

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

A PRIMER

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INTRODUCTION

THE LONG-TERM GOAL IS RADICAL SOCIETAL RECONSTRUCTION

Critical race theory is a movement that demands its adherents transform supposedly racist institutions, structures, and ideals through hardline activism. It argues that the United States was built on a foundation of racism and that racism is everywhere.¹



PHOTO BY: CHRIS OWENS

In their book “Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity – and Why This Harms Everybody,” former *Aero Magazine* editor Helen Pluckrose and mathematician James Lindsay explain that the goal of critical race theory (CRT) is to “end racism by seeing it everywhere.” The paradox embodied by this statement may confuse those who were taught that ending racism requires individuals to be colorblind; that is, to treat people the same regardless of race.

“Ending racism by seeing it everywhere” seems like a world away from the vision reflected in Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s majestic “I Have a Dream” speech. Most Americans recognize the most powerful line from the speech delivered on August 28, 1963: “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” King and the civil rights leaders of his day championed the idea that the United States could defeat racism by adopting the basic principle of dignity and respect for all humans regardless of skin color.

Critical race theorists disagree. In short, they argue that the United States was built on a foundation of racism and therefore it truly is everywhere. As described in their book “Critical Race Theory: An Introduction,” authors Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic claimed “racism is ordinary, not aberrational ... the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country.” As a result, they argued, “the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on to do the world’s work will keep minorities in subordinate positions.”²

Their long-term project is one of radical societal reconstruction, not racial reconciliation. Indeed, one of the distinguishing features of critical race theory is that it was never designed to be a benign concept occupying the minds of university professors and pages of obscure academic journals. Instead, it is a movement that demands its adherents to transform supposedly racist institutions, structures, and ideals through hardline activism. To be sure, CRT is unique as a theory because it contains “an activist dimension,” according to Delgado and Stefancic.³



*A George Floyd protest in
Indianapolis descends into a riot.*

ORIGINS

CRITICAL RACE THEORY'S MARXIST ROOTS

To understand critical race theory, one must first understand the defining characteristic of Marxism. For German philosopher Karl Marx, the history of society unavoidably boils down to a history of “class struggles,” in which one group oppresses the other.

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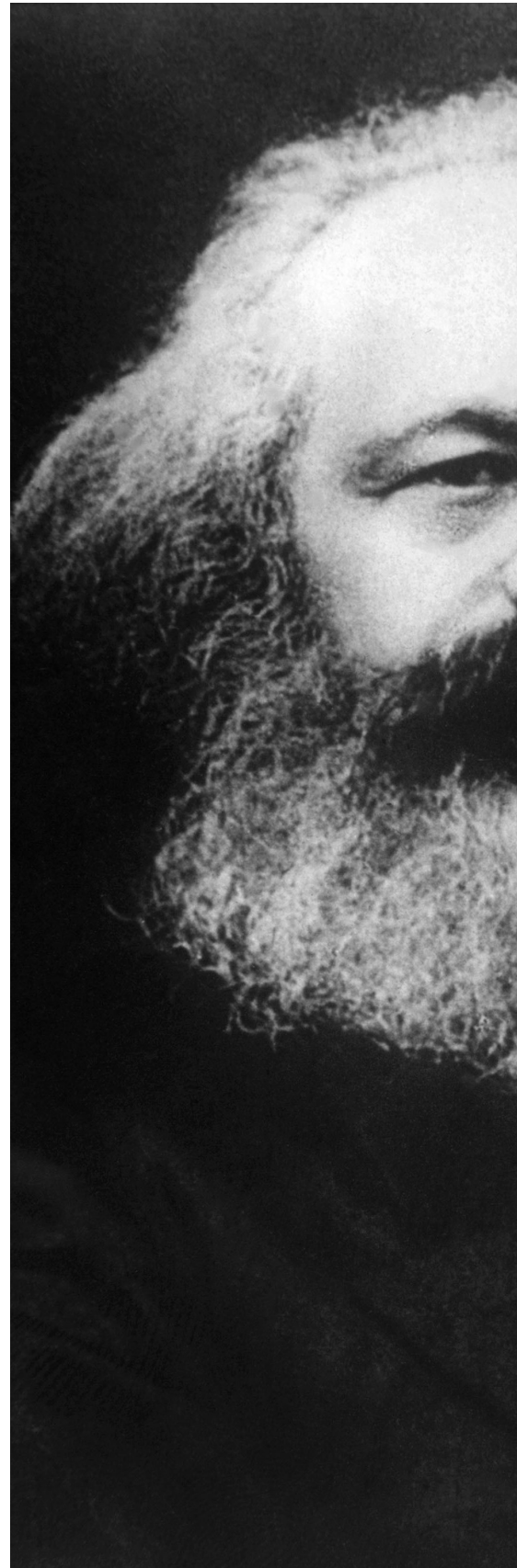
Oppression is loosely defined as a state of being unjustly controlled. The oppressors are the ones exercising that control, doing so in an unjust manner often to benefit themselves at the expense of the oppressed.

