, removing children from their families and their home villages. Stories of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, as well as overt racism and prejudice continue to emerge from Alaska Native people who attended these boarding schools. Finally, with the increased presence of non-Native people, Alaska Native people were subjected to racism and exclusionary practices such as being prohibited from rights that other Alaska residents enjoyed (e.g. mining claims, the right to enter and utilize restaurants, stores, etc.).

Psychological and other harms inflicted on Alaska Native peoples. The nature and structure of the relationships between a tribal member, her family, her clan, her Tribe, her community and her traditional homeland are all essential in building an identity as a healthy individual and as a member of the Tribe, past, present and future (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987; Dombrowski, 2001; Emmons, 1991; Goldschmidt & Haas, 1998; Hope, 2000; Langdon, 2000; Soboleff, 2000). When these relationships are compromised or severed, through loss of land and access to the land as well as removal from homes and villages, the physical, mental, spiritual

and cultural health of indigenous people can be at risk for a number of problems, including mental health, physical health, social issues, and behavioral issues (Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; Alaska Federation of Natives [AFN], 1994; AFN, 1999; Blum, Hammon, Harris, Bergeisen, & Resnick, 1992; Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998; Department of Health and Human Services, 2000; Dombrowski, 2001; Duran & Duran, 1995; Gone, in press; Gray & Nye, 2001; Napoleon, 1990; Office of Technical Assessment, 1990; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000; Westermeyer, 2001; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Stubben & LaFramboise, 2001). This can include problems with alcohol and drug abuse as well as the potential for negative consequences resulting from this substance abuse such as higher rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, injuries, death, suicide, homicide, alcohol-related birth defects (often referred to as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Effects), poverty, reduced academic performance, and co-morbid mental health disorders (Bates, Beauvais, Trimble, 1997; DHHS, 2000; Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998; Frank, Moore, & Ames, 2000; Gray & Nye, 2001; May, 1996; Moran, 2001; Napoleon, 1990; Novins, Beals, Shore, & Manson, 1996; O'Neill & Mitchell, 1996; Whitbeck, Hoyt, McMorris, Chen, & Stubben, 2001). However, it is extremely important to point out that many Alaska Native communities and individuals lead healthy, sober and culturally sound lives, and that Alaska Native people are working very hard to heal their own communities.

Reparations. In 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was signed, which conveyed 44 million acres of land and almost 1 billion dollars to Alaska Natives via Native-owned corporations. While some Alaska Natives initially viewed this Act as a victory, it became clear that the issues were much more complicated and problematic. ANCSA, unfortunately, placed monies and lands in corporate structures, in a context (remote, rural, Tribal villages) that was not prepared to manage them, making these holdings vulnerable to outside interests. In addition, ANCSA did *not* protect aboriginal subsistence rights and much of Alaska Native traditional subsistence areas were ceded to state, federal and private interests. As mentioned above, this loss is linked to increased risk for many negative consequences. However, as also mentioned above, Alaska Native people continue, not just to survive, but also to strive to heal themselves and their communities.

Fortunately, there are models in our own profession, psychology, to empower Native communities and increase cultural appropriateness in interactions between Natives and non-Natives (e.g. Fisher & Ball, 2002, 2003; Mohatt et al, 2004). These models require that *all* members of a process are invited to the table with equal influence, and that the context, values and worldview of all parties are understood and respected. Clearly, the next step in working toward full reparation

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of past wrongs and resulting harms requires that we recognize that this land claims issue is far from settled. State, federal entities must work in *partnership* with Alaska Native people to insure that all perspectives are understood and respected in the negotiating process. It is time to return to *Ellangeq*, to bring our vision full-circle, remembering and respecting that physical, mental, spiritual and cultural health of Alaska Native people *cannot* be separated from their lands.

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Tallying Up For Reparations: Asking For New Promises?

Mary Clearing-Sky, PhD - Odawa Mother, Grandmother, and Psychologist

I have no time to write an essay due in five days. But as I drove to Northern Cheyenne across some of the best known Indian land bearing the sites of some of the most infamous acts against Indian people, starting my journey at Bear Butte, crossing many once-bloodied creeks, crossing the Little Missouri River, the Powder River, the route of escape and recapture of many peoples, where memories still breathe, the land and the people (the four-leggeds and wingeds are people too) gave me the words. Please do not change Indian to Native American. You change our name too many times. My Grampa and I are sticking with Indian.

