

The Political Economy of Education: Intersectionality and the Race-Class Nexus

The Ways of White Folks: A Love Letter to the National Education Association

Point of Personal Privilege

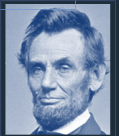
By Bill Lyne

SOURCE: <http://www.nea.org/home/70098.htm>

The two things that preoccupied the National Education Association and its Board of Directors in 2016 were the U.S. presidential election and race. That preoccupation was probably not coincidental, as the two things turned out to be deeply intertwined. Donald Trump's divisive campaign took much of its most potent nourishment from long traditions of U.S. racism. More importantly, the White working class voters who gave Trump his electoral college majority (both those who voted for him and those who stayed home instead of voting for Hillary Clinton) found his version of race more persuasive than NEA's. A significant minority of Trump voters were educators, and most of the rest were from our side of the labor/capital divide.¹ They are working people that NEA—as the country's largest labor union—should be able to speak to. And they weren't buying what we were selling, be it Secretary Clinton or a less racially divided vision of the United States. Our inability to convince working people that they have more in common with us than they do with a blowhard billionaire bully should lead us to reconsider a variety of things, not the least of which is our managerial version of race.

"I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and cause me to tremble for safety of my country; corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in High Places will follow, and the Money Power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the People, until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic destroyed."

--Abraham Lincoln, 1864



In July 2015, on the recommendation of the NEA Executive Committee and the NEA Board of Directors, the NEA Representative Assembly unanimously passed New Business Item B (NBI B),

“a single and splendid government of an aristocracy, founded on banking institutions, and monied incorporations under the guise and cloak of their favored branches of manufactures, commerce and navigation, riding and ruling over the plundered ploughman and beggared yeomanry.”

—Thomas Jefferson, 1825



in which we declared ourselves ready to combat “institutional racism.” This put us only slightly behind the latest fad in the ongoing tortured and hand-wringing discussion of race in the U.S. We declared the existence of institutional racism and committed to spend more than \$250,000 to combating it through “internal dialogue” and the preparation of plans of action.²

Ten years ago, the thing that every undergraduate knew to say about race was that it is a social construction, that race is not a meaningful biological category, that the perceived

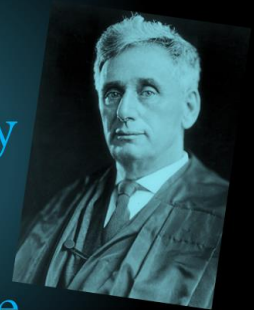
differences between races are not, as Thomas Jefferson thought, “fixed in nature,” but rather the product of social, economic, and cultural narratives.³ Today, the thing that every undergraduate knows to say about racism is that it is institutionalized, that the patterns, practices, and policies woven into the fabric of the institutions that rule us (banks, schools, police departments) can and do deny rights, access, and opportunity to those perceived to be something other than White. Both of these things are, of course, banally true. And both concepts are useful in trying to understand the warp and woof of race across U.S. history. But racial inequality statistics, the alarming rate of police killings of black people, and the destructive use of race in the 2016 election all make it clear that the inculcation of these concepts in college curricula and union resolutions has made little to no dent in race as a divisive and destructive force in U.S. society. For even as we name racism as an institutional force, we still abstract it away from the historical and class-based origins of race that make it so powerful. NBI B defines institutional racism as “the societal patterns and practices that have the net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and denying rights, opportunity, and equality based upon race,” making no mention of the origin or function of those patterns and practices.⁴

As the NEA set out to implement NBI B in 2016, we focused on revealing and seeking to eradicate the often-invisible pattern and practice of “White privilege.” Hunting and shooting White privilege, showing White folks how much they unconsciously benefit from being perceived as White, is a staple of anti-racist training.⁵ A day after the passage of NBI B, NEA Executive Director John Stocks declared the centrality of fighting White privilege to our war on institutional racism:

I personally believe that we cannot challenge institutional racism without understanding the insidious entitlements of White privilege in America. White privilege is something that those of us who have benefitted from it, like me, need to spend time confronting if we truly believe in racial equality.

Democracy vs Plutocracy

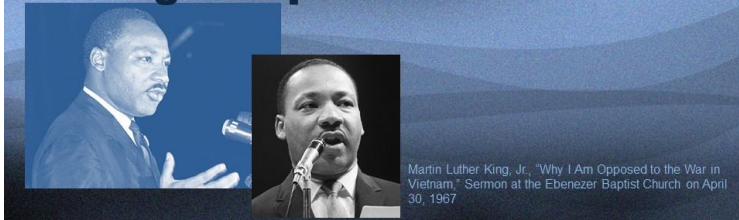
“We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.”



—Louis D. Brandeis, Justice of U.S. Supreme Court (1916-1939)

Delegates, let us vow, in the year 2015, 239 years after the American revolution, 150 years after the end of the Civil War, and nearly 50 years after Selma and Stonewall, let us vow, that as long as there is breath in our bodies, we will not allow racism or intolerance or injustice to extinguish the light of hope and opportunity in America.⁶

“When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, militarism and economic exploitation are incapable of being conquered.”



