



THE BOOKSHELF

ECONOMICS OF RACISM, U.S.A.

A BOOK REVIEW
By William L. Patterson

At the present historical moment the vast majority of Black citizenry of these United States, as a matter of fact, the vast majority of all citizens of color in the U.S.A., are living through one of the most difficult periods of their lives.

Inflation and unemployment are taking tremendous toll of a standard of living that has never been other than critical for them. Ghetto dwellers, because of miseducation and deprivation of skills in the industrial field have consciously been made "the last to be hired the first to be fired." This is their normal condition. Now facing a major crisis of this system which has penetrated every social sphere, they are the first to be forced off the jobs they got. They will be the last to be rehired, if at all.

It is at such a critical hour that the *Economics of Racism, U.S.A.: Roots of Black Inequality*, by Victor Perlo, one of this country's leading economists, appears on the scene. This book is published by International Publishers, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. It is a historic document. Just a casual survey of its table of contents will give to class conscious labor leaders and those seriously participating in the Black liberation struggle an awareness of its far-reaching economic, political and ideological significance.

"The book examines the question of responsibility. Who causes and perpetuates discrimination? Who organizes resistance to ending it? Who profits from it?"

Perlo documents the answers to these vital questions. In ferreting out the trouble he writes:

"There is now a comprehensive set of legal guarantees of equality in education, housing, employment. But the enforcement of these laws is in the hands of a social class that profits inequality, and which throws up an infinite series of roadblocks against making the laws effective."

Of course, what is called "education" is, particularly in the realm of the humanities, "miseducation" bringing false social values to Black as well as white. And, without mass pressure, the progressive laws that were passed may well be nullified through adverse action by the judiciary or the administrative branches of government. The conspiracy of government is the bulwark against the enforcement of progressive legislation. The guarantees are false promises.

Perlo says: "This book is offered to black readers who, it is hoped will find material of use in their liberation struggles." It is offered, too, to white readers who, the author says, "Must be convinced that they have everything to lose by permitting or encouraging the apartheid trend." What they have lost is shown by the crisis.

"Discrimination against Blacks adversely affects white working people in many ways in addition to the downward drag in earnings." The downward drag on national morality is also shown.

The percentage of Black employment of total employed by large private employers and major occupational groups is described in detail.

In his scathing criticism of the system of capitalism and its racism the author deals exhaustively with the futility of Black capitalism and quotes Dr. W.E.B. DuBois who wrote:

"I saw clearly that the solution of letting a few of our capitalists share with whites in the exploitation of our masses, would never be a solution of our problem but the forging of eternal chains."

This is said without denying Blacks the "right" to enter the sphere of man's exploitation of his fellow man if the desire is there. But Perlo adds, a study of the National Industrial Conference Board which concluded, "To date these efforts have had little overall impact."

Coming to labor union influences Perlo holds that: "It is in the self-interest of white workers to recognize that their general needs as workers can only be met with any degree of sufficiency and security to the extent that the special needs of Black workers are met simultaneously." The emphasis is his and the evidence of this self-interest is provided. That is the key to Black-white unity in struggle. Perlo castigates the role of employer played by the government under the existing system. He ends with a program to be equal, a program to eliminate racism and advance the interests of all people.

Black teens: Victims of recession

From Focus Magazine

THE CURRENT RECESSION has taken a wide and highly publicized toll. The nightly news flashed pictures on the screen showing factory workers lining up for unemployment assistance, dramatizing production cutbacks in many industries.

But the recession has had two special victims. They are: 1) Affirmative action efforts to make up for past discrimination against Black workers; and 2) The Black teenager.

Affirmative action is one of the first victims of any prolonged recession. During the economic boom of the early '70s, efforts to reverse age-old patterns of racial discrimination by many employers and some labor unions were made easier because more jobs were opening up, and it was relatively easy to hire some Blacks to fill some of those jobs.

It takes little imagination to forecast what is likely to happen when jobs are being cutback, however, Blacks, who in many companies were hired only in the past few years, fall victim to the "last hired, first fired" pattern that is not only traditional, but in many cases is also written into labor pacts.

MEANWHILE, an already intolerable unemployment rate among Black teenagers has climbed sharply as the recession deepened. Even in the relatively prosperous year of 1969, when overall unemployment was 3.5 percent, the rate among Black teenagers was 24 percent. With figures for the second quarter of 1975 showing an overall unemployment rate of 8.9 percent, the rate for Blacks between 16 and 19 years old was a staggering 37.8 percent.

According to official figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 364,000 young Black men and women were pounding the pavement looking for work this past spring.

This figure understates the problem, however, because many teenagers drop out of the labor force in despair, and thus are not counted among the unemployed. Government figures show that as the recession grew worse, the number of Blacks who dropped out of the labor force because they felt they could not find a job doubled between the first quarter of 1975.