In the 1848 pamphlet “Communist Manifesto,” Marx wrote with Friedrich Engels,

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of old ones.⁴

Throughout history, Marx insisted, the one constant surviving all phases is class struggle. Regardless of changing historical epochs and social arrangements, there will always be a struggle between oppressor and oppressed. That was Marx’s assumption underlying all of his philosophical and economic analyses.





By “bourgeois society” Marx referred to a capitalist society featuring the private ownership of the means of production. The means of production are those resources utilized in producing consumer goods, like factories, tools, raw materials, heavy equipment, etc. Such an economic arrangement, according to Marx, divides society into two classes: the bourgeoisie who own the means of production and the proletariat who work for the bourgeoisie.

Marx viewed these two groups to be at odds with each other, and by virtue of their ownership over society’s means of production, the bourgeoisie was in a position to “oppress” the workers. How does the oppressed class overcome this oppression? Marx stated it plainly: “the theory of the Communists may be summed up on the single sentence: Abolition of private property.”

To reiterate, for Marx “private property” is the means of production, not consumer goods. In short, Marx advocated for ending the capitalist economic system by outlawing the private ownership of the means of production. By eliminating the source of class struggle and committing to a relationship of mutual cooperation, that is, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” Marx claimed that society would rid itself of oppression.



HISTORY

CRITICAL THEORY

Critical race theory is the application of Critical Theory to the concept of race. It replaces Marx's conception of class struggle with an oppressor/oppressed dynamic based on identity groups, such as race and gender.

Critical race theory is the application of Critical Theory to the concept of race. In short, it replaces Marx's conception of class struggle between the economic classes of bourgeoisie and proletariat with one dividing society into oppressor and oppressed based on identity groups, such as identities based on race and gender.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THEORY?

As defined by Encyclopedia Britannica, Critical Theory is a "Marxist-inspired movement in social and political philosophy originally associated with the work of the Frankfurt School" whose primary goal is to "understand and to help overcome the social structures through which people are dominated and oppressed."

The theory begins with Marx's assumption that society is shaped by power imbalances (oppressor vs. oppressed) and critiques all aspects of society based on that assumption. In short, the animating force for Critical Theory is the informal fallacy of "begging the question," in which one begins with a conclusion and then selectively presents "evidence" to "prove" one's point.

According to Mark Thorsby, Professor and Chair of Philosophy and Humanities at Lone Star College in Houston, Texas, the Frankfurt School was founded in the 1920s to examine why there was no class revolution led by the workers, as Marx had predicted.⁵ The School⁶ was a collection of Marxist philosophers and researchers and was

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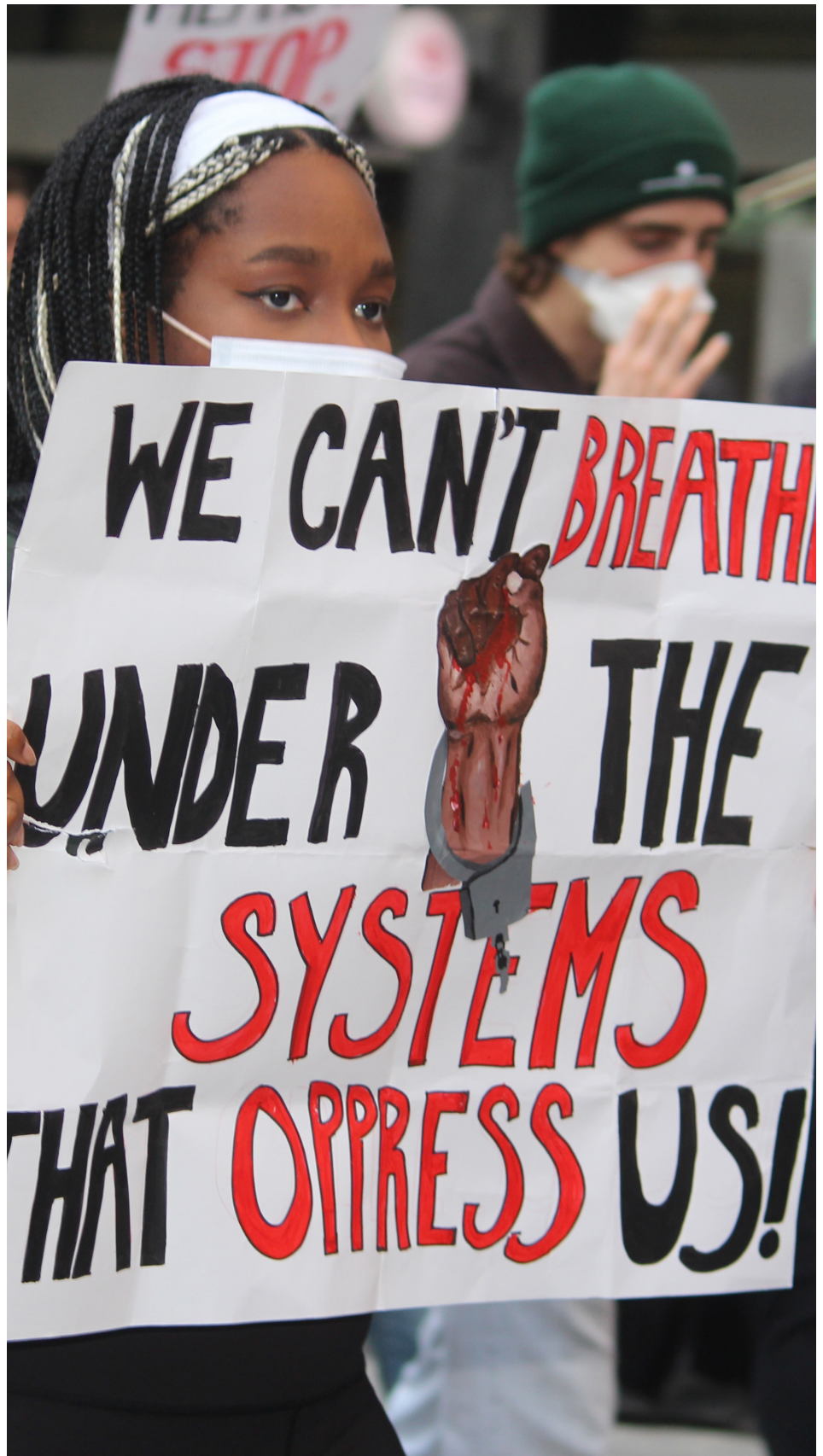


PHOTO BY: ROSE MAKIN

associated with the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany.

According to the Frankfurt School founders, the Industrial Revolution gave rise to much of what Marx had predicted about capitalism; i.e. centralized wealth and income inequality. But the worker's revolution didn't happen, and — contra Marx — there was less appetite for the revolution in the more advanced capitalist nations.

The Frankfurt School thinkers still believed that Marx's philosophy remained the best hope to the oppressed who had been disenfranchised by the capitalist order, as discussed by Jean-Philippe Deranty, a member of the faculty at the Department of Philosophy at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, and one of today's leading scholars of Critical Theory.⁷

The Frankfurt School wanted to reinvigorate the Marxist philosophy but first had to figure out why the revolution failed to materialize in capitalist nations.

