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**Chinweizu, War, And Reparations  
Worrill's World  
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As the Houston Chapter of the National Black United Front has so eloquently stated, we must stand against the war, because "we understand that Global White Supremacy is the driving force behind much of America's foreign and domestic policy."

The Houston Chapter of NBUF proclaims, we must say "No To War! YES TO REPARATIONS!" We should listen to the wisdom of our great ancestor, the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey on the question of war. Garvey said, "If the war is not yours... Never go into war foolishly. Never sacrifice your life without good results for your cause. War is the best time to take advantage of your transgressor, whoever he may be. Whenever he is engaged in war and he promises you nothing, you will never get anything from him in time of peace."

All of the forces that represent the world of white supremacy that oppose the just demands of African people for reparations will not prevail in their efforts to disrupt, diminish, or stifle the mass momentum that we are witnessing by African people in America, and throughout the world, who are organizing, day-by-day and block-by-block, around the issue of reparations just because they are involved and obsessed in an unjust war in Iraq.

On April 27, 1993 the great African scholar and thinker Chinweizu, presented a paper at the second plenary session of the First Pan African Conference on Reparations in Abuja, Nigeria. I think it is timely in the face of the attacks on the Reparations Movement and the United States' involvement in the War on Iraq, to refer to the keen insights that Chinweizu presented in this paper. Chinweizu put forth the following historical background:

"Contemplating the condition of the Black World is vexatious to the spirit: that is probably the strongest impetus which has brought us all here today."

For many centuries, and especially in the last five, the Black skin has been a badge of contempt. For instance, it used to be said in Brazil that if you are white and running down the street, you are an athlete, but if you are Black and running down the street, you are a thief! And in most parts of the world today, if you are white and rich, you are honored and celebrated, and all doors fly open as you approach; but if you are Black and rich, you are under suspicion, and handcuffs and guard dogs stand ready to take you away.

Yes, the Black skin is still the badge of contempt in the world today, as it has been for nearly 2,000 years. To make sure it does not remain so in the 21st century is perhaps the overall purpose of our search for reparations.

We are gathered here today, thinkers and activists who want to change Black People's condition in the world. What things do we need to change, both in the world and in ourselves, if we are to accomplish the mission of reparations? What changes must we make in structures, in psychology, in historical consciousness and much else?

We might begin by noting that Blacks are not the only people in the world who are seeking, or who have sought, reparations. In fact, by only now pressing our claim for reparations, we are latecomers to a varied company of peoples in the Americas, in Asia, and in Europe. Here is a partial catalogue of reparations, paid and pending, which are 20th and 21st century precedents for reparations to the Black World.

In the Americas, from Southern Chile to the Arctic north of Canada, reparations are being sought and being made. The Mapuche, an aboriginal people of Southern Chile, are pressing for the return of their lands, some 30 million hectares of which were, bit by bit, taken away and given to European immigrants since 1540. The Inuit of Arctic Canada, more commonly known as the Eskimo, were in 1992 offered restitution of some 850,000 sq. miles of their ancestral lands, their home range for millennia before European invaders arrived there.

In the USA, claims by the Sioux to the Black Lands of South Dakota are now in the courts. And the US Government is attempting to give some 400,000 acres of grazing land to the Navaho, and some other lands to the Hopi in the southwest of the USA.

In 1988, the US Government admitted wrongdoing in interning some 120,000 Japanese-Americans under Executive Order 9066 of 1942, during WWII, and awarded each internee \$20,000.

In Europe, after WWII, the victors demanded reparations from Germany for all damages to civilians and their dependents, for losses caused by the maltreatment of prisoners of war, and for all non-military property that was destroyed in the war. In 1921, Germany's reparations liability was fixed at 132 billion gold marks. After WWII, the victorious Allies filed reparations claims against Germany for \$320 billion. Reparations were also levied on Italy and Finland. The items for which these claims were made included bodily loss, loss of liberty, loss of property, injury to professional careers, dislocation and forced emigration, time spent in concentration camps because of racial, religious and political persecution. Others were the social cost of war, as represented by the burden from loss of life, social disorder, and institutional disorder; and the economic cost of war, as represented by the capital destroyed and the value of civilian goods and services foregone to make war goods. Payments were made in cash and kind— goods, services, capital equipment, land, farm and forest products; and penalties were added for late deliveries.

Perhaps the most famous case of reparations was that paid by Germany to the Jews. These were paid by West Germany to Israel for crimes against Jews in territories controlled by Hitler's Germany, and to individuals to indemnify them for persecution. In the initial phase, these included \$2 billion to make amends to victims of Nazi persecution; \$952 million in personal indemnities; \$35.70 per month per inmate of concentration camps; pensions for the survivors; \$820 million to Israel to resettle 50,000 Jewish emigrants from lands formerly controlled by Hitler. All that was just the beginning. Other, and largely undisclosed, payments followed. And even in 1992, the World Jewish Congress in New York announced that the newly unified Germany would pay compensation, totaling \$63 million for 1993, to 50,000 Jews who suffered Nazi persecution but had not been paid reparations because they lived in East Germany.

With such precedents of reparations to non-Black peoples in four continents, it would be sheer racism for the world to discountenance reparations claims from the Black World."


***Let us continue to keep building the Reparations Movement throughout the African World Community!***


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