by David Gilbert

redneckrevolt.org

historically

WORKING CLASS

LOOKING AT THE WHITE
classical theories of class by leaving into cultural or biological determinism.
not be found by some magical leap of abstract thought – either by working
process of organizing a large number on a revolutionary basis. This issue will
not only set the terms of the term “white working class” but also reconsider the
nature and consciousness of the white working class as a whole. This is both real about the
movement and an analysis, and even less realistic. This is both real about the

significantly modify the people particularly working-class whites. In
this context, the opponents dismiss the possibility of organizing
revolutionary consciousness among whites. We have often, however, taken

justifies the general leftist position of the white working class and our fight against

its central theme. This has emerged as a new position by the left. The main

Historically, we must admit that the identity with the oppressor nation has been

part of a “white” oppression nation.
We must use our tools of analysis (materialism) to understand concretely how this contradiction developed historically. But an historical view cannot be static. In seeing how certain forces developed, we must also look (dialectically) at under what conditions and through what means the contradiction can be transformed.


To analyze this development we need to understand that any method of exploiting labor requires a system of social control. There were a series of servile rebellions that threatened the plantation system in the period preceding the transition to racially designated chattel slavery and white supremacy. Allen cites numerous examples in his book to demonstrate this. For instance, Bacon's rebellion, which began in April 1676, was a struggle within the ruling class over "Indian policy," but Bacon resorted to arming white and Black servants, highlighting the extent to which the plantation bourgeoisie needed to expand their system of social control.

The 20-year period of servile rebellions made the issue of social control urgent for the plantation bourgeoisie, at the same time as they economically needed to move to a system of perpetual slavery. As Allen says, "The non-slavery of white labor was the indispensable condition for the slavery of black labor." The 20-year period of servile rebellions made the issue of social control urgent for the plantation bourgeoisie, at the same time as they economically needed to move to a system of perpetual slavery. As Allen says, "The non-slavery of white labor was the indispensable condition for the slavery of black labor."

A series of laws were passed and practices imposed that forged a qualitative distinction between white and Black labor. In 1661, a Virginia law imposed twice the penalty time for escaped English servants compared to African servants. White women were also subject to more stringent laws. For example, heavy penalties were imposed on white women who bore children fathered by Africans.

A system of white supremacy was historically constructed. The tangibility of a revolutionary alternative as opposed to the more immediate material privileges is historically dependent on the structure of the means of production and those who own the means of production and those who control the means of production. The distinction between those who control the means of production and those who own the means of production must be realized about the history of white supremacy.

In sum, revolutionaries must be realistic about the history of white supremacy, the impact of material wealth and dominance, and the mushrooming of job and status differentials among workers, both those who control the means of production and those who live by the sale of labor power. A system of white supremacy that was historically constructed can be historically deconstructed. A key factor for whites is the tangibility of a revolutionary alternative as opposed to the more immediate material privileges.

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We would argue that the women's movement and the social movements, to be revolutionary, must relate to racism, national liberation, and Third World leadership. But we should add that, as with women's liberation, the social movements must be looking for ways to extend their base into the working class on an anti-racist and pro-women's liberation basis.

The Lesbian-Gay-AIDS movement has been of particular urgency, militancy and importance in this period. The struggle around AIDS has pushed the radical sector toward the need to ally with Third World leadership. The social movements are more coherent and organized, and their effectiveness on the world stage gives promise that they can express the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of the whole system. Of course these movements have been, almost from their beginning, in anti-systemic struggles, but would also serve to redefine and revitalize class issues and class struggle itself.

Lessons from the 60's certainly don't offer a blueprint for the 90's, which are a very different decade. Clearly we are not now in a period of progressive social upheaval. Nevertheless, what we need now is leadership, not simply leadership of the middle and lower classes, but leadership of the working class. Peace, ecology, the homeless, health care, education all speak to important pieces that express the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of the whole system. Of course these movements have been, almost from their beginning, in anti-systemic struggles, but would also serve to redefine and revitalize class issues and class struggle itself.

We cannot build a true feminist movement if we ignore the ways in which we are ourselves part of the problem. We must be anti-racist, national, and Third World leaders. We must be able to lead the women's movement and the social movements to be revolutionary, to lead the nation in a national leadership and pro-women’s leadership basis.

And yet, if we look at the whole thing as a whole, we see a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The social movements have been, almost from their beginning, in anti-systemic struggles, but would also serve to redefine and revitalize class issues and class struggle itself. Peace, ecology, the homeless, health care, education all speak to important pieces that express the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of the whole system. Of course these movements have been, almost from their beginning, in anti-systemic struggles, but would also serve to redefine and revitalize class issues and class struggle itself.
servants. The English Parliament, in 1717, passed a law making transportation to bond-servitude in the plantation colonies a legal punishment for crime. Another example of this conscious design is the system of “free Negroes” who were not only allowed to remain free but were also allowed to pass as free whites, thus enriching the plantation economy.

It would be important to analyze the impact of this system on the development of early capitalism. The English Parliament, in 1717, passed a law making transportation to bond-servitude in the plantation colonies a legal punishment for crime. Another example of this conscious design is the system of “free Negroes” who were not only allowed to remain free but were also allowed to pass as free whites, thus enriching the plantation economy.

Allen refers to, but doesn’t fully develop, the impact of white supremacy on the white laborers. His general analysis is that by strengthening capitalist rule it reinforced exploitation of whites too: “... workers from their proletarian class struggle alongside Blacks and to bind them more tightly to their own ruling class.

While a youth movement in itself can’t be sufficient, the promising success of RYM within its realm does suggest some lessons: 1) the role culture can play in building cross-class movements; 2) the value of looking for potential points of intersection of interests of whites with the advance of national ... women, while eschewing the name “feminism” , have actively adapted and adopted the goals and struggles of the movement.
Large numbers of working class youth did get involved in the movement. At the high point, millions took to the streets in the wake of the 1971 invasion of Cambodia and the killing of students at Kent State University in Ohio and at the University of California at Los Angeles. But it was a movement that could not sustain itself in the long run. SDS, which correctly formulated the RYM strategy in December, 1968, was already splintered apart by May 1971. The dissolution of SDS, which was precipitated by the movement's failure to sustain itself, marked the end of the RYM strategy as a political force in the United States. The movement went into a crisis in 1968 because it came face to face with the terrifying reality of imperialism's power. RYM was a creative and realistic strategy to extend the base and power of the movement. But it needed to be joined by an equally strong politics on women's liberation. But for all of its value, RYM meant abandoning responsibility for building a movement that could sustain militant struggle against imperialism.

DuBois' work is a classic study, an absolutely essential reading to understanding U.S. history. The book deals not only with the Reconstruction period that followed the Civil War but also with the War of 1861-1865 and with the development of the Black Freedom Movement. In his classic study, DuBois argues that the slaves were not freed by Lincoln's or by the Union's benevolence. The slaves were freed because their labor was needed to deplete the South of labor for its wartime economy. Secondly, they volunteered of their own accord and were not forced into the Union Army. The decision to use Black troops came only when Lincoln realized that he needed to use Black troops in order to win the war. While DuBois did not apply only to slaves, the principles he laid out in 1863 are still relevant today. The parallels between the struggle for Black freedom in the 19th century and the struggles for civil rights in the 20th century are striking. DuBois' work is a classic study, an absolutely essential reading to understanding U.S. history.
W.E.B. DuBois' Black Reconstruction 1860-1880

DuBois' work is a classic study, an absolutely essential reading to understanding U.S. history. The book deals not only with the Reconstruction period that followed the Civil War but also with the War itself, which was a turning point in the history of the United States. There were important changes in the social structure of the post-Civil War era.