Their goal with Critical Theory was ultimately to “emancipate” the oppressed, according to Thorsby, in contrast to traditional theories, which sought only to explain current events and social arrangements. Critical Theory is focused on the “ought” rather than the “is.” In other words, it involves a normative judgement for how society ought to be arranged, and it critiques society for how it fails to live up to that standard established by the “theorist.”

Rather than attempting to solve problems within the current social order, Critical Theory seeks to criticize and challenge the current order.

As Max Horkheimer, a leading Frankfurt School philosopher, wrote in his 1937 essay “Traditional and Critical Theory,” “the critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgement.” A critical theorists’ “real function,” he adds, is to provide a “presentation of social contradictions” that serves as “a force within it to stimulate change.”⁸

Critical Theory's goal, by exploring concepts of the current social order such as class, exploitation, and oppression, is the “transformation into the right kind of society.”

Horkheimer continues, “Critical Theory has no specific influence on its side, except concern for the abolition of social injustice,”⁹ with “injustice” of course being defined by Marxist critical theorists like Horkheimer.

In sum, Critical Theory begins with the assumption that society is unjustly arranged into oppressors and the oppressed, and the current reason is capitalism. The theorists then investigate

society to seek “injustices” that confirm this assumption as a means to raise awareness among the oppressed about the unjustness of their social status. This awareness, or “class consciousness” (more on this later), will help motivate the oppressed class to rise up and overthrow the current unjust social system.

Confronted by the reality that the proletariat never led a workers’ revolution, however, the Frankfurt School had to shift its focus to another supposedly oppressed group in hopes they would grab the revolutionary torch.

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MODERN ERA

MERGING CRITICAL THEORY WITH IDENTITY POLITICS

Frustration over the working class's failure – particularly in Western countries – to lead the revolution in the post-World War II era led the Marxists of the Frankfurt School to reformulate the makeup of class identity.

Some in the Frankfurt School suggested that distinct class interests of the working class were no longer relevant due to its assimilation into, and financial success within, industrial society. Indeed, the New Left in the 1960s saw higher living standards for workers occurring in the U.S. specifically and sought other oppressed groups to form a coalition for social change.

As described in the 1983 book “A Dictionary of Marxist Thought” by Tom Bottomore, the Frankfurt School’s pessimism that the working class would rise up and lead the revolution ushered in a “recognition of the non-revolutionary character of the Western working class,” which in turn “led them to depreciate radically the role of the working class and to look elsewhere for the revolutionary forces of modern society.”¹⁰

Looking elsewhere for new revolutionary forces led them to focus on students, minorities,

and other “exploited ethnic groups” that were not class-based in the classic Marxian sense but based on cultural identity.

Sharon Smith, a highly regarded socialist author and leading activist with the International Socialist Organization, wrote in a 1994 paper

published in *International Socialism*, “Many who once looked to the working class movement as key to social change have shifted their focus toward the ‘new social movements.’ This term covers a broad range of movements which originated in the 1960s and 1970s, including those

against the oppression of women, blacks and lesbians and gays.”¹¹

Further echoing this sentiment was queer theorist Jeffrey Escoffier – research associate with the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research and former professor at the University of California at Berkeley – in a 1986 article in the *Socialist Review*: “We are now in a period

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of decline and discouragement. We have no objective guarantee that the working class recognizes capitalism as the cause of the injustice and inequalities of American life. The recent history of the American working class clearly shows that it lacks the organizational and political capacity to struggle effectively for the fundamental transformation of society.”¹²

Identity politics attempts to divorce “power” from the realm of class society as defined in orthodox Marxism as the relations to the means of production, and instead seeks to place it in the realm of personal relations (i.e., man vs. woman, black vs. white, gay vs. straight).

“At its heart, identity politics is a rejection of the notion that the working class can be the agent for social change, and a pessimism about the possibility for significant, never mind revolutionary, social transformation,” Smith

added.¹³ Identity politics, in short, was invented as a means to replace economic class struggle with race and gender class struggle to advance the socialist revolution.

