

Spring 2024

A Revised Socialism: Concerning Race, Colonial Violence, and Class

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Recommended Citation

Bougher, Gray E., "A Revised Socialism: Concerning Race, Colonial Violence, and Class" (2024). *Senior Projects Spring 2024*. 29.

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A REVISED SOCIALISM:
CONCERNING RACE, COLONIAL VIOLENCE, AND CLASS

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2024

Dedication

I would like to thank my family and my parents for supporting and believing in me along my journey to get to where I am today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my senior project advisor William Dixon, for sharing his guidance and knowledge with me in the process of writing this senior project. I would also like to thank all of the professors I have learned from during my time at Bard College that have helped prepare me for this moment.

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Introduction

“The social revolution cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself of all its superstitions concerning the past” (Karl Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire)

The definition of socialism and its associations are inconsistent across individual lines.

What is thought to be socialism is not one homogenous agreement on the concrete elements of its reality. It is important to understand for the purposes of this work, that what is to be argued for is a renewed self-critical democratic socialism. Democratic socialism is anti-statist and anti-authoritarian, unlike some communist governments that have formed in the past. Oftentimes, socialism is synonymous with totalitarianism and violence in the minds of many. Democratic socialism is also not in alignment with the social democrats because it does not believe in the ability of mixed economies such as a welfare system under capitalism because it leaves many businesses under private control without democratic decision making.

Democratic socialism is a political ideology that supports a socially owned economy with democratically run workplaces, worker’s self-management in the marketplace, decentralization, and a democratically, socially planned economy. It supports the liberation from various forms of oppression, whether it be economical, social, or political. Democratic socialism bases itself on traditional socialist theory, such as Marxism. However, an efficacious socialist pursuit should be willing to point out flaws within various socialist theories and practices and build upon itself through a constant exchange of learning and historically contingent responses to changing societies. This essay will examine certain flaws within socialist theory, especially focusing on

issues of race, colonial violence, and class structure, and how to respond to these gaps (Adam Volle).

The socialist agenda and many major socialist thinkers throughout the time of their modern existence have largely ignored or not taken seriously enough the issue of racism as a *historical construct* that predates, but was used to, kickstart and uphold capitalism. By failing to allocate *adequate* attention to the issue of racism both historically and in the present day, socialism does itself an injustice because it cannot fulfill its primary goal of improving the quality of human life for all. This is not to say that all socialists have been unaware of racism's role in upholding capitalism nor that they have completely ignored the need for an anti-racist agenda altogether. In fact, socialism often has connotations with anti-racism and according to Cornel West, an American philosopher and political activist, "the bulk of democratic socialists are among the least racist of Americans" (6). However, their attempts at comprehending race in correlation with, and outside of class struggle has been insufficient. Additionally, many socialists incorrectly assume that the elimination of class differentiations itself will eradicate racism. Implementing a new societal order will not solve racism as it cannot simply undo deeply internalized prejudices. A working-class government is not the end-all cure to social ills.

The problem with this hyper-focused class conception is that it allows room for complacency under the current capitalist system, both in the past and today. It allows people to ignore the grievances of their fellow marginalized citizens as they, the white proletariats, focus simply on their socialist task and ignore the uncomfortable reality that not only are they themselves regressing in their own objectives but they are causing a regression in the objectives of the anti-racist movement.

To be fair, for just a moment to those who believe this, capitalism does use racism to make itself stronger and therefore, racism cannot be eradicated without the expulsion of capitalism. However, it is still an inevitable reality that racism will continue as an ideology even in the establishment of a socialist society. It is, however, the socialist program's societal organization that gives the highest optimal chance for a continued and unyielding existence of anti-racist action.

This essay will argue that democratic socialism needs to be implemented in response to the current problems arising from capitalism in a way that engages sufficiently with anti-racist coalitions and groups. It will imagine what the future of the left concerning race and class should look like and the challenges of its implementation. Socialism is needed today to resolve societal problems surrounding race and visa versa.

The essay will first analyze Marxist and Kropokinist theories on socialism to defend and critique the foundational theories of socialism. It will then explore historical racism in feudalism and capitalist societies looking at theories written by Cedric Robinson, Barabra Fields, and other various historians to examine socialism's relationship to various anti-racist struggles. Next, the essay will examine socialism's relationship to revolutionary violence, focusing on anti-colonial pursuits. A responsible socialism will reflect on violence, as it is a constant brutal phenomenon that has often been used in transitions to communism and in anti-colonial efforts to liberation. Socialism is not necessarily pacifist and recognizes the need for discretion in pursuing violence for liberation. Evidently, socialism has at times perpetrated violence in a level of unnecessary magnitude. The essay will ask questions concerning what kinds of violence are deemed legitimate (and who gets to make that decision) and what kinds are not. It will also ask when and

where, violence is justifiable. It should be noted that some violence is used for the purpose of the oppression of others while other forms of violence have the end goal of peace and non-violence. We will look at anti-colonial violence through the psychiatric lens of Franz Fanon. Finally, the essay will examine the complex class structure in the United States and how that complicates liberation efforts that contradict Marx's original vision of class structure. It will then provide suggestions as to how we might take influential socialist action today.