The slaves were not freed by Lincoln's or by the Union's benevolence. The slaves were freed because the South was depleted of labor for its wartime economy. Secondly, they volunteered out of necessity to survive and to help the Union win the war. This is evident in the Union army's recruitment of African American soldiers.

The possibility of a Black reconstruction was defeated by a systematic uprooting of labor, with the Reconstruction period marking a new period of unbridled commodification and dehumanization of Black people.

The New Left did have an international strategy, for extending the movement and deepening its class base, but it was abandoned at the very moment it was achieving stunning success. The Revolutionary Young Movement (RYM) was deeply committed to involving broader working class sectors without losing the political focus on anti-war, anti-racism, and militancy.

By the late 1960s, the growing disaffection and anger about the war in Vietnam provided a unifying focus and sense of identity for all the disaffected. The war in Vietnam was seen as a reflection of the war at home, and the movement against it grew in strength and scope.

The main base for the anti-imperialist movement of the 60s was a social composition of youth, heavily impacted and in many ways generated by Black culture. As the movement developed, it involved women and freed African American men, and it intersected with those of national liberation; the contagious effect of victorious revolutions and liberatory visions.

In summary, the Black Reconstruction was a significant departure in U.S. history, with its focus on the role of African Americans in the post-Civil War era. The movement was driven by the desire to extend the gains of the Civil War and to establish a new social order, one that would be more just and equitable for all people.
The movement of the 1960's showed the potential for positive response from whites to the rise of national liberation struggles, along with a desire for a more humane and cooperative society. As the war in Vietnam dragged on, increasing numbers of working class youth became involved in the movement. This fledgling success and glimmer of potential of the 60's also provided some historical lessons that we have not done nearly enough to analyze and codify. The movement involved more than the traditional units of protest in the labor movement - primarily through the genuine efforts of the various civil rights organizations, and the growing pressure of social consciousness. The role of the student movement was also critical, particularly in advancing cultural politics that were often negatively viewed by authorities. The impact of the arts was enormous, and the cultural revolution played a major role in furthering the struggle. DuBois presents two main reasons: 1) Poor whites were provided some non-laboring jobs as overseers, slave-drivers, members of slave patrols. (DuBois doesn't indicate what percentage of poor whites were not without some basis. (About 1/4 of the Southern white population were petty bourgeois, small farmers). "The result was that the system was held stable and intact by the poor white..."

"The real reason the South was held stable and intact by the poor white..."
These were really straight out murderous race riots against the local Black population. For DuBois, the position of the Northern working class appears somewhat irrational. Freed slaves did not mộably return to the South because the South was a place of slavery, where the existence of a slave class severs wages of competition. But in this sense competition plays itself out at a lower level. On the other hand, as based in the material basis of wages, labor organization to block ag expansion based on a market organization of working people forms a system based on competition. DuBois seems to lack understanding of competition and its impact on wage levels. In the past 12 years, the painful setbacks have shown that the movement of socialism is not automatically determined by the working-class experience. In the second decade of the century, the working-class movement can be said to have regained its momentum. The powerful and potent force of socialism has again emerged. We can see that the struggle for socialism being led by the working class is becoming more realistic. The struggle for socialism with the Third World struggles has become our top priority for both humanitarian and strategic reasons. The more we can do to get imperialism off their backs, the better the chances toward a genuine long-term emancipation of working people from a system based on exploitation, dehumanization, and war.

In the 60's and 70's, it appeared as though the rapid advance of national liberation was remaking the world in the direction of socialism. In the past 12 years, the painful setbacks have shown that we have no clear guidelines as to when, how, or even if these struggles can lead to socialism. While it is discouraging to no longer have a defined outline for the triumph of world revolution, the human stake in the outcome of the social crises and struggles does not allow us the luxury of demoralization. We have to make our struggle with the Third World struggles for a more intelligent and directed effort to maximize the potential for humanitarian and liberatory change.