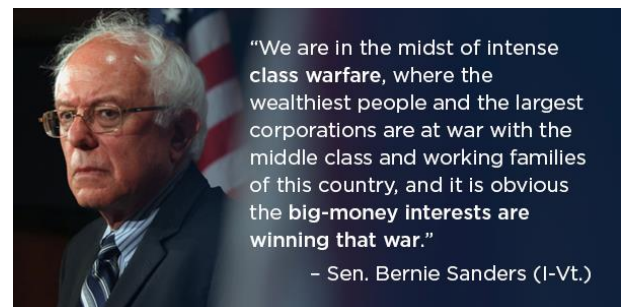
Stocks very quickly reduces the institutional to the personal, admonishing White people like himself to turn inward and confront their own privilege. This is straight out of the corporate anti-racist playbook, which always leaves the question of how the United States became institutionally White unanswered.

The study of whiteness has its origins in a rich scholarly tradition that includes the work of W.E.B. DuBois, Theodore Allen, Noel Ignatiev, and David Roediger.⁷ These writers all explore, in great detail, the intricately

imbricated relationship between whiteness and labor in the U. S. But by the time it reaches most of our classrooms and almost all anti-racist training, it has been cleansed of its politics, history and class consciousness and devolved into a privilege walk or a list in Peggy McIntosh's knapsack.⁸ Instructing White people about how to see that they don't automatically trigger security in department stores or aren't regularly asked to speak for their entire race creates the illusion of engaging institutional issues, but it is about as politically effective as attending a rally against racism. Pointing in the abstract toward White privilege shorn from its origins in labor history tends to lead White listeners from the privileged economic classes to unproductive guilt and smug lectures directed toward other, less enlightened White people. And, in the devastated regions of capital, preaching White privilege verges on the silly. Telling unemployed steel workers from western Pennsylvania that they are awash in privilege is, at best, incomprehensible and, at worst, reinforcing of racist behavior and attitudes. Whiteness is always a presence up and down the socioeconomic ladder, and it is always at the heart of racist discrimination and oppression, but usually it is more a *wedge* than a privilege.

The Alchemy of Race and Class

In the 17th century, the bosses in the colonies that would become the United States took the first steps on the road that leads to Donald Trump. Soon after White working class voters in the economically battered Midwestern states gave him an Electoral College majority, pundits and bloggers rushed to declare that none of the old rules applied to the twittering Mr. Trump. But the fundamental dynamic that led those voters to vote against their own interests is as old as tobacco in Virginia. The ready-made lies about Latinos, Blacks, and Muslims that Trump deployed to convince struggling Rust Belt workers





that they had more in common with a Park Avenue rich boy than they did with workers of color were created centuries ago by colonial planters bent on controlling labor rebellions in the New World.

Race has become such a naturalized part of U.S. culture and politics that the labor origins of racial division have been all but forgotten. References to slavery as some version of the nation's "original sin" in our curricula and our popular media leave most Americans believing that racial hierarchies arrived in the Americas fully codified instead of inchoate and evolving. The early capitalist exploitation of the fertile land of the New World was carried out by laborers imported from both Europe and Africa, and those laborers were subject to varying degrees of indentured servitude and bondage. But those degrees were not initially determined by race. Both Africans and Europeans were sometimes freed after serving their terms of servitude and working conditions

were equally brutal for both. Those brutal conditions and the lack of distinction between Black and White workers led to labor solidarity across racial lines in the numerous workers rebellions from 1660 to 1680 (the most significant of which was Bacon's Rebellion in 1676).

Recognizing that hyper-exploitation of a large working class that perceived itself as a class with common conditions and interests created the conditions for perpetual resistance and rebellion, the owning class began making moves to divide workers by trying to convince European workers that they were White. From 1680 to 1710, the notion of whiteness begins to appear in colonial law and custom as a property right for the propertyless. At the same time, hereditary chattel slavery for Black Africans becomes firmly institutionalized. White workers are afforded privileges that no slave has and are told that even free Blacks have no rights that even the lowliest white worker is bound to respect. Whiteness and White privilege become the tools deployed to convince European workers that because of their skin color they have more in common with the owners on the veranda sipping mint juleps than they do with the Africans with whom they share laboring and living conditions.⁹

**PEOPLE DIED DEFENDING
THIS COUNTRY, NOT
CORPORATIONS!**



**CORPORATIONS ARE NOT
PEOPLE!**

SCAMMING THE CITIZENRY CORPORATIONS AND TAX DODGING

Corporations are paying a smaller share of federal tax revenue than they did in the 1950s, dropping from one-third then to only one-tenth of the total today. Yet, an army of lobbyists is pushing hard to convince Congress to cut the corporate income tax rate... Conservatives have defined the debate in a highly misleading manner. They focus on the top statutory rate — the rate specified by law — instead of the effective tax rate — what is actually paid.

- Corporate share of federal tax revenue has dropped by two-thirds in 60 years — from 32% in 1952 to 10% in 2013.
- General Electric, Boeing, Verizon and 23 other profitable Fortune 500 firms paid no federal income taxes from 2008 to 2012.
- 288 big and profitable Fortune 500 corporations paid an average effective federal tax rate of just 19.4% from 2008 to 2012.
- Profitable corporations paid U.S. income taxes amounting to just 12.6% of worldwide income in 2010.
- U.S. corporations dodge \$90 billion a year in income taxes by shifting profits to subsidiaries — often no more than post office boxes — in tax havens.
- U.S. corporations officially hold \$2.1 trillion in profits offshore — much of it in tax havens — that have not yet been taxed here.
- Some corporations pay nothing in taxes.
- Lower tax rates do not boost growth and jobs.