These old ones reminded me of many other promises of reparation. Red Cloud, who traveled this route many times while running from guns with his people told us: “Promises, Red Cloud said, they made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one. They promised to take our land and they took it.” We will leave to the lawyers the legal issues involving Indian land and aboriginal title. We can speak of the social, historical, cultural, psychological and spiritual issues that interface with the topic of reparation.

This they asked me: How can we count the tears? How can we enumerate the losses? How can we measure the grief still undone, tabled while running from guns, muffled by hands over mouths of babes and selves unable to speak or cry the grief; grief choked while rebuilding lives and communities, stuffed on demand of churches, schools, and governments? How do we consider the struggle to hold our natural and beautiful life-ways and languages forbidden and deemed pagan by you?

How do we count the never-felt embrace of grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins buried in pits of many or in lonely boarding school graves thousands of miles away? How do we count the steps of the thousands of Trails of Tears on this land? How do we count the smallpox blankets and unrequested sterilizations? How do we count the ripping from bosoms of our children, sent off to be “saved” from us and assimilated into a “civilized” nation slapped like scotch tape atop all our nations.

How do we count the broken treaties, broken promises. How do we measure the betrayals of our good will and good word? How do we add the mountains, the lakes, the rivers, the forests, the deserts, the mesas, the swamps, the bayous, the beaches, the grasslands, the wind who also weep at ruin you have wrought. Oneida Oren Lyons once reminded the United Nations that no one ever asks for the voice of the

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four-legged and the winged ones. How can we fathom their losses? How do we count the open wounds on our Mother, the Earth, and the disease and death still being wrought from the tailings you spread on our yards?

How can we consider your genocidal policies? War, murder, reservation, relocation, removal of our children, underfunded health and education programs, unallocated funds for pretty-sounding legislation, unfulfilled technical assistance attempted in the 11th hour of a new 20 year promise in the (PL194-638) Self-Determination Act followed by the pointing finger saying, “See, they can’t run their own services!”? How do we comprehend the closure of the national suicide prevention effort as horrendous numbers of suicides were occurring in this last decade? In sum, how do count the rent from a nation and fifty states of squatters, sooners and thieves?

How do we count that we are the first (and according to our lessons will be the last) to be the guardians of this land where your nation stands atop our many nations, and yet are the last to be asked to speak about reparation? How do we measure that still the only apology to the people came not from the government, but from an Indian (BIA Director Kevin Gover, Pawnee, marking the 175th anniversary of the BIA in Sept, 2000) who apologized for the actions and failures to act of the BIA?

What we do know how to count, my child, are the Elders who, thank the Creator, have never quit struggling under the scotch tape to retain and teach our ways. Tell them that that is how we will continue to survive and thrive with or without their promises. We are healing ourselves with our ways. Our relationship with you may begin to heal with a genuine apology accompanying reparation. If reparation for you is dollars, then some of us trust the dollars will be used for healing (similar to our First Nations relatives’ programs).

And, Relatives in government, how do we teach you as you march headlong in the same manner over many peoples? Our lessons, which you told us were pagan, tell us that it is in the balancing of human values that we make healthy communities, that we find justice, that without that balance and justice there can be no peace or security in the world. (Sacred Tree) Perhaps if you can begin making justice here in your nation sitting upon our many nations, you may also begin to envision how

to honor others values, make peace and security across the planet. Genuine attention to valuing the many peoples, to acknowledging and embracing our value differences, genuine attention to balance and healing and to the present and future health of all peoples in the hoop of this nation and the many nations is not an option. It is required for survival, peace and security on the planet.

“It is in the balancing of human values that we make healthy communities, that we find justice... Perhaps if you can begin making justice here in your nation sitting upon our many nations, you may also begin to envision how to honor others' values, make peace and see unity in the world”

— Mary Clearing-Sky

We have survived in a hostile world. Many of us are thriving in a hostile world. Our strength comes from that which you tried to destroy. Perhaps in reparation, but more likely in genuinely embracing all of the worlds' peoples and our Mother, the Earth, rather than its oil, uranium, gold, and diamonds, you will find your peace and survival too. You have our earnest prayers.