Chapter 1: A Theoretical Defense of Socialism

To put into writing the subconscious or conscious awareness of people or the general public, their modes of existence in society, their sentiments, their *beings*, is to collectivize unity and to create a space for imagination and critical thought. It is to put under light what is already in existence in a way that forms a new mode of thinking.

Frantz Fanon, a Francophone Afro-Caribbean Marxist writer, philosopher, and psychiatrist, wrote a psychoanalytical autobiography called *Black Skin White Masks* in which he writes on the essence of being as a black man and on postcolonial thought. He states that “it is through self-consciousness and renunciation, through a permanent tension of his freedom, that man can create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world.” (206) This essay’s entire goal is aligned with this sentence. Its main objective, through its defense of implementing a modern form of democratic socialism alongside examining its relationship to race, colonialism, and class structure, is inspired entirely by a desire for a world in which humans exist free from the majority of the burdens which current capitalist societies place upon them. The search for a new response to capitalism today, as communist governments have failed around the world to implement a democratic, non-authoritarian, proletarian government, aligns with the values of rejecting complacency and of imagining the very real possibility of a higher quality of life for all.

Let us defend some of the basic theories of socialism that Marx successfully outlines before moving forward that are still relevant in socialist efforts today. Karl Marx was the first theorist to introduce modern-day socialism in scholarly writing. He is known as the father of socialism. He inspired global revolutions and promoted new ways of societal existence.

However, communism today has become associated with authoritarian governments, repression,

and systemized mass murders because of how the governments of countries such as Cuba, Russia, and China chose to carry out communism. Therefore, today, the word to be used that aligns closest to Marxist theory is democratic socialism. Marx meant for communism to be democratic, not tyrannical. He meant for the means of production to be in the hands of a proletarian state not a state of the few.

A beneficial and relevant part of Marxist theory is that of primitive accumulation in which capitalism is the assumed mode of political economy. This is important to analyze because it allows for an imagination and possible integration of a society that functions differently. Karl Marx was the first political theorist to criticize the willing neglectfulness of critical political economists before him. These economists fail to analyze the beginnings of capitalism as they assume its history without explaining its development. Their writings presuppose the existence of private property and capitalism so as to promote its overwhelming power in the world. To do this is to maintain a “bourgeois society...that becomes ossified in a predetermined mold, [which] stifl[es] any development, progress, or discovery” (Fanon, 206). Marx argues that societies condition people in a way that molds them into the wheels that ensure capitalism’s continuation. He wants to show that people are not synonymously prone to a certain kind of human nature but rather that they develop into selves related to their reality. He believes that people subconsciously adapt and develop into specific existences based on what they are surrounded by. Therefore, capitalist theorists would not openly display ideas of other kinds of socioeconomic and political organization so as to sustain capitalism and to form and display it as inevitable and unquestionable. Capitalism did not gracefully or naturally fall upon civilizations as the best outcome to come from feudalism but rather was sustained and built up during the industrial

revolutions through force and violence. Marx would agree that capitalism did in some aspects, make up for deficiencies that existed under feudalism. It freed serfs from their masters and they gained citizenship, the right to vote, and the right to own land. However, he would then argue that these workers fell under a new type of enslavement, that of the wage-laborer in which man no longer owns the means of his production and the separation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is constantly being reproduced.

Classical political theorists write with conviction that the economy sustains itself under capitalism through free market coordination. However, capitalism sustains itself through the assumption of its own existence and through the assertion that there is no other option. Under capitalism, the worker has become reliant on the market and he adapts a market compulsion in order to gain the bare necessities of subsistence that allows them to simply continue existing as a slave to their labor, their product, and the owners to which they provide an unending accumulation of surplus value. Capitalism carefully structures itself in a way that ensures man's reliance on the market rather than on himself and his community. It is a system that wants to eradicate the skills necessary to provide for oneself. Under capitalism, man is left with only his labor to offer as a form of exchange for survival.