Source: <http://www.americansfortaxfairness.org>

The alchemy of turning genuine class differences into false racial ones (what the historian Theodore Allen calls the “invention of the white race”) has proven to be an extraordinarily effective social control device across U.S. history. It is certainly one of the main reasons why U.S. working class struggle and upheaval have never metamorphosed into long-term working class political organization. White working class capitulation to slavery, the failure of northern White labor to make common cause with southern newly freed Black labor during Reconstruction, organized labor’s collaboration with Jim Crow and New Deal racism in the early 20th century, and the distance between White labor and the Black Freedom movement in the latter part of the century are all testament to the power of White supremacy to keep working people pitted against each other.¹⁰ Ruling class production of racial narratives has continuously recreated and reinforced this division across U.S. history. The myth of the Black rapist led to the White working class Ku Klux Klan and lynching. The racist suspicion of Black workers that was created in the 17th century virulently infected the U.S. labor movement in the early 20th century and derailed any genuine labor solidarity. Despite the fact that affirmative action disproportionately benefited White people, the narratives surrounding those programs always colored them Black and routinely presented working class Black people, not ruling class people, as the biggest impediment to working class White people getting ahead.¹¹ Since at least the middle of the 20th century, race baiting (from Richard Nixon’s “southern strategy” to George Bush’s Willie Horton ad to Bill Clinton’s Sister Soulja attack to Trump’s effervescent racial stream of consciousness) has been virtually *de rigeur* in U.S. presidential campaigns as a way to keep White working class voters looking away from the actual arrangements of capitalist power and voting against their own material interests.



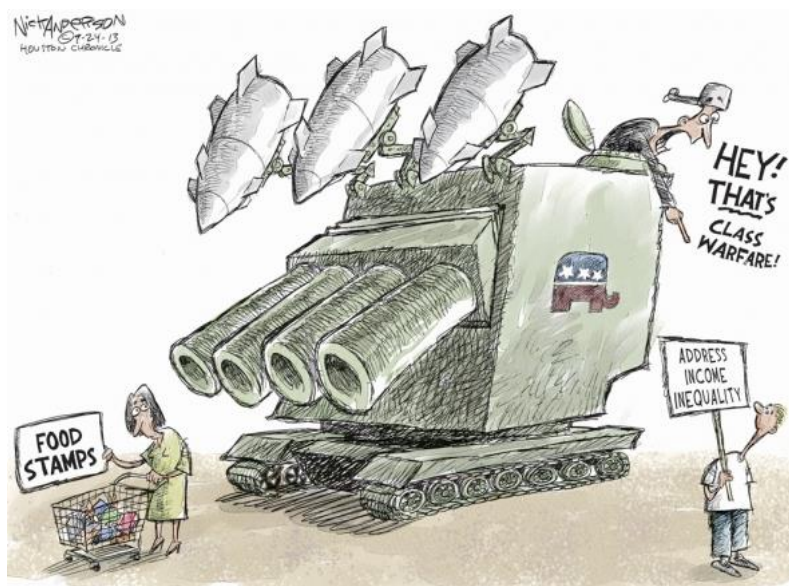
The inextricable link between race and class oppression must be one of the most significant reasons for the lack of a labor party and a relatively weak labor movement in the U. S. compared to other industrialized Western countries. It also explains the shifting valence of race in different class contexts.

Proclamations of racial "progress" are almost always followed by a "so much more to do" caveat. Those formulations would be so much more useful and

accurate if we added that progress is usually confined to the privileged classes, while the poor and working classes are always left with little more than so much more to do. Because its primary job is to divide the working classes, race plays out differently up and down the socioeconomic ladder. Racism is always at its most virulent and violent within and among the working classes. Individuals within the ruling and managerial classes certainly harbor and often manifest both latent and blatant racist thoughts and behaviors, but they tend not to perceive Black people as a class as a threat to their economic and social well-being.

Thus, Frederick Douglass can become a best-selling author, statesman, and ambassador within a northern elite that tacitly sanctions and benefits from southern racialized convict leasing and the transition from slavery to Jim Crow. Zora Neale Hurston and Duke Ellington were welcomed and celebrated in rich White parlors while lynching grew and Black workers were excluded from white labor unions. In the 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr. was embraced by the White House as the Black Panthers were murdered by the FBI. When Rush Limbaugh or Donald Trump spew their race-baiting bile, they are aiming squarely at White working class people, not at the millionaires and billionaires they work and play with. Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Barack Obama all enjoy relatively raceless daily lives among their ruling class friends and colleagues, but on blogs and in barrooms are subjected to relentlessly racist anger and hatred from people who the security details never let near them.