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Reparations: Repairing the Psychological Harm The Case for Filipinos and Filipino Americans

A. Marie M. Austria, PhD and Asuncion Miteria Austria, PhD



A. Marie M. Austria, PhD

Brief History. The Philippines was a colony of Spain for over 300 years, from 1521–1898. The Spanish conquest and colonization of the Philippines had been a continuous process of enslavement, brutality, greed, and injustice. Native Filipinos were intimidated into submission and compelled to assume silence (Agoncillo, 1969, p. 69). They were “maligned in the classrooms and were taught not to think, but to follow blindly” (p. 67). Prominent Filipino leaders (e.g., priests, writers, and lawyers) and educated Filipinos were persecuted and killed in public executions following fraudulent charges and mock trials.

The Philippines was ceded by Spain to the United States under the Treaty of Paris signed on December 10, 1898 for \$20 million, in which the Philippines was not consulted as to how such cession would affect its future. During the American occupation, Filipinos learned English and were able to have direct contact with Western culture. This resulted in the neglect of indigenous languages and literatures, and the exclusive study of the West, particularly the U. S. Thus, average educated Filipinos became foreigners in their own country, speaking a language whose nuances were not yet mastered, while at the same time, ignorant of their own cultural heritage. The required teaching of American topics and culture, to the exclusion of those of the Philippines, led to the development of an exceedingly colonial mentality.



Asuncion Miteria Austria, PhD

The colonial mentality caused some Filipinos to despise what was their own, substituting them with things that were American. Filipino children were taught about American history and heroes,

“Filipino children were taught about American history and heroes, but Filipino heroes were not mentioned...This resulted in a generation of Filipinos having a dim view of their history and national figures. Various Filipino scholars believe that colonization has had lasting significant consequences...including alienation and marginalization.”

— Marie & Asuncion Austria

but Filipino heroes were not mentioned, or if mentioned at all, only with condescension (Agoncillo, 1969). This resulted in a generation of Filipinos having a dim view of their history and national figures.

Various Filipino scholars (Strobel, 1997; Lott, 1976) believe that colonization has had lasting significant consequences for those who were colonized, including alienation and marginalization. Colonization has interfered with the development of a healthy Filipino American cultural identity because of

the political and social implications of one's position within the relationships of power in a U. S. society. Strobel (1997) has called the resulting effects of the colonization in the Philippines by the U. S. “internalized oppression.” Strobel (1997) defined this internalized oppression as “...learned self-hatred when they (Filipinos) start to believe that they are not as good as their colonizers ” (p. 63). This internalized oppression may subsequently be passed from one generation to the next.

During the U. S. colonization (1920 to the early 1930's), a wave of Filipinos, consisting of farm laborers and grape pickers, migrated to work in agriculture in Hawaii and California. Filipinos also worked on agricultural fields in Oregon, Washington, Arizona and Montana. They built levees in the San Joaquin Delta and slaved away in fisheries and lumber mills up and down the West Coast in horrid conditions. Many of the first immigrants believed that they would find financial, social, and political security by living in the U. S. Instead, the majority of these immigrants became a cheap labor source for the agricultural industry (Lott, 1976). During this time of servitude, Filipinos faced rampant societal and governmental discrimination. They were barred from voting, owning property or starting businesses of their own in California (Lott, 1976). There was widespread discrimination against Asian groups, such as segregation in the schools. Anti-miscegenation laws in 16 states kept them from legally marrying white women. Until 1947, it was illegal in California for Filipinos to marry whites. In Alaska, cannery workers from the Philippines were segregated and barred from many establishments that hung signs like “No dogs or Filipinos allowed.”

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In early 1942 under Japanese occupation during World War II, Filipinos were subjected to extreme physical and economic oppression, food shortages and starvation, and atrocities such as massacres, looting, and brutal assaults on women. Some Japanese soldiers invented games of recreational rape and torture. The most brutal form of Japanese entertainment was the impalement of Filipino women's vaginas with wooden rods, twigs, and weeds. The Japanese military employed methods of killing that ranged from bayoneting local civilians and POW's, beheading with swords, or burying alive, burning, and freezing their victims. This reign of terror lasted more than three years, during which time, no one could be sure that they would not be arrested for the most minor of offenses to the Japanese military (e.g., not bowing properly to the Japanese sentry at the street corner, or for not bringing their residence certificate) (Agoncillo, 1969).

