168 Boston Hill Road

Andover, CT 06232

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Editor

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P.O. Box 73

Glastonbury, CT 06033

To The Editor:

I believe no single person can be wrong about everything. Sam Prentice aspires to disprove this. His arguments about reparations are absurd, misinformed, and insulting. To debate a subject, we should actually understand what it's about.

Lets start with, "They want white Americans to engage in self-flagellation for events occurring over a century ago..." No, reparation proponents are not asking "white Americans" for anything. They are looking for apologies and recompense from institutions, not from individuals. If Mr. Prentice chooses to engage in self-flagellation, it's for personal reasons.

Reparations involve two things: apologizing for past behavior and atoning for harm.

Reparations have been made in America for slavery, for stealing land from Native Americans, for internment of Japanese Americans, for police brutality and torture, for illegal medical experiments and forced sterilizations. Churches, states, banks, colleges, and others have provided reparations for enabling slavery. Germany, Japan, Austria, and France have made reparations for WWII atrocities. (UMass maintains a wonderful reparations list: https://guides.library.umass.edu/reparations).

Most American reparations go to racial minorities. This makes sense. As a result of long-standing deliberately racist policies, there remains intractable racial discrimination in housing, the criminal justice system, college admissions, and elsewhere. Systemic racial biases demonstrate the enormous shadow of slavery, our country's original sin. Reparations could be one small partial fix for the problem.

Mr. Prentice's focus on the Democratic party's history is tedious. Yes, it should apologize for connections to slavery; I don't know if it ever has. Ignore his lies about Chicago; I doubt even he believes them. But we should note the absurdity of his claiming Democrats interned the Japanese. It was the U.S. government; the President's party is irrelevant.

As usual, Mr. Prentice ignores facts and makes absurd conclusions. Perhaps he's the exception that proves my rule.

Sincerely,

Scott Sauyet,

[scott@sauyet.com](mailto:scott@sauyet.com)

(860) 742-9800 (H)

(860) 335-2869 (C)