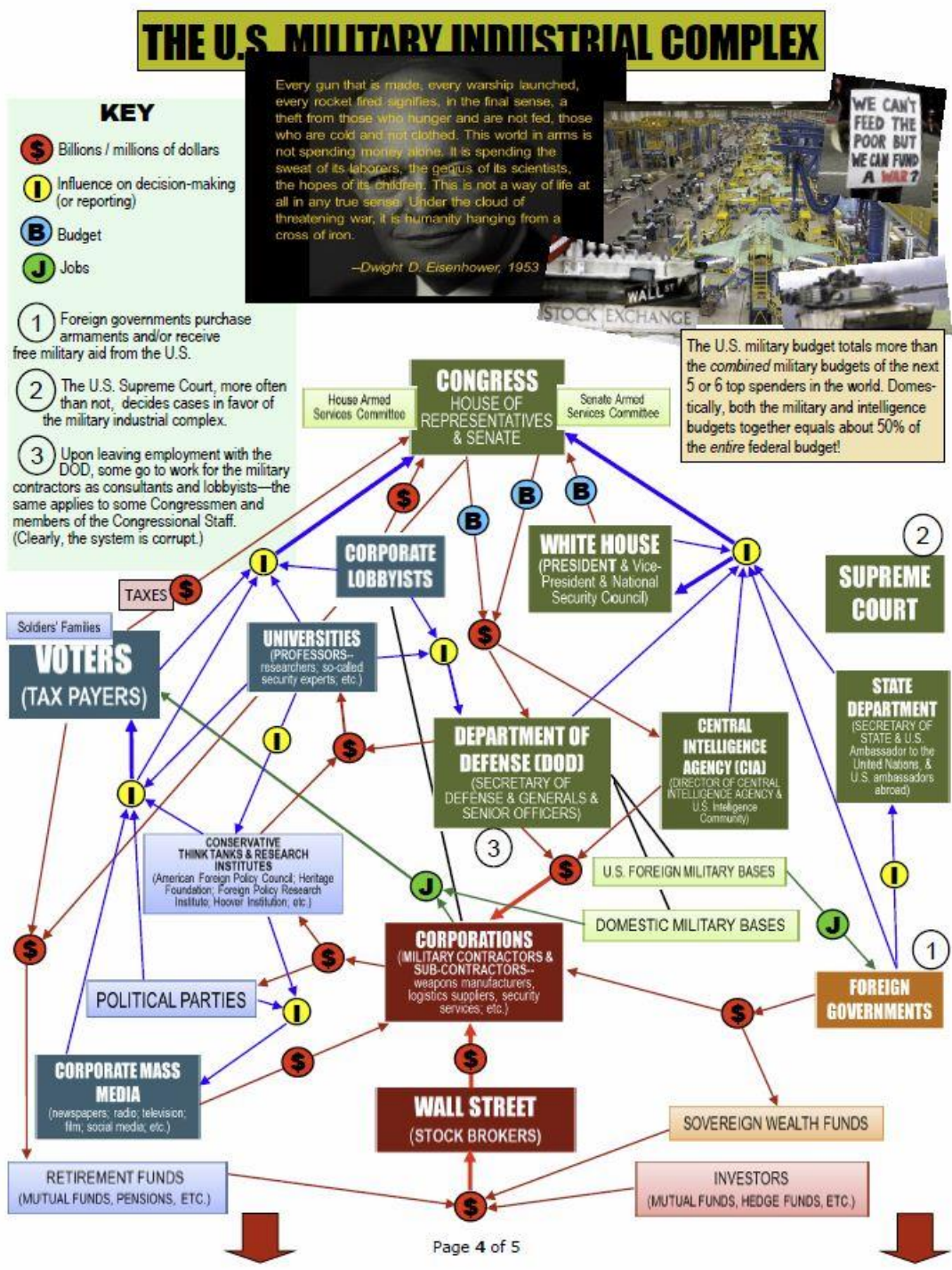
At an infamous 2008 fundraiser in San Francisco, then-Senator Obama put his finger squarely on the predicament of the White working class: "they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations."¹² The rebuke from the ideological state apparatus to Obama's



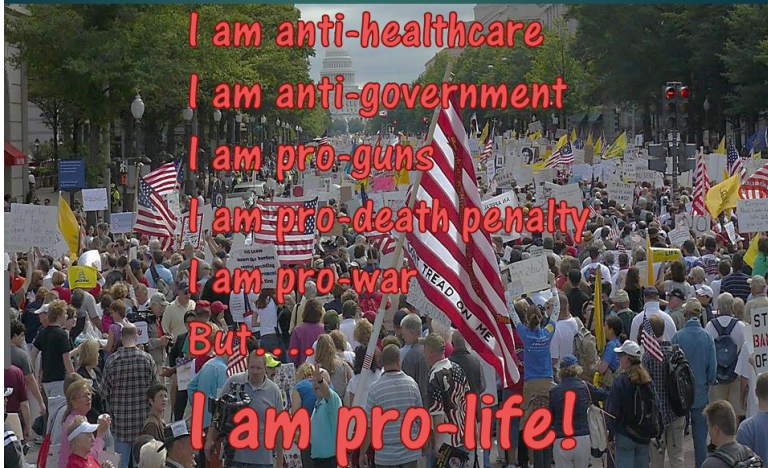
pulling back the curtain was swift and severe: the future president was an elitist snob whose wine-sipping ways blinded him to the intrinsic value of God and guns, and put him out of touch with

“real Americans.” He was the one who had been duped, not the White working class. Senator Obama was, of course, accurate in his description, but what he left out was the way that situation had been created and his own participation in its perpetuation. He spoke as if the disgruntled White working class was the victim of natural forces, immutable economic tides, and not the product of Western capitalist arrangements. And he certainly didn't mention how, as a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, and as a U.S. senator and future U.S. president, he worked both consciously and

unconsciously to keep the racialized divisions of working class control in place.¹³ In the context of this history, it is not a contradiction that Obama's successor is both the landlord who discriminated against Blacks in low- and middle-income apartment rentals in Brooklyn and Queens in the 1970s and irritated wealthy white Palm Beach residents by allowing wealthy Black people into his club at Mar a Lago in the 1990s.