The New Left identified oppression as individual antagonisms between genders, races, sexual orientation, etc. Replacing owners of capital as society’s oppressors were white, male, straight Christians; the group targeted as holding “privilege” in traditionally capitalist societies.

Political struggle replaced economic struggle as the unifying force to overthrow the capitalist system. The Frankfurt School writers did also argue, however, that struggle against oppressions can take place outside the realm of politics. Other institutions like media, education, corporate boardrooms, and Hollywood all became instrumental levers of power to capture.



PHOTO BY: MAYA REAGAN

LAW & LEGAL

ORIGINS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN LAW

Starting in the 1970s, a group of legal scholars began creating an intellectual foundation that would become critical race theory. Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, Patricia Williams, Alan Freeman, Cheryl Harris, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and dozens of other academics and writers were dismayed that civil rights victories in the courts failed to weaken racism or mitigate unequal outcomes across racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, and various other identity groups. The precursor to critical race theory, called critical legal studies, cultivated a substantial body of academic and popular writing that highlighted the relationship between racism, law, and power.¹⁴

Critical legal studies scholars borrowed from Critical Theory and Progressive-era legal thought to develop a framework that rejected the long-held belief that laws provided a logical, consistent, authoritative, and just framework for solving problems or settling disputes. Instead, this new generation of academics and writers declared that “law is politics.”

In other words, laws and legal interpretations are subject to the same kinds of negotiations, compromises, and biases present in politics. Indeed, critical legal theory embraced a concept called “legal indeterminacy,” the idea that “not every legal case has one correct outcome,” as Delgado and Stefancic wrote.¹⁵

This group of legal scholars extended their analyses to assess how dominant groups use law and legal reasoning to preserve their social, political, and economic power at the expense of marginalized communities. The primary mechanism for maintaining structural inequality was the lopsided distribution of power and resources that appeared to pervade the American legal system. White elites only agreed to legal concessions for people of color, Derrick Bell argued, because it was in their interest to do so. Bell called this phenomenon “interest convergence” and explained the concept in a widely influential article published in the *Harvard Law Review* in 1980.¹⁶

In the 1980s and 1990s, academics in various disciplines began applying the critical legal studies framework to analyses of other institutions. Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate’s 1995 essay, “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education”¹⁷ and Ladson-Billings’ 1998 follow-up article, “Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like education?”¹⁸ indicated the spread of critical legal studies into the humanities, social sciences, and professional schools during the last decade of the twentieth century.

Eventually, academics in the natural sciences, health sciences, medicine, and even engineering would also integrate critical race theory insights and methodologies into their scholarship.

GOALS OF CRT

GOALS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical race theorists reject the incrementalism of the traditional civil rights movement. They do not believe that racism is a character defect possessed by certain individuals due to ignorance or circumstance. Nor do they believe that racism can be eradicated through reasoned engagement and cooperation within the framework of existing institutions, including the institution transformed most by civil rights activism: the courts.

According to critical race theorists, even institutions that appeared to mitigate racism nonetheless maintain structures of power that benefit dominant groups or allow those groups to find alternative ways to discriminate. The solution, then, is to dismantle and replace institutions that reproduce white privilege.

As Delgado and Stefancic proclaimed, “Only aggressive, color-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much to ameliorate misery.”¹⁹

These efforts include embracing racial discrimination for the sake of achieving equity. Equity is the process of addressing the needs of individuals through the unequal distribution of resources. Ibram X. Kendi, director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University

and prolific critical race theory writer, famously proclaimed, “The defining question is whether the discrimination is creating equity or inequity. If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist. If discrimination is creating inequity, then it is racist. ... The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.”²⁰

Behind the curtain of “equity,” however, revolution is their ultimate goal: challenging “the very foundations of the liberal order,” including “equality theory ... and neutral principles of constitutional law,” along with being “suspicious of another liberal mainstay,

namely, rights,” according to Delgado and Stefancic.²¹

Staying true to their Marxist roots, eliminating the right to private property in the means of production — the fundamental building block of a capitalist economy — is a top priority. Jean-Philippe Deranty summed up CRT’s goals this way: “Critical Theory has always had an affinity with one political option amongst others, namely socialism.”²²

Indeed, Kendi himself declared “To love capitalism is to end up loving racism.”²³

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The real reason for the spread of CRT in schools is to propagandize children with the “oppressor vs. oppressed” narrative, raising class consciousness at an early age to better recruit foot soldiers for the revolution.