History of Reparations Claims. There is little documented information available about the government of the Philippines formally seeking reparations from the Spanish and U. S. governments as the result of colonization by both of these countries. The history of reparations from Japan, however, is well documented. Initially, the Philippine government demanded that Japan pay 1.6 billion Pesos for actual damages suffered by the Filipino people under Japanese occupation. The Japanese government rejected this demand, citing that it would not be able to maintain a viable economy if it had to pay all claims to the countries it devastated. Thus, in the 1951 Peace Treaty, there was a provision for reparations payment through services (Yu-Jose, 1998).

In 1956, following four years of negotiations, a final reparations agreement was signed in a peace treaty that provided for payment by Japan within twenty years of a total amount of \$550 million in the form of capital goods and services. Additionally, Japanese private companies would extend to private Filipino firms economic development loans of \$250 million on a commercial basis. Some Filipino government officials criticized the reparations agreement observing that it was not real payment of the damages done by Japan to the Philippines, but rather, an effective means for Japan to expand its trade with the Philippines and exploit its natural resources (Yu-Jose, 1998). The reparations were used primarily for six basic development projects, namely, public works, transportation, industries, agriculture and fishery, electric power, mineral resources, and others (e.g., education, and the salvaging of sunken vessels).

Separately, Filipino and Filipino-American veterans continue to seek equitable veterans' benefits after having served with American soldiers during World War II.

Benefits of Reparations. As with other ethnic minority groups who seek reparations, Filipinos do so for redress for severe wrongdoing committed against them. Quite often the atrocities perpetrated are such that there is no fair or genuinely adequate manner by which to rectify matters between the wrongdoers (or their descendants) and the parties wronged (or their descendants) (Corlett, 2003, p. 149). Despite this, reparations from Spain, the United States, and Japan would be valued by Filipinos as symbolizing admission of wrongdoing and a good faith attempt to right the wrongs. As a practical matter, reparations would contribute greatly to the economic development of the Philippines, which is in dire need of resources to support its ever-growing population.

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Before Reparations, Cease Current Violations: What Psychologists Can Do For Indigenous/Aboriginal Social and Emotional Well-Being

Carlota Ocampo, PhD and Le'a Kanehe, JD, LLM



Carlota Ocampo, PhD

For many of the world's indigenous and aboriginal peoples, psychological harm is best addressed by working to ameliorate their current colonized state and blocking future colonization by nation-states. Psychologists can play an important role in the well-being of indigenous peoples by focusing on relationships between colonization and deteriorating mental health. Put another way, psychologists can help elucidate links between indigenous well-being and land rights, self-determination, language, cultural identity, and freedom to pursue traditional lifestyles.

Reparations will come later, when injustices are past.

Reparations are an appropriate redress when adverse consequences of a grave past injustice affect present-day well-being of victims and their descendants. Descendants of victims of the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans, survivors of the Tuskegee syphilis study, women sterilized under eugenics laws, and Japanese Americans interned during World War II meet the above criteria (no equation of these traumas is intended here).



Le'a Kanehe, JD, LLM

Let us test the case of indigenous peoples. Has colonization adversely affected their psychological well-being? The answer is yes. A considerable body of evidence links deteriorating indigenous mental health to colonization, which imposes radical changes in lifestyle, mobility, livelihood, culture, diet, spirituality, social roles, and community structure. The United Nations and World Health Organization report rising psychophysiological and mental disorders among indigenous peoples, including the world's highest rates of diabetes, cancer, alcoholism, substance abuse,

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social/family violence, suicide, trauma, and psychiatric diagnoses, along with the highest rates of morbidity and mortality.^{1/} This, coupled with lowest access to mental health services, reveals data that are quite alarming: the U.N. reports traumas among Russia's indigenous peoples have increased several hundred percent; psychiatric problems among Maoris of New Zealand, Aborigines of Australia and Torres Straits Islanders are significantly higher than the general population; one-third of Native Pacific Islanders may experience diabetes; and the Guarani-Kaiowa of Brazil suffer among the highest suicide rates in the world.^{2/}