The Pledge of the Ignorantsia



In his 2015 NEA Representative Assembly speech, Stocks ends his discussion of racism by calling for us to create a country “where the light burns so brightly that racism dare not enter its radiance.”¹⁴ He then turns to the problem of income inequality. This separation of race and class unconsciously replicates exactly the naturalization of whiteness that Stocks associates with White privilege. Racism is a matter of individual hearts and moral bright lights; economic inequality is by default a White thing. This opposing binary of race and class is a dominant U.S. tradition that has easily been

co-opted by the neo-liberal paradigm that includes Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Congressional Black Caucus. When Bernie Sanders’ genuinely progressive campaign drew fire from Black elites and their constituencies, it was at least in part an attempt to police the border between race and class and to maintain what Kenneth Warren calls those elites’ “managerial authority over the nation’s Negro problem.”¹⁵ Adolph Reed nicely summarizes the work that separating race from class does for the ruling class:

That is to say, as is ever clearer and ever more important to note, race politics is not an alternative to class politics; it is a class politics, the politics of the left-wing of neoliberalism. It is the expression and active agency of a political order and moral economy in which capitalist market forces are treated as unassailable nature. An integral element of that moral economy is displacement of the critique of the invidious outcomes produced by capitalist class power onto equally naturalized categories of ascriptive identity that sort us into groups supposedly defined by what we essentially are rather than what we do.¹⁶

Encouraging White people, especially working class White people, to look into their souls and confront the racists they truly *are* only discourages them from actually *doing* something that might create the interracial class solidarity needed to oppose the U.S. neo-liberal political order.

Insisting on the imbrication of race and class often leads to the sort of attack that Bernie Sanders received from the Black managerial class and their followers in the cultural studies wing of academia.¹⁷ And while such race baiting did play a big role in helping Hillary Clinton beat back Sanders’s challenge



WORKING FOR THE FEW

Political capture and economic inequality

Economic inequality is rapidly increasing in the majority of countries. The wealth of the world is divided in two: almost half going to the richest one percent; the other half to the remaining 99 percent. The World Economic Forum has identified this as a major risk to human progress. Extreme economic inequality and political capture are too often interdependent. Left unchecked, political institutions become undermined and governments overwhelmingly serve the interests of economic elites to the detriment of ordinary people. Extreme inequality is not inevitable, and it can and must be reversed quickly....

- Almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just one percent of the population.
- The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$110 trillion. That's 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population.
- The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world.
- Seven out of ten people live in countries where economic inequality has increased in the last 30 years.
- The richest one percent increased their share of income in 24 out of 26 countries for which we have data between 1980 and 2012.
- In the US, the wealthiest one percent captured 95 percent of post-financial crisis growth since 2009, while the bottom 90 percent became poorer.

Source: Oxfam Report, 2014. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/working-few>



in the Democratic primaries, it did not carry over to the general election, where young, Black, and Latino voters did not come out for the longtime neo-liberal Clinton the way that they did for the Black neo-

liberal Obama. Imagining that the spectrum of Black thought is contained in the bourgeois voices of John Lewis and Melissa Harris-Perry, and that all authentic Black politics must be identity politics, ignores the strong support of people like Cornel West and Adolph Reed for Bernie Sanders. More importantly, it also ignores a vibrant, though suppressed, tradition of what Cedric Robinson, in his epic study, calls “Black Marxism.”

That tradition includes the mature work of writers like W. E. B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, and Angela Davis. It also includes the last years of the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. DuBois evolves from a naive uplift notion of the “talented tenth” whose hard work and accomplishment will bring racial equality to the eight hundred pages of *Black Reconstruction*, which sees the failure of working class solidarity as the primary threat to Black equality. Langston Hughes holds both the Black middle class and the whiteness they chase in contempt. James Baldwin loses the critical approbation he received early in his career when he turns to investigations of whiteness and solidarity with the Marxism of the Black Panthers. Both King and Malcolm X, shortly before their murders, evolved toward seeing race as deeply entwined with class and poverty. The radical aspects of all of these writers’ careers have mostly been expunged from the academic and popular imagination. Their understanding of whiteness has been reduced to “I, too, sing America” and neo-liberal whimpering about privilege. But even a cursory examination of the full trajectories of their careers shows that they ultimately all understood race as a capitalist tool and they all probably would have broken with the NEA and voted for Sanders over Clinton.¹⁸

THE ILLUSION OF HISTORY

In the river of time, on which we are all travelers, there are no boundaries between the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*; because history is always part of the present, just as the present is always part of the future.

The So-called “Right to Work” Laws EQUALS The Right to EXPLOIT Laws

Hello... ! Smell the coffee!