GOALS OF CRT

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

A necessary ingredient to inspire the revolution is “class consciousness.” This refers to the “oppressed” class in society being well aware not only of their victim status but also their role as the revolutionary force. Without this consciousness, the “oppressed” won’t rise up to overthrow the current social order. As noted above, the failure of the working class to lead the revolution was caused in large part because workers in Western nations began enjoying comfortable lifestyles and therefore couldn’t be convinced of their oppression, according to the Frankfurt School theorists.

Moreover, critical to the revolution is to recruit members of the “oppressor” class to join the revolution. This is accomplished in no small part by convincing members of the designated oppressor class that they are indeed oppressors and should atone for their sin by actively joining the movement to overthrow the current social order.

Georg Lukács, a Hungarian Marxist and leading thinker of the Frankfurt School, wrote about class consciousness in his 1968 book “History and Class Consciousness.” Lukács described the proletariat’s “awakening of its class consciousness” as its “sharpest weapon” in the struggle.²⁴

Moreover, Lukács insisted that “the fate of the revolution” will depend on the “ideological

maturity of the proletariat, i.e. on its class consciousness.”²⁵ In short, without class consciousness, there is no revolution.

This leads us to the question: who will lead the raising of this class consciousness?

The group of academics, intellectuals, and other influencers tasked with instilling the narrative of oppression and exploitation in an effort to raise class consciousness is known as the “vanguard” of the revolution. The role of the vanguard is to convince the chosen revolutionary class that they are indeed not only oppressed but also the group that needs to rise up and usher in the revolution overthrowing the current social order.

Today’s vanguard has shifted its sights from the workers to identity-based class consciousness. To convince nonwhite people they are “oppressed” to create an urgency for revolution is their goal. Meanwhile, they attempt to recruit white people to the cause by convincing them of their “privileged” status in society, hoping to create a guilt that will inspire them to join the cause by becoming “actively anti-racist” and an “ally” of the revolution.

This is the real reason for the spread of CRT in schools: to propagandize children with the “oppressor vs. oppressed” narrative to raise class consciousness at an early age to better recruit foot soldiers for the revolution.

WHAT CRITICAL RACE THEORY TEACHES

Critical race theorists believe that racism is systematic and structural. Dominant groups use racism systematically to maintain imbalanced power relationships with historically oppressed groups. Moreover, they contend that white supremacy is an underlying structure that lies at the heart of American institutions, social structures, and professed ideals.

But white supremacy is so deeply embedded in the normal, day-to-day life of Americans that people seldom notice that it is operating to impart advantages or “privilege” to some at the expense of others, they argue.

Critical race theorists contend that white people are complicit in the production and reproduction of systemic racial injustice. White people express their racial biases through their interactions with people of color, and, borrowing from the ideas of psychoanalysts, they usually do not realize that these socially conditioned behaviors are pulling the behavioral strings. White people from all walks of life tolerate racism because they benefit from it materially or psychologically, while people of color accept it because they have found that it is in their best interest to do so or simply do not know any better.

Critical race theorists demand that white people deal with “white emotionalities” (whites’ emotional investment in whiteness) and “white fragility” (whites’ defensiveness to questioning or challenging their racial worldviews, positions, or advantages). This requires deep psychological exploration, and many organizations have developed step-by-step programs to aid white people in this pursuit. In general, it is a multi-step process of self-reflection, confession, submission, reeducation, immersion, action, and evangelization.