Is colonization a grave past injustice? It is a grave injustice, but is not past. Colonization continues, through various mechanisms: military actions, eviction (forced relocation), invocation of imminent domain, abrogation of treaty protections, denial of collective bargaining status, etc. The Guarani-Kaiowas have directly linked suicides to recent losses of lands to ranchers, via violent action and Brazil's courts.^{3/} Another current colonization effort is exemplified in New Zealand's Foreshore and Seabed Bill (2004), which transfers "public" (e.g., traditional Maori) lands to the crown, while sparing "private" (mostly non-Maori owned) lands, in violation of tikanga (Maori customs and common law) and international human rights norms of racial discrimination.^{4/} For a people whose cultural identity is inseparable from the land, the result will be psychological devastation.

^{1/} For example, see World Health Organization Document EB103/30, December 8, 1998, 103rd Session of the Executive Board Provisional agenda item 8, report by the Secretariat on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

^{2/} Indigenous People: U.N. Concerned About Declining Health. U.N. Wire: December 1, 1999.

^{3/} For example, see the United Nations 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, March 15-April 23, 2004, Agenda Item #9, testimony of the International Indian Treaty Council; for Guarani-Kaiowa testimonies, visit http://www.survival-international.org/guarani_suicides.htm (Survival International).

^{4/} For example, see analysis by Maori attorney Moana Jackson, available at: <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/moana.htm>

Are reparations an answer to ongoing dispossession? What is the scope of reparations? If reparations mean honoring treaties, sacred sites and land rights, sovereignty and self-government, and preservation of language and culture, yes. However, governments generally see reparations as monetary payments. For indigenous and aboriginal peoples, this can be politically tricky, used in bargaining to further terminate land rights. For example, prior to an 1893 American overthrow, Native Hawaiians were internationally recognized as citizens of an independent kingdom. Since passage of an “apology resolution” in 1993, Congress has encouraged “reconciliation” between the U. S. and the Native Hawaiian people, ^{5/}yet pending federal recognition legislation - the “Akaka bill,”^{6/} - has many Native Hawaiian groups concerned. The bill provides no set amount of land or money or any authorization for transfer of jurisdiction of powers (sovereignty or self-governance). In calling for “negotiations”, the bill sets up a process to extinguish existing land claims FOREVER— yet promises nothing in return. This reparations bill is just another tool of colonization.

“Multiculturalism does not generally serve the needs of the world's indigenous peoples in their daily struggle to maintain cultural identities...Blending into the melting pot...represents a subtle form of continued colonization”.

— Carlotta Ocampo & Le'a Kanehe

In multicultural societies, reparations serve as atonement for past wrongs and as means of economic empowerment; psychological benefits result either way. However, multiculturalism does not generally serve the interests of the world's indigenous peoples in their daily struggle to maintain the cultural identities, languages and traditions from which they derive psychological well-being. Blending into the melting pot - an often unspoken reparations

expectation - represents a subtle form of continued colonization. What price can be

^{5/} To acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the January 17, 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, U. S. Public Law 103-150 (1993).

^{6/} If passed, this legislation's official title would be “Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act.” S. 344, H.R. 665, H.R. 4282, available at <http://www.thomas.loc.gov>.

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put on a peoples' loss of sovereignty, self-determination, homeland, and cultural core? For collectively-identified indigenous and aboriginal peoples, settlements paid to individuals today cannot atone for the dispossession suffered by millions of ancestors past and generations yet unborn. One wouldn't talk of reparations to Japanese Americans currently interned or to descendants of Africans if the slave trade were on-going. One would work to end these crimes against humanity. In addition to ethical, well-designed research to elucidate factors in indigenous social and emotional well-being, psychologists can support self-determination, sovereignty, and full access to traditional lands and ways of life for the indigenous peoples of the world.

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Reparations for Japanese Americans

Donna K. Nagata, PhD



Donna K. Nagata, PhD

Shortly after the Japanese military bombed Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the Western portion of the United States. Taking only what they could carry, approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans were ordered into incarceration camps without a trial or individual review. Two-thirds were U. S. citizens. Japanese Americans lived an average of 2 to 3 years in the isolated camps surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards. The mass incarceration was portrayed as a military necessity to guard against potential acts of disloyalty that might be com

mitted by individuals sympathetic to Japan. However, the 1980 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) investigated the circumstances surrounding the incarceration and concluded that the decisions to imprison “were not driven by analysis of military conditions” but rather, were shaped by “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership (CWRIC, 1997, p. 18).”