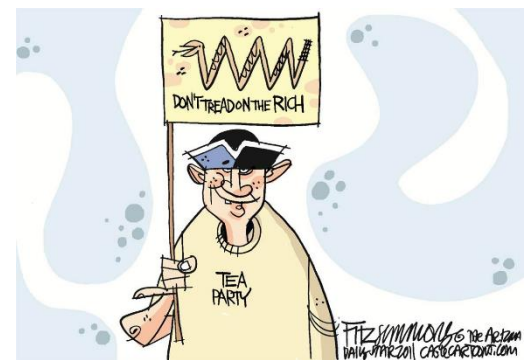
Support Our Unions!

Where would you be today without unions?
Unions brought you child labor laws; the minimum wage; the “weekend”; workplace safety; paid lunch breaks; the 8-hour work day; overtime; pensions; workmen’s compensation; Medicare; collective bargaining; and much, much more!

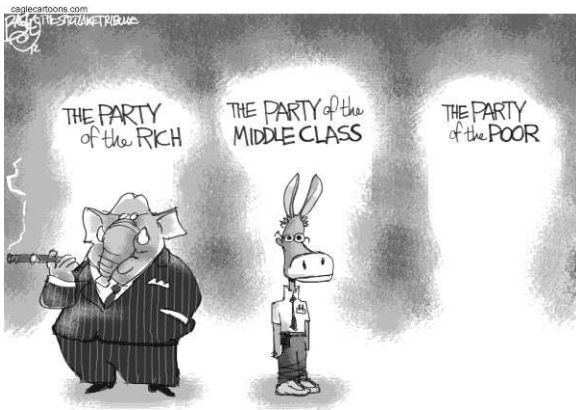
The NBI B Blues

As well-intentioned as it is, NBI B does not fall into this tradition, as it does not recognize race as a tool invented to divide labor and deployed to perpetuate and protect inequality. It feigns toward radicalism with the introduction of the word “institutional,”

but it ignores U.S. racial history and continues to treat racism as a disease in an otherwise healthy body (the big insight being that the disease has spread from individuals to institutions) that must be eradicated with the medicine of programs, actions, and trainings around the clichés of cultural competency, diversity, and social justice. For the NEA Board, at our meetings and conferences, most of this medicine has been delivered by the anti-racist consultants and companies who have emerged to exploit the growing diversity market. The primary job of these usually well-paid consultants is to, as Robin D.G. Kelley puts it, “shift race from the public sphere to the psyche” and make it safe for the prevailing political order.¹⁹ The programs and trainings, along with the NBI that spawned them, imagine racism as a freestanding malady, independent of socioeconomic forces, that has infected otherwise raceless institutions. The NBI’s claim to innovation is its discovery of *institutional* racism, but the institutions in that formulation remain inert. The assumption is that scrubbing these institutions of their racist “patterns and practices” will open the gates to the “opportunity and equality” that is the goal of NBI B. As long as we refuse to interrogate those institutions as the servants of capital and refuse to see race as the invention of capital, not much will change.



We can see this limitation most clearly in the signature effort of the NEA’s crusade against institutional racism: the *Report of the NEA Committee on Discipline and*



the School to Prison Pipeline. This report is thorough, well-documented, and makes clear what almost all Black American parents already know: in most institutional settings their kids are treated worse than White kids. But it confines itself to that statistical analysis, never really asking why schools and prisons ended up this way. And it goes out of its way to fully separate race from class, asserting that poverty doesn't matter when it comes to school discipline:

Critically, the shocking disparities in school discipline rates recounted at the outset of this report are not due to poverty or different rates of misbehavior. While poor students are disciplined more frequently, when data takes the role of poverty into account, children of color are still over-represented in suspension rates. *New and Developing Research on Disparities in Discipline* notes that no evidence has been found that discipline disparities are due to poverty and discusses previous investigations that found that Black-White differences in out of school suspension persist regardless of the level of poverty.²⁰

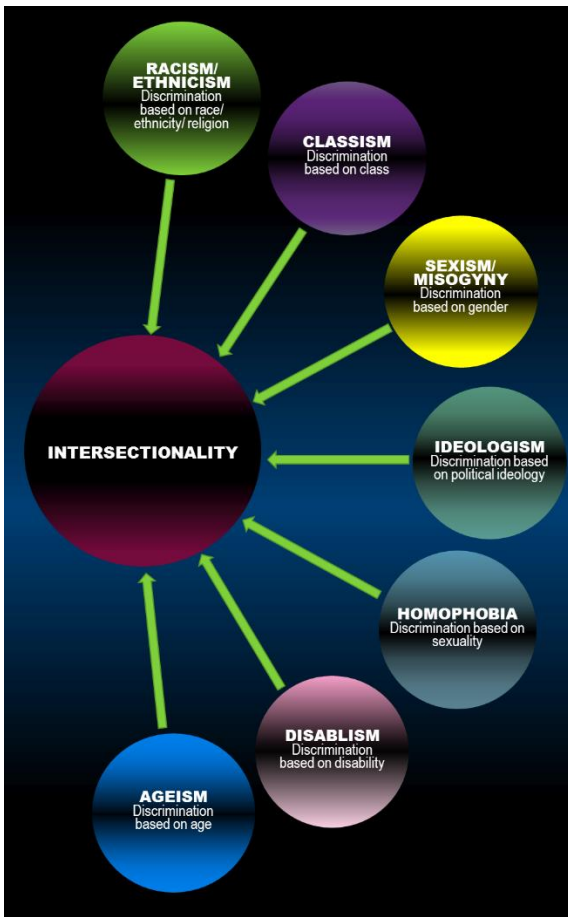
Construed in this truncated and limited way, and swallowing whole the studies that treat race and poverty as distinct variables, the claim here is easy enough to believe. The few Black students at a rich suburban school are probably more subject to scrutiny and discipline than their many White classmates, in the same way that the many Black students at an impoverished inner city school are treated worse than their few White classmates. But school discipline is where the report's consideration of poverty ends—there is no discussion of the relationship between poverty and the prison end of the pipeline.