The struggle with the Third World struggles has become our top priority for both humanitarian and strategic reasons. The more we can do to get imperialism off their backs, the better the chances toward a genuine long-term emancipation of working people from a system based on exploitation, dehumanization, and war.
Under economic pressure, the spontaneous tendency is to fight harder for white supremacy. While the absolute value of privilege might decrease, the relative value is usually increasing as poor people are forced to fight harder for privileges and power that have become more scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to place severe restrictions on the expansion of the working class. For example, the Reconstructions of 1865 and 1877 in the South were marked by the election of Jim Crow policies, which meant a lot of democratic reforms, but also a lot of economic pressures. Important new Black Impacts on Southern politics. In the South, African American workers, including those with the same level of education and skills, found themselves in a very similar position to the Reconstruction of 1865, where they were able to fight for their rights and demand better conditions in the South. Nevertheless, the reality of the thousands of armed Black troops all showed the effectiveness of the Civil War in the South.

Rarely have major sectors of the white working class been won over to revolutionary consciousness based on a reformist interest. Imperialism in ascendancy has been able to offer them more bread and butter than the workers. This has been the case in the South, where the Reconstruction of 1865 and 1877 allowed the African American workers to fight for their rights and demand better conditions in the South. Nevertheless, the reality of the thousands of armed Black troops all showed the effectiveness of the Civil War in the South.

Further, this issue cannot be treated in isolation from the other main pillar of white supremacy – the availability of land based on the genocide of the Native Americans. It is doubtful that the capitalist system can deliver land to the African American workers. Instead, the new possibilities for Black labor in the South are tied to the reality of the thousands of armed Black troops all showed the effectiveness of the Civil War in the South.

In any case, the predominant position among poor whites is to oppose the spread of slavery but did not favor abolition. These positions were punctuated by occasional race riots, but did not lead to a solid alliance between poor whites and Black workers. After the Civil War, the defeat of the slaveholders and the presence of the Union Army, the African American workers were able to fight for their rights and demand better conditions in the South. Nevertheless, the reality of the thousands of armed Black troops all showed the effectiveness of the Civil War in the South.
The basis for an alliance seems clear. The basic problem of Reconstruction was economic; the kernel of the economy was land. Both freed slaves and poor whites had an interest in acquiring land. It would seem logical to have an alliance to expropriate the old plantation owners.

DuBois gives several reasons why this alliance didn’t come to fruition: 1) Poor whites were determined to keep Blacks from access to the better land from which slavery had driven the white peasants. 2) Black leaders were treated leniently. In short, white labor saw a threat to their racial prerogatives in every advance of the Blacks.

These reasons were all very real. However, it is not clear on the face of it why they should override the potential for joint expropriation of the plantation owners. Despite the importance of black power, there is no indication that the Union Army developed sufficient strength to support the black power and Reconstruction movements. (See Vincent Harding, There Is A River) Thus died the promise of “40 acres and a mule.”

Thus, DuBois’ characterization of Reconstruction as a “dictatorship of labor” backed by the Union Army seems overdrawn. He is much more on the mark when he says “It was inconceivable, therefore, that the masters of Nonwhites would be in a position to have an alliance with the freedmen. The kernel of the economy was land. Both freed slaves and poor whites had an interest in acquiring land.”

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This method, however, fails to take account of the growing number of families where the woman's wages are the primary income. The methodological question also relates to the potential for women's oppression to be a source for a progressive current within the white working class.

In a way, Sakai puts forward a direct negation of the opportunist "Marxist" position that makes class designation everything and liquidates the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nation. ... of privileges relative to Third World workers – can not be parlayed into a history of "revolutionary class struggle". Class consciousness can not be defined solely by economic demands. At its heart, it is a movement toward the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. "Proletariat internationalism" – solidarity with all other exploited and oppressed – is a necessary and essential feature of revolutionary struggle.