The decisions to imprison Japanese Americans were shaped by “race prejudice”, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.
– Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1997

The incarceration uprooted entire communities and caused severe economic damage through lost jobs, income, possessions, and property. The loss of freedom and suspicion of disloyalty affected all incarcerated, especially those who were American citizens imprisoned by their own country based only on ethnic heritage. Racism underlying the incarceration was a powerful influence as well. Although the United States was at war with Germany and Italy, neither German Americans nor Italian Americans faced mass internment. Researchers note that many Japanese Americans experienced lingering feelings of shame and self-doubt following their incarceration (Mass, 1986; CWRIC, 1997) and, among men, an increased post-war risk for cardiovascular disease has been identified (Jensen, 1997). Additional effects extending into the next generation born after the war included the loss of Japanese

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language, culture, and financial resources. Offspring of incarcerated also experienced feelings of anger and sadness around their parents' unjust treatment and a sense of vulnerability around their own ethnic identity (Nagata, 1993).

Silence shrouded the topic of the incarceration for decades within the Japanese American community. However, the civil rights movements of the 1960s stimulated an increased ethnic pride and Japanese Americans began taking pilgrimages to former camp sites. During the 1970s the first redress legislation was introduced but was unsuccessful. Two years later, in hopes of preventing future unjust imprisonments, Japanese Americans successfully lobbied to revoke Executive Order 9066, which had remained in existence after the war. By the end of the decade, Japanese Americans were increasingly committed to the idea of redress but disagreed about the best strategy to pursue. A commission approach was eventually selected, resulting in the 1980 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. After hearing testimonies from over 750 witnesses and studying extensive documents and records, the commission concluded that the imprisonment had not been a military necessity and was, instead, a "grave injustice" (CWRIC, 1997; p. 18)." It recommended that: 1) Congress pass a resolution recognizing the wartime injustice, 2) an offer of apology be extended, 3) \$20,000 be paid to each surviving incarcerated, and 4) a fund be established to educate the public about what had occurred. Efforts to pursue redress legislation continued through the 1980s and momentum for the movement grew within the Japanese American community, inside Congress, and in the broader society. Additional support came when the legal cases of three Japanese Americans convicted of violating the original wartime curfew and exclusion orders were reopened and revealed evidence that the federal government had intentionally withheld information that the incarceration was not a military necessity (Maki, Kitano, & Berthold, 1999). President Ronald Reagan eventually signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, authorizing redress for Japanese Americans who had been wrongfully incarcerated over forty years earlier. After two more years fighting to obtain appropriation funds, the first redress checks were issued in 1990, accompanied by a letter of apology signed by President George Bush.

Although no legislative action could undo the painful experiences surrounding the incarceration, the redress movement had important psychological benefits. First, it brought this chapter of American history into public view and gave Japanese Americans the opportunity to share their stories with others. Second, the government's public acknowledgment of wrongdoing provided many incarcerated with a sense of relief and helped lift the lingering sense of stigma from the war.

Some also reported feeling an increased faith in the government. The process of seeking redress created a sense of empowerment among Japanese Americans as a group and strengthened intergenerational bonds within their communities. In this sense, redress had positive impacts on those who lived through the incarceration as well as younger generations.

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Mexican Repatriates and Mental Health: Silent Wounds and Unanswered Echoes

Ricardo E. Gonsalves, EdD



Ricardo E. Gonsalves, EdD

With the onset of the Great Depression the U. S. government sought to alleviate the crushing poverty experienced by the working class by displacing over one million Mexicans and U. S. citizens of Mexican heritage. Government authorities in California and other states implemented violent raids upon Mexican communities in an attempt to repatriate Mexicans “back” across the border and, through their removal, obtain land and jobs for Anglo-Americans, (Balderrama and Rodriguez, 1995; Chinea, 1996). However, the potential psychological trauma experienced by victims of forced repatriation to Mexico remains a mystery that has yet to be explored.