THE FEELING that it is futile to look for a job undoubtedly helps explain the fact that as of last October, 27 percent of Black teenagers who had graduated from high school were

out of the labor force. The picture was even bleaker for high school dropouts, of course: only 58.4 percent of the Black dropouts ages 16 to 19 were trying to find jobs, and of those who were trying, 36.3 percent were unsuccessful.

The Black teenage unemployment problem is not confined to the poor sections of our cities, although it is greater there. As of the first quarter of this year, the unemployment rate for Black teenagers was 42.7 percent in poverty areas, and 35.1 percent in nonpoverty areas. Neither figure can be considered acceptable.

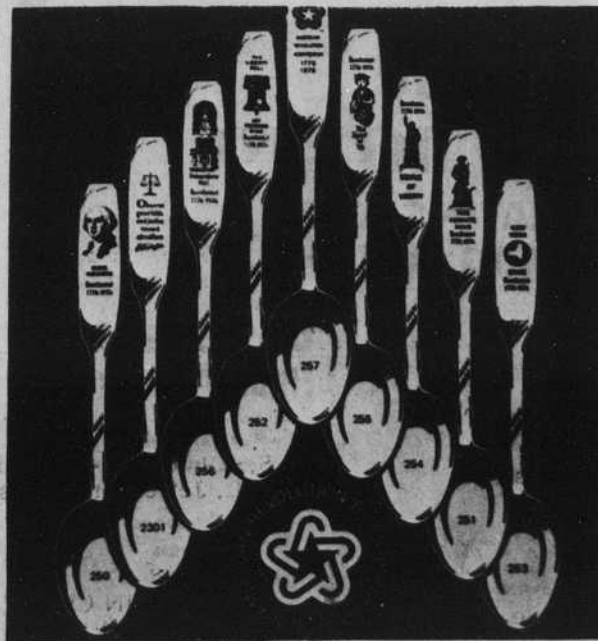
EVEN MORE disturbing that the fact of high Black unemployment is the lack of attention it has received. The feeling has prevailed that it is not important, because the male head of the household was the important person to consider. Of course, unemployment among Black male adults is bad enough to cause alarm on its own: 12.1 percent as of this spring.

But the facts are that among Black families, 35 percent are headed by women (compared to only 11 percent among white families), and that Black families headed by women are generally low-income. In fact, 67 percent of all Black families below the poverty level are headed by women.

As a result, Black teenagers with jobs contribute a significant share of their families' total incomes. The median income of Black teenagers is just over \$600. This is almost eight percent of the median income of all Black families, and more than 13 percent of the median income earned by Black families headed by women.

It may be true that white teenagers also have trouble finding jobs. But while the Black teenager unemployment rate was 37.8 percent in the second quarter of this year, the unemployment rate for white teenagers was 18.3 percent, or less than half the Black rate.

The implications are clear: A large portion of the nation's Black teenagers--at least 43 percent in poverty areas--are idle. Even if the recession eases somewhat in the coming months, the unemployment rates are likely to lag behind most indicators of industrial production, because most employer will wait to see whether demand holds steady before taking on more workers. Meanwhile, the push for affirmative action has weakened, and the gap between Black teenagers and their white counterparts is not likely to close.



A new spoon was created to mark the 200th Anniversary and is officially recognized Commemorative of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, authorized under Public Law 93-179. The spoon, the only one so licensed at the present time, is produced under License No. 76-19-0514.

It takes the form of an American 5-pointed star, surrounded by continuous stripes which form a second star. This double star is symbolic of the two centuries which have passed since the American Revolution. These stripes suggest the furled bunting traditionally used in times of celebration throughout the nation.

This 4 1/2" demitasse spoon retails for only \$2.95 for silver plate and \$4.50 for gold plate. It comes gift boxed, singly, or in sets of 2, 3, 4, 6 and 12, mixed or matches.

Produced by Oneida Ltd., Silversmiths, exclusively for Commemorative Gifts Ltd., 323 Washington St. Ogdensburg, N. Y. 13669.

Lower taxes for historic properties

John Richardson, acting Administrator for the State Parks System, recently announced that a provision in Nevada's new "Greenbelt Law" applies to the preservation of sites designated as "historic."

"Owners of noncommercial properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are considered prime candidates for inclusion under the law according to the Nevada Tax Commission.

Essentially, historic properties would be taxed at

lower rate to encourage retention of their historic values," aid Richardson.

The new law goes into effect on July 1, 1976. However, in order to qualify for next year, owners of registered properties must make application to their County Assessors not later than Oct. 6, 1975.

Details of applying the law are still being worked out by the Tax Commission and implementation will be based upon the interpretation of each County Assessor.

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