What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality refers to the complex web of different forms of oppression--such as sexism, racism, and classism--experienced simultaneously by marginalized individuals and groups in a society in such a way as to constitute *super-oppression*; that is, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (to borrow a well-known phrase from the Greek philosopher Aristotle).

Note: The theory behind intersectionality was first articulated by the African American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in her article published in 1989 in the journal *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, titled "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." She had written it as a criticism of white feminists who, quite often, remained naively insensitive to the racism that black women experienced in United States--a problem that continues to plague them to this day because of their *colorblind racism*.

More importantly, the very next sentence after the passage quoted above again slides away from the institutional part of institutional racism: "Rather, we need to look at our responses to student behavior and our preconceptions, both conscious and unconscious, to find the cause of these disparities." Here, institutional racism gets implicitly conflated with "unconscious" behavior, and

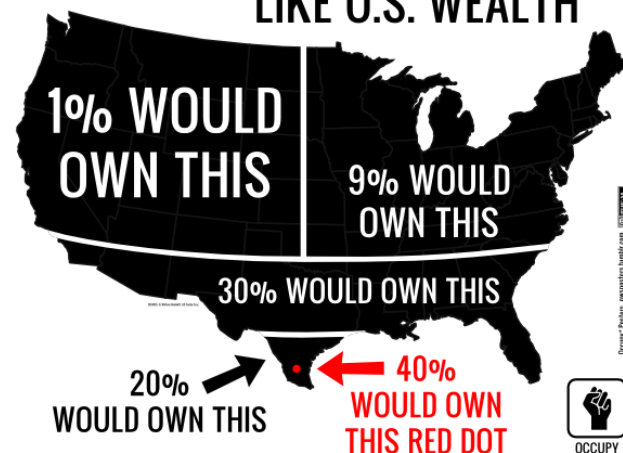


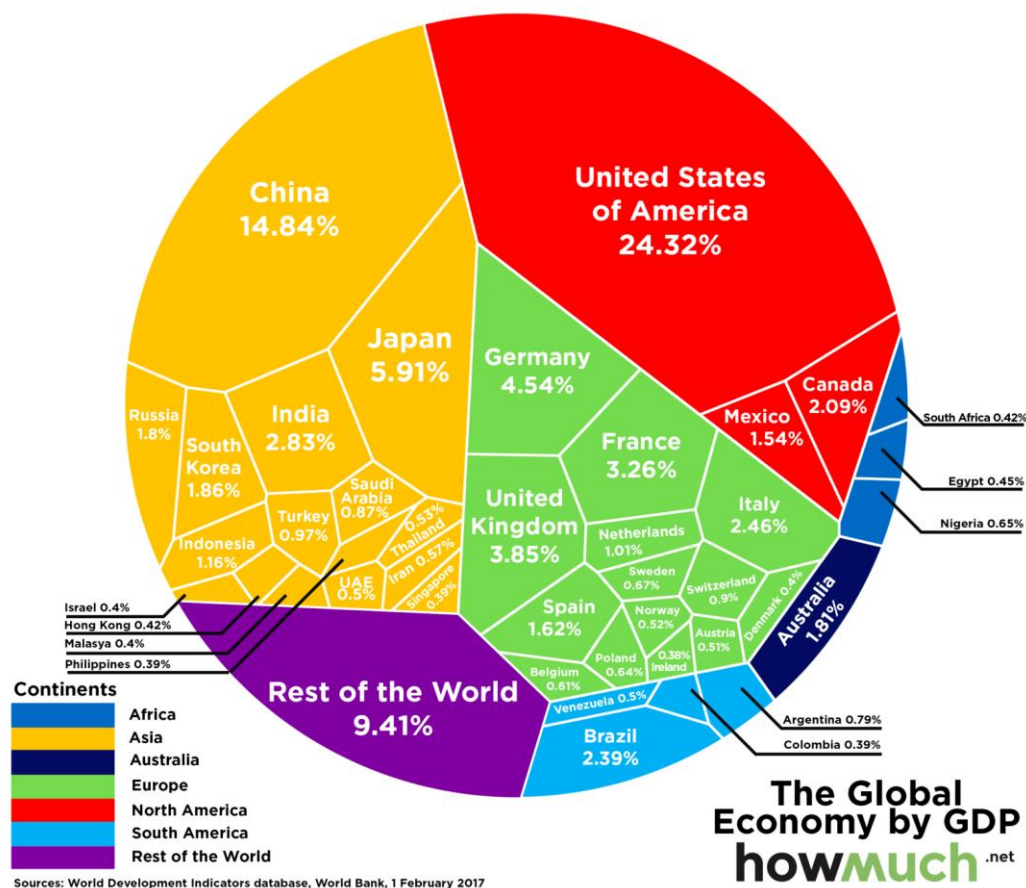
once again the solution becomes more multicultural and cultural competency training for individuals who are unconsciously treating students of color badly. This would no doubt be a net positive, but stopping there leaves two institutions that are crucial to the history of racial division in the U.S. utterly unexamined. In the wake of the Civil War and the loophole in the 13th Amendment, prisons became a primary method of re-enslaving Black labor, and mandatory public schooling was, in part, a warehousing-working-class-children response to child labor laws.²¹ The NEA Report does not argue for fundamentally examining the institution of school or the institution of prison. Instead, it calls for the creation of “a supportive and nurturing school climate” to smooth out racial disparities in discipline.²² Ultimately, the logic of the report implies that if we get to the point where White children are disciplined and imprisoned proportionally at the same rate as Black children, then we will have solved the problem of the school to prison pipeline. As Reed points out, “within that moral economy a society in which one percent of the population controlled 90 percent of the resources could be just, provided that roughly 12 percent of the one