In short, all white people are inherently racist. All social institutions are constructed to keep



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CRT not only serves to condemn people of color to lower socioeconomic status, it stokes up racial tension that can lead to violence.

the white “oppressors” in power. If you are non-white, the system is designed to keep you down. But what about successful people of color? Critical race theory explains that either their identity is indistinguishable from whites (such as in the case of Asian Americans) or they are a privileged, model minority that enjoys “brown privilege” (such as in the case of Indian Americans).

The debate over the status of Asians Americans continues to divide critical race theory enthusiasts. There is consensus that attitudes about Asian Americans began to shift after World War II. President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent 120,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps for fear that their loyalty to Japan would undermine American efforts to defeat the Axis powers. After the war, Asian American families began a process of assimilation and integration that produced generations of productive citizens. For some social justice activists, Asian Americans were successful only because they were complicit in systems of white privilege. This sets them apart from other nonwhite groups that challenged the status quo and thus did not share their good fortune.²⁶

When minority groups, such as Indian Americans, concede to the power structure created by whites, critical race theorists contend that they are guilty of “brown complicity” or “brown silence.” CNN producer Angela Dewan explained, “But what about brown silence? Just as people are being told to acknowledge their White privilege, calls are growing louder for South Asian diasporas, particularly Indians, in the UK, US and Canada to check their brown privilege and speak out against anti-Black racism.”²⁷ This way of thinking adds a new flavor to the claim that “silence is violence.”

One of the core tenets of critical race theory is intersectionality, a concept originated by le-

gal scholar and philosopher Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality refers to the way that individuals experience privilege and oppression as members of multiple identity groups, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. In this way, individuals have intersecting identities that represents multiple layers of privilege, oppression, or both. For example, a poor white woman enjoys the privilege of whiteness and the burden of gender and socioeconomic oppression. A poor black woman, on the other hand, is subject to classism, racism, and sexism. By applying the concept of “standpoint theory,” this means that the poor black woman understands oppression in ways that the poor white woman, because of her white privilege, can never know. In fact, the poor black woman can comprehend both the perspective of the oppressed and the oppressor, producing superior insights into the nature of reality. Jose Medina calls this insight “kaleidoscopic consciousness.”²⁸

Regrettably, the critical race theory formulation perpetuates a sense of helplessness among people of color and those belonging to nondominant identity groups. Such helplessness perpetuates a self-fulfilling prophecy as young minorities are taught that the entire “system” exists to prevent their success, so why try?

And imagine teaching white children they are a source of someone else’s oppression not because of anything they’ve actually done but because of how they look. Imagine teaching people of color to blame white people for failing to attain educational, occupational, or financial goals. Both of these messages can generate resentment. CRT not only serves to condemn people of color to lower socioeconomic status, it stokes up racial tension that can lead to violence.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN SCHOOLS

Denying that critical race theory has infiltrated our schools is a lie. We must be clear, however, that it is not the theory itself being taught in schools, but rather the theory inspiring lesson plans, activities, and teachers' approach to instruction.

National media outlets have documented efforts by the National Education Association and other trade and professional associations to advance critical race theory. Some North Carolina public school educators and administrators enthusiastically embrace CRT-inspired pedagogy.

It's also a lie to smear CRT opponents of wanting to "ban" the teaching of slavery or Jim Crow laws in history classes. At no point during the debate over revisions to North Carolina's

social studies standards did opponents of the new standards demand that state education officials eliminate sensitive or difficult topics from the public school social studies curriculum. Instead, they objected to placing race, gender, and related identity conflicts and simplistic oppressor/oppressed dichotomies at the center of American history.

Similarly, legislation introduced to eliminate the racial biases inherent in CRT does not seek to eliminate the teaching of difficult topics. What opponents of this bill fear is that it implores teachers to be impartial — in accordance with the state's code of ethics for teachers — rather than impose their preferred historical narratives on impressionable children, often without



the knowledge or consent of their parents or guardians.

Critical race theory infiltrates public schools in various ways, starting with teachers’ initial and ongoing training. While alternative pathways to a license exist, the most direct way to obtain a teacher license is to receive an education degree from a state-approved, university-based educator preparation program. This reality provides a captive audience for schools of education and a pipeline for transmitting CRT from the university to the next generation.

Indeed, in the introduction section to “Critical Race Theory: An Introduction,” Angela Harris, distinguished professor at the University of California at Davis School of Law, bragged about how CRT is infecting education colleges:

“Critical race theory has exploded from a narrow sub-specialty of jurisprudence chiefly of interest to academic lawyers into a literature read in departments of education, cultural studies, English, sociology, comparative literature, political science, history and anthropology around the country.”²⁹ (Emphasis added.)

North Carolina’s public universities are not immune to the influence of critical race theory in teacher education programs. In a 2020 white paper titled, “Becoming Anti-Racist ELA Teachers,” North Carolina State University College of Education professors Michelle M. Falter, Chandra L. Alston, and Crystal Chen Lee urged white prospective English language arts (ELA) teachers to commit to “fight racism wherever it is found, including within yourself.”³⁰

The authors laid out a therapeutic process for white students to grapple with their “implicit” biases against people of color. “To begin this

process, it is helpful to consider the types of interactions you had with people who were different from you when growing up, if you have ever harbored prejudiced thoughts towards those from different backgrounds and what effects those thoughts have on students who come from different backgrounds,” they wrote.³¹

The most common manifestation of critical race theory is through CRT-informed instruction. Again, it is important to distinguish that the “theory” itself is not taught in schools, rather that CRT *informs* classroom lessons.

Daily classroom activities offer ample opportunities for activist educators to impose their radical worldview on unsuspecting children. They may include a wholesale introduction to

the tenets of critical race theory or the selective use of its key terms and concepts under the banner of “culturally responsive pedagogy.” While most common in English language arts and social studies classes, CRT approaches have also been incorporated in science, mathematics,

health, and arts instruction.

For example, in a 2021 submission to the Fairness and Accountability in the Classroom for Teachers and Students (F.A.C.T.S.) Task Force, a parent raised concerns about a “how whiteness is a problem in science” assignment in a high school chemistry class. Another sent a slide of a teacher’s presentation about “color-blind racism” and the “privilege” associated with those who do not identify racism as the cause of “contemporary inequalities.” Multiple parents reported the assignment of “Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You” by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi.³²

Behavioral programs designed to address

**2019
GOLDSBORO**

Goldsboro High School principal Christopher D. Horne directed teachers to do a “privilege scavenger hunt” by reading Peggy McIntosh’s “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” Horne required teachers to write a “cultural autobiography,” read a “CRT and the Brain” handout, and conduct a classroom gap analysis.

**August, 2019
WAKE COUNTY**

An English teacher at Heritage High School in Wake County distributed a “diversity inventory” to students in her class of tenth-grade students. The assignment asked students to indicate their religion, race/ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, country of origin, age, socioeconomic status, and gender. Once the students recorded their answers, the teacher required students to answer a series of probing questions about themselves.

**February, 2021
CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools teacher flagged a “Privilege Self-Assessment” worksheet distributed to his middle school students. The worksheet asked students to identify their “privilege” by placing checkmarks next to personal attributes, such as socioeconomic status, religion, gender identity, nationality, and the possession of modern utilities.

**June, 2021
CHARLOTTE**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools paid Ibram X. Kendi \$25,000 for a 43-minute interview about race and racism.

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the psychological needs of children or their conduct in the classroom also may be designed with CRT in mind. The premise behind restorative justice programs, which are designed to replace traditional punishments for student misbehavior, is that our predominantly white teacher workforce punishes students of color disproportionately due to implicit or subconscious racial biases. Standards for teaching children how to interact with others and regulate their emotions, known as social-emotional learning (SEL), also incorporate elements of CRT through diversity inventories and privilege self-assessments.

Finally, CRT scholars argue that white people have systematically excluded people of color from the teaching profession.³³ Thus, critical race theorists seek to change the racial composition of the public school workforce. These efforts range from programs to recruit more students of color into the ranks of teachers and administrators to the desire to match the race of education personnel to the race of the student population.

ENDNOTES

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4800 Six Forks Rd., #220
Raleigh, NC 27609
919-828-3876
johnlocke.org

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