

# Sins of the Past

This week a House subcommittee holds a hearing on reparations for slavery.

The issue is a far left favorite because it does a number of things. It reinforces the radical belief that the United States was founded by racist white men who installed a system whereby white guys would run everything and blacks, women and others would be exploited.

It also defines poverty among minorities as not the fault of individuals but of an unjust society that exists to this day.

Personal responsibility does not count when the legacy of slavery dropped a curtain of oppression on the black race and there is no recovering from that. At least in the eyes of the radical left.

According to a poll taken by Marist College, 58 percent of African-Americans favor reparations for slavery and other historical injustice. Just 8 percent of white Americans support reparations.

That eight percent must include most of the democrats running for president because only Bernie Sanders has clearly stated opposition to reparations. The others either support it, or want to "have that conversation."

Which they really don't want to have but are too gutless to oppose a bad policy.

I say that having some experience with brutal injustice as far as my ancestors are concerned. According to The Freeman's Journal published in Dublin, my ancestors living in County Cavan, Ireland had their land seized by British authorities after failing to pay the onerous land tax. The Reilly family had no funds as the famine whipped out their crops. In a dispatch dated April 6, 1849, the correspondent witnessing the

forced evictions writes: "The scene was heart rending in the extreme ... manhood was stripped of means, and left to pine in want and misery. Women might be seen worn to skeletons with the clammy dew of death on their emaciated brows. Not content with sending these miserable creatures adrift in the world, they (the British) set fire to their once comfortable dwellings."

The devastation to my ancestors led twin 16 year old boys, James and John, to sail on a "coffin ship" from Ireland to Brooklyn where they made their way in a hostile country without family or friends.

The point is that historical injustice has existed since the dawn of man. You cannot right the serial wrongs and it is brutally unfair to impose burden on innocent people in an attempt to do so.

Millions of white people in America were harmed by the Civil War when their ancestors died in the conflict that freed the slaves. To demand their tax dollars for reparations today or those of any contemporary American is unjust.

Native Americans surely deserve reparations if African-Americans receive them. And just the other day there was an oped in the New York Times suggesting that homosexuals receive reparations as well.

In my opinion, there is no way reparations will become policy unless radical leftists take control of the country. Cash for victims would cause far more damage than benefit as it would further divide Americans along racial lines.

Clear-thinking people understand the horror of slavery and the damage it has done to all black Americans. The federal and state governments have an obligation to help minorities in constructive ways. But cash payments and property grants will not be constructive.

In 1975, Joe Biden weighed in on the reparation issue saying: "I don't feel responsible for the sins of my father or grandfather ... and I'll be damned if I feel responsible to pay for what happened 300 years ago."

Too harsh, in my opinion. And Biden would never say that now in the age of Political Correctness.

Summing up, it is time to put aside grievance and work together for a stronger, more just country. And, as Joe Biden surely knows, reparations would not accomplish that.

They just cause more strife.