



The Invention of the White Race

By Theodore W. Allen

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The Invention of the White Race By Theodore W. Allen

The complete two-volume set of the groundbreaking analysis of the birth of racism in America.

When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no “white” people there. Nor, according to colonial records, would there be for another sixty years. In this seminal two-volume work, *The Invention of the White Race*, Theodore W. Allen tells the story of how America’s ruling classes created the category of the “white race” as a means of social control. Since that early invention, white privileges have enforced the myth of racial superiority, and that fact has been central to maintaining ruling-class domination over ordinary working people of all colors throughout American history.

Since publication in the mid-nineties, *The Invention of the White Race* has become indispensable in debates on the origins of racial oppression in America. Volume One utilizes Irish history to show the relativity of race and racial oppression as a form of social control. Volume Two details the development of racial oppression and racial slavery in colonial Virginia and, more broadly, Anglo-America. In this updated edition, scholar Jeffrey B. Perry provides a new introduction, a short biography of the author, a select bibliography and a study guide.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A powerful and polemical study.” (*Times Literary Supplement*)

“A monumental study of the birth of racism in the American South which makes truly new and convincing points about one of the most critical problems in US history … a highly original and seminal work.” (**David Roediger, author of *The Wages of Whiteness***)

“A must read for all social justice activists, teachers, and scholars.” (**Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, author of *Red Dirt: Growing Up Okie***)

“Allen transforms the reader’s understanding of race and racial oppression from what mainstream history often portrays as an unfortunate sideshow in U.S. history, to a central feature in the construction of U.S. (and indeed global) capitalism. Allen destroys any notion that ‘race’ is a biological category but instead locates it in the realm of a construction aimed at oppression *and* social control. This is more than a look at history; it is a foundation for a path toward social justice.” (**Bill Fletcher Jr., coauthor of *Solidarity Divided***)

“Decades before people made careers ‘undoing racism,’ Ted Allen was working on this trailblazing study, which has become required reading.” (**Noel Ignatiev, coeditor of *Race Traitor*, author of *How the Irish Became White***)

“A real *tour de force*, a welcome return to empiricism in the subfield of race studies, and a timely reintroduction of class into the discourse on American exceptionalism.” (*Times Higher Education Supplement*)

“As magisterial and comprehensive as the day it was first published, Theodore Allen’s *The Invention of the White Race* continues to set the intellectual, analytical and rhetorical standard when it comes to understanding the real roots of white supremacy, its intrinsic connection to the class system, and the way in which persons committed to justice and equity might move society to a different reality.” (**Tim Wise, author of *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son***)

“One of the most important books of U.S. history ever written. It illuminates the origins of the largest single obstacle to progressive change and working-class power in the U.S.: racism and white supremacy.” (**Joe Berry, author of *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower***)

“A must read for educators, scholars and social change activists – now more than ever! Ted Allen’s writings illuminate the centrality of how white supremacy continues to work in maintaining a powerless American working class.” (**Tami Gold, director of *RFK in the Land of Apartheid* and *My Country Occupied in Slave Plantation Societies***)

“Few books are capable of carrying the profound weight of being deemed to be a classic – this is surely one. Indeed, if one has to read one book to provide a foundation for understanding the contemporary U.S. – read this one.” (**Gerald Horne, author of *Negro Comrades of the Crown***)

“A richly researched and highly suggestive analysis … Indispensable for readers interested in the disposition of power in Ireland, in the genesis of racial oppression in the U.S., or in the fluidity of ‘race’ and the historic

vicissitudes of ‘whiteness.’” (*Choice*)

“The most important book on the origin of racism in what was to become the United States – and more important now perhaps than when it was first released in the mid nineties.” (**Gregory Meyerson, coeditor of *Cultural Logic***)

“*The Invention of the White Race* is an important work for its meticulously researched materials and its insights into colonial history. Its themes and perspectives should be made available to all scholars ... A classic without which no future American history will be written.” (**Audrey Smedley, author of *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview***)

About the Author

Theodore W. Allen was an independent scholar, coalminer, mailhandler, engineering draftsman, teacher and librarian.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Esther Price:

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