There is also the possibility that a legacy of trauma continues to haunt the victim’s families causing a ripple of mental disorder across generations.

The suffering inflicted by the mass displacement was pervasive both in scale and duration. As noted in the following excerpt of a proposed reparation bill (SB 427) sponsored by State Senator Joe Dunn of California;

- (a) Beginning in 1929, government authorities and certain private sector entities in California and throughout the United States undertook an aggressive program to forcibly remove persons of Mexican descent from the United States.
- (b) Between 1929 and 1944, it is estimated that two million people of Mexican descent were forcibly relocated to Mexico, including approximately 1.2 million who had been born in the United States, including the State of California, and were United States citizens.
- (c) Throughout California, massive raids were conducted on Mexican-American communities, resulting in the clandestine removal of thousands of people, many of whom were never heard from again.

(d) Approximately 400,000 citizens and legal residents of Mexican descent were forcibly removed from California to Mexico

To date the proposed bill has yet to make any progress and is opposed by governor Schwarzenegger who has vetoed the legislation. However, supporters of the legislation will continue to present the bill until it receives consideration. There is yet another piece of legislation, SB 37 that attempts to establish a two year period for victims of repatriation to file claims for damages.

The deportations were part of an ongoing policy of terror with a goal of displacing the immigrant and indigenous residents of the land. For example, a recent article in the New York Times discusses evidence of Texas Rangers slaying Mexicans as an early form of ethnic cleansing. As noted by Blumenthal a “damning but little-known Texas legislative investigation of 1919, link the Rangers to the ‘evaporations’ of up to 5,000 Mexican insurgents and Tejanos - Texans of Mexican origin - whose lands in the Rio Grande Valley were coveted by Anglo settlers”. (Blumenthal, 2004). The raids and forced repatriations exemplify a tradition of violence and psychological warfare against Mexicans and their descendants.

“The deportations were part of an ongoing policy of terror with a goal of displacing the immigrant and indigenous residents of the land. For example...a Texas legislative investigation of 1919 links the [TX} Rangers to the “evaporations” of up to 5000 Mexicans insurgents and ...Texans of Mexican origin whose lands in the Rio Grande Valley were coveted by Anglo settlers.”

— Ricardo E. Gonsalves

The mass deportations of the 1930’s were specifically designed to inflict psychological harm. This is illustrated by Chinae who points out that “The United States Secretary of Labor, William N. Doak, ...launched a nationwide ‘scare’ campaign against Mexicans. Local Immigration officers, law enforcement agencies, and slanted newspaper stories teamed up to publicize deportation raids to serve as a ‘psychological gesture’ to frighten aliens, Mexicans in particular, to leave the United States” (Chinae, 1996). The use of psychological destabilization was employed in the famous La Placita raid in Los Angeles where 400 Mexicans were rounded up and deported. As noted by Balderrama and Rodriguez, “The Placita was chosen for its maximum psychological impact in the INS’s war of nerves against the Mexican community”. (Balderrama and Rodriguez; 1995 p57.)

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The raids frequently relied on the use of surprise tactics in which individuals or families were abducted off the street or out of their homes. Again, this is an early example of “the disappeared”, a situation where mothers, fathers, children and loved ones suddenly cease to exist without explanation. Many individuals and families who were repatriated to Mexico were born and raised in the U. S. and faced the trauma of being in a land in which they did not speak the language nor were familiar with the customs. In many cases the raids forced people to leave with only the clothes on their back and without the opportunity to contact a friend or relative. As noted by Raymond Rodriguez, the deportees and those who returned faced trauma at the point of abduction, in the long and tortuous journey to Mexico, and upon return re-entry to the U. S. (R. Rodriguez, personal communication, October 23, 2004). In general, the assault on the community was an assault on the family with repercussions shared by all.

To my knowledge there have been no psychological studies documenting the effects of forced repatriation upon the remaining survivors of that tragedy. Anecdotal comments provided by some of those who were interviewed indicate that they did suffer from self-reported psychological distress including nightmares, anxiety, alcoholism, insomnia and depression (R. Rodriguez, personal communication, October 23, 2004). However, anecdotal evidence is not scientific data. It is imperative that research be conducted as the legacy of trauma could extend across generations and continue to impact the lives of individuals, families and communities.

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