Furthermore, the culture of a more or less unified, supra-class, white supremacist outlook is also a very important factor. That culture is a reflection of a common history as part of an interdependent economy. That culture is a reflection of a common history as part of an interdependent economy. All the above considerations, however, do not provide a complete class analysis. There are other aspects of people's relationship to the mode of production which are important, and they are also affected by the growing number of families where the woman's wages are the primary income. This method, however, fails to take account of the growing number of families where the woman's wages are the primary income. The methodological question also relates to the potential for women's oppression to be a source for a progressive current within the white working class.

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The 30-year history clearly shows that the alignment with white supremacy – which has predominated over the revolutionary class consciousness – is a necessary and essential feature of revolutionary struggle. Looking at the development of economic demands, class consciousness can not be defined solely by economic demands. At its heart, it is a movement toward the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. "Proletariat internationalism" – solidarity with all other exploited and oppressed – is a necessary and essential feature of revolutionary struggle.

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The position of common labor was greatly weakened since their strikes and violence could not succeed with skilled labor and engineers to keep the machinery going. In the South, the poor whites who were in a minority were engaged in cultivating cotton and tobacco, which were the main crops. In the North, on the other hand, the black proletariat was engaged in manufacturing and transportation. DuBois documents state by state the war of terror that defeated Reconstruction. Here, I will provide one example: In Texas, during the height of the war, there were an average of 600 lynchings per month. Black people were living in a state of fear, where they were not able to express their opinions freely. Reconstruction was simply defeated with the complicity of Northern capitalists, who supported the Ku Klux Klan and other bands of terror. This was a clear example of how the system of capitalism was able to maintain its power through violence. DuBois also notes that this was an example of how white supremacy was maintained through violence. Sakai takes a definite and challenging position. His view is that the masses of whites have advanced themselves primarily by oppressing Third World people—through imperialism and colonial policies. He believes that it is important for us to grapple with these issues and to apply those lessons to our current conditions. His view is that anti-imperialism and anti-racism are essential for a truly democratic society.

What conclusions about the white working class can we draw from this history? Sakai's general view is that the masses of whites have advanced themselves primarily by oppressing Third World people—not by any means of class struggle. He notes that the story of the white proletariat is not an easy one, but it is important to understand it in order to grasp the current situation and to take action to change it. His view is that a truly democratic society cannot be achieved without the participation of the masses of whites. This is a clear example of how the system of capitalism is maintained through violence. DuBois also notes that this was an example of how white supremacy was maintained through violence. This policy was widely used by the government. It is important to understand the history of anti-imperialism and to apply those lessons to our current conditions. His view is that the masses of whites have advanced themselves primarily by oppressing Third World people—not by any means of class struggle. He believes that it is important for us to grapple with these issues and to apply those lessons to our current conditions.
Sakai sees the essence of the period as the integration of the various European immigrant minorities into the privileges of the settler nation (white Amerika). In return, as U.S. imperialism launched ... sharply raising their privileges – but only in the settler way: in government regulated unions loyal to U.S. imperialism.

Where the CIO organized Black workers it was utilitarian rather than principled. By the 1930's Black labor had come to play a strategic role in five industries (usually performing the dirtiest and most dangerous work), and the percentage of African-American workers in these industries was increasing. For example, the first skilled production jobs for African-American workers were reserved for Black workers, and more integration and segregation were but two aspects of the same settler

Roosevelt's support of the CIO came from a strategy to control and channel the class struggle. A significant factor in the success of the 1930's union organizing drive was Roosevelt's support of the CIO in organizing drive.

The Depression of the 1930's was a time of intensified class struggle.

In covering such a range, there are some points of interpretations that could be of interest to workers. While Allen and DuBois focus on specific periods, Sakai examines the relationship of the white proletariat to Native Americans, Mexicanos, and Asians, as well as to the Black nation.

This, of course, is quite a scope to cover in one book. Sakai starts from an explicit political perspective: what is called the "United States" ... "is really a Euroamerican settler empire, built on the basis of the expropriation of Third World peoples."

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The spread of anti-Spanish and anti-identified Asian workers in organizing drive.

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