percent were black.”²³

In his recent farewell address in Chicago, Barack Obama summed up the point of this essay. Buried among the recitations of his administration’s accomplishments, the soft jabs at Donald Trump, and the return to the siren call of “Yes We Can” was a relatively straightforward statement of the role of race in U.S. capitalism. “If every economic issue is framed,” said the lame duck president, “as a struggle between a hardworking White middle class and an undeserving minority, then workers of all shades are going to be left fighting for scraps while the wealthy withdraw further into their private enclaves.”²⁴ In eight years as president, Obama was able to do virtually nothing about the problem he so clearly states. In some ways, he may have made things worse, clearing the field for Trump’s unadorned appeals to racial division. This failure tells us very little about Barack Obama, but a lot about the

IF U.S. LAND MASS WERE DIVIDED LIKE U.S. WEALTH





institution of President of the United States. It suggests that all of our work on behalf of Hillary Clinton for president was utterly beside the point when it comes to institutional racism. Race will continue to do its work on behalf of capital, no matter who sits in the White House. If the election of Donald Trump has taught us anything, it is that we should spend less time supporting and speaking to the implacable face of power, no matter whether that face is Black or female or spray tanned with a bad comb over.

We should spend less time worrying that Betsy DeVos could be even worse than Arne Duncan, and more time recognizing that no Secretary of Education will ever truly put the interests of working educators first. We should start from the material and historical fact that every time a White cop shoots a Black person, it is worker on worker violence that is fully sanctioned by the ruling class. And then we should strive to get working people to stop voting against their own interests, starting with ourselves. When we have come to have more in common with a K Street lobbyist than we do with a dispossessed factory worker in Michigan, how can we blame that worker for choosing to identify with a billionaire bully?

END NOTES

1. See Toppo, "Teacher Unions Smarting After Many Members Vote for 'Trump.'"
2. See the full text of NBI B at: <http://ra.nea.org/business-item/2015-nbi-b/> Full disclosure: I have been a member of the NEA Board for the last three years and happily voted in favor of NBI B.
3. See this excerpt from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* at: <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch15s28.html>
4. NBI B, *op cit*.
5. See Reed, Jr., "The Limits of Anti-Racism."
6. Watch Stocks' entire speech at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3Wro9a15uA>
7. See DuBois, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume 2: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America*; Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume 2*; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; and Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*.
8. See McIntosh, "Privilege Walk Lesson Plan."
9. See Allen, *op cit*; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*; and Goldfield, *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics*.
10. See Allen, *op cit*; Goldfield, *op cit*; and DuBois, *op cit*.

11. See Wise, "Is Sisterhood Conditional?: White Women and the Rollback of Affirmative Action."
12. Selections from Obama's 2008 speech, quoted in Fowler, "Obama: No Surprise That Hard-Pressed Pennsylvanians Turn Bitter."
13. When asked what would be the first thing he would do if he were elected president, Noam Chomsky once replied, "Have myself arrested for war crimes." Chomsky's comment points to the power of the office to box in whatever individual might occupy it. Obama's failure on banking and immigration policy and his racist education policy all reveal the constraints his office put on him.
14. Stocks, *op cit*.
15. Warren, *What Was African American Literature?* p. 17.
16. Reed, "From Jenner to Dolezal: One Trans Good, the Other Not So Much."
17. See Walsh, "White Progressives' Racial Myopia: Why Their Colorblindness Fails Minorities — and the Left."
18. Full disclosure, part 2: The NEA Board's endorsement of Clinton over Sanders was a fraught process, with a variety of thumbs on a variety of scales. In the end, I voted to endorse Clinton and, unless I could somehow know then what I know now, I would probably do it again.
19. Kelley, "Black Study, Black Struggle."
20. NEA, "Policy Statement on Discipline and the School to Prison Pipeline," p. 9.
21. See Lleras Muney, "Were Compulsory Attendance and Child Labor Laws Effective? An Analysis from 1915 to 1939."
22. NEA, *op cit*, p. 19.
23. Reed, "Were Compulsory Attendance and Child Labor Laws Effective? An Analysis from 1915 to 1939."
24. Obama, "Farewell Address."

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