Another aspect of his theory that is still relevant today, is his belief in capitalism's ability to enslave and repress people. Marx believes that capitalism keeps people from realizing the fullest extent of themselves as beings. For example, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* cannot fully be understood without reading Marx's "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" which was unfortunately not published until 1932, creating misunderstanding surrounding his theories. In the Manifesto, Marx lays out the political agenda of the communist party, their

basic values, and the inevitability of revolution against the bourgeoisie to establish a proletarian state. Of course, one can see that the goal of improving the lives of workers is present in the Manifesto. However, the Manuscripts outline the underlying *theory* that supports this goal. The Manuscripts by Marx demystifies an unclearness that exists in the Manifesto by further exploring the state of man under capitalism and his potential to live without it. The Manuscripts make it clear that the true goal for Marx is not communism in and of *itself* as it may appear to be under the Manifesto. Rather his goal is the emancipation and fulfillment of man *through* communism as a *means* to achieve a state in which man exists in his most unadulterated, truest, and freest form. Communism is not simply the abolishment of private property and the establishment of a proletarian ruling class. Rather, it is a process used to gain freedom and humanity for all, which has yet to exist.

Marxist theory also analyzes the alienation of man, which is a phenomenon that has carried itself through the years. He argues that fundamentally, the product of man's labor is alienation. With no other alternative than to rely on the market, man presents and produces himself as a commodity, as his labor itself is the only product he has to offer to the capitalist. He does not own himself nor his product, which both confront him as alien and hostile. He becomes a slave to the product he is meant to produce which he then loses to an alien power, which is the capitalist. His labor becomes "a sacrifice of [his] life" ("Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", 81).

The worker is existing in a defeating and unattainable paradox which he will never escape as long as he works for his oppressor. Man continues to be reduced to a decrepit humanless state the more effort he exerts to try to improve his situation. The capitalist's purpose

is to receive the fullest extent of labor he can from the worker because the worker is one of his costs of production. He must maintain the existence of his worker and his other materials for as long as he can until the worker must be replaced (*Wage Labor and Capital*, 206). Therefore, the value of the worker becomes simply the “power and magnitude of his production” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”, 70). His wages are kept at the lowest level possible that allows him to survive and continue working as the capitalist reaps the benefits of his labor, flipping profits and creating excess wealth for themselves (*Wage Labor and Capital*, 210). The larger the capitalist’s work force alongside increasingly proficient machinery, the more product he can produce in shorter amounts of time. The cost of his labor power becomes cheaper. The worker and the owner rely on each other and allow for the continued existence of the other. The worker continues his labor just merely to survive and will continue to work the next day to continue his simple existence. He therefore continues to reproduce capital for the owner.

Marx states that “free, conscious activity is man's species character” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” 76). He argues that labor under capitalism is neither free nor conscious. It is forced. Man gives all his talents to his product but the product is alienated from him and therefore indifferent. Humans are not bound to producing simply for necessity unlike animals. Man has the capability to produce things for pleasure and in “accordance with the laws of beauty” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”, 76). They can transcend a type of labor that is strictly for the purpose of fulfilling basic needs. Additionally, unlike animals who are only aware of their needs in the present, man has the capability to use his imagination and to produce with a goal in mind. He manipulates the materials or nature that he uses for production and realizes his own purpose in the process. (*Capital Volume 1*, 284) However, this is an

impossible undertaking under capitalism. However this prompts one to wonder if this concept still applies for those who enjoy their capitalist jobs and feel fulfilled. The response by Marx of course, is that they are simply not capable of comprehending the immeasurable extent to which their lives would be more fulfilling under communism. They are in no way an exception to capitalist enslavement nor to self-alienation. No matter how much one's wage is, it will still fall absurdly below the material wealth of the property owner and they will still remain in the absence of equilibrium. In a capitalist society, man's senses are reduced to their most basic, animalistic forms as he subordinates his will to his alienated work (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, 77) (*Capital Volume 1*, 284). The only time in a man's day in which he is conscious of his life activity is outside of the workplace. He goes home and engages in his limited sensuous being. He eats, he reproduces, he relaxes. It is the only time in which he does things of his own volition.

Labor "estranges the *species* from man." Man's species being is the essence of being human. It is man's human nature. Man lives on nature and is reproducing nature. He is a part of nature himself. Production is the life activity of man. However, his relationship to production changes as he works for the capitalist. He exists in opposition to his natural form as his "activity is not his spontaneous activity" and his species-being is objectified. His unfree life-activity becomes the totality of "his essential-being." Meaning that the whole of his life-activity, his purpose in life, is reduced to simply meeting his physical needs. The capitalist is indifferent to any other goals he may have. However, as a free species-being, he delivers himself back to his natural form, one of beauty and creativity which is not restricted by anxieties surrounding survival ("Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", 75-76).

The ultimate and sole solution to man's enslavement is the “positive transcendence of private property as the appropriation of human life” which will allow for a “complete return of man to himself as a social being” (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” 84). Man returns to his purest natural form. Communism will break down all existing estrangements and is the next historical phase necessary for human development (93). Private property is made possible through the “united action of all members of society” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 485). Man, according to Marx, will eventually and inevitably “wake up” and become aware of his situation. He will then refuse to continue to participate in the cycle of capital and private property in which he currently enables.

Communism exists as a mode in which man will again become self-aware and know himself in ways that would never have been possible otherwise. It is a reversal of the tragic reality of man in which he has no idea of who he is, what he enjoys, or what he is capable of. Under capitalism, man does not have the resources to understand who he is. With the abolishment of private property, which must not be understood as the abolishment of *personal* property as it often is, property loses its social class character and will no longer exist as a stampage of class distinctions (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 485). Without private property, man can enjoy the pleasures of life without having to own them, without competing for a life of comfort and luxury. Marx is a firm believer in progress and flourishing. Through communism Marx believes, everyone will have equal access to resources, pleasure, health, and education. The world will collectively progress at an incredible rate, as the life-activity of man and his sensuous being, is reinstated (“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” 88).

The establishment of communism is about liberation and the reimagining of society in a way that benefits the majority, not just the minority of the bourgeoisie.

While his “sensuous being” argument is generally strong, the idea that man is totally animal-like and has no ability to be fulfilled *at all* under capitalism can be contested. Humans have still managed to find creativity, love, purpose and compassion in their work even if it is not to the fullest extent it would be under socialism. However, he is focusing on a eurocentric view during the time of industrialization in which many people were greatly suffering. In modern times, this theory of the sensuous being is not entirely applicable for everyone.

Analyzing Kropotkin’s *Conquest of Bread* on luxury will aid in further understanding this concept (96). If one was to have everything he desired and needed in this life, then capitalism would cease to exist because it is reliant on citizens competing with each other to achieve the best life they can through the accumulation of higher wages. However, without capitalism the work of one person will be used to benefit all (29). Kropotkin realizes that humans have already seen a need for community and common ownership as they have established things such as libraries and public parks. This is complementary to Marx’s assertion that man will in no way *not* realize his unfortunate existence. They will come to realize that they have the “right to well-being” (30). Humans have been deceived and stolen from. They have come to believe that the beautiful experiences life has to offer, such as travel, free-time, good and healthy food, and access to resources are luxuries which can only be acquired by the lucky few who earn enough to do so. It is vital to remember however, that even those with enough money to have more life experiences than others are still not free or experiencing life to its fullest extent. Humans have societally assimilated low expectations for their standards of living. However, once the standard

of living is raised, they will be less willing to accept anything less than they deserve. Kropotkin, like Marx, believes that well-being for all is possible and the fact that so many people are deprived of it is absurd, unnecessary, and unethical (45).

Despite Marx's many contributions, there are some aspects of his theories that are worth criticizing and leaving in the past. In general, Marx is criticized by many scholars for his complete omission of the value of unwaged labor in the private sphere in which women reproduce the labor force and perform housework, and how in some ways the current female gender role was invented by capitalism. Though this essay will not delve into this subject, it is important to recognize it nonetheless. Additionally, he fails to *sufficiently* examine racism and colonialism as an integral factor leading up to and upholding capitalism. He fails to recognize how colonialism and racism exists outside of economics. He also makes the assertion that colonial violence against the colonized person is necessary for a country's development, which will be challenged in later chapters. He does mention enslavement and violence in his account of primitive accumulation, the process through which feudalism developed in capitalism, but fails to mention prejudices of any kind. Marxist theory assumes that problems such as sexism, racism, and colonialism can be solved through the abolishment of capitalism and the implementation of communism. This assumption is quite a shallow stance to stand by but many traditional revolutionary Marxist supporters today would agree. His theories have been profoundly influential and this is both beneficial and problematic. In the case of the relationship between the anti-racist struggle and class struggle, his theories have "prevented US socialist movements from engaging in anti-racist activity in a serious and consistent manner." (West, 6).

Even though the eradication of capitalism would be helpful in solving prejudices because they are an integral part of what upholds it, it is a bit of an absurd assumption that communism can eradicate all prejudices. Prejudice is deeply rooted in human consciousness and cannot simply be ousted out with the emergence of a new organization of society.

Additionally, Marx is incorrect in asserting that there is one unified revolutionary working class. Although addressing “the masses”, he fails to account for the intricacies of class. There are multiple class structures and its existence is more complicated than he made them seem. Furthermore, Marx is much too vague in his political agenda for a proletarian working class. Although he outlines the values of his political agenda, he fails to suggest any real solutions as to how to go about creating this new kind of social and economic system and how the people should conduct themselves after his so-called revolution. Due to his vagueness, the socialist agenda is weakened by a misunderstanding and confusion about what socialism actually is. There has been no universal and accepted definition and there still is not. Conversations with loyal Trotsky-Marxists in Paris points towards and proves this point. What is the exact plan? How will it be brought to fruition? The answers given to posed questions were unsatisfactory and they agreed that Marx failed to write on this issue. They asserted that people will determine what action to take when the time of the revolution comes. They were treating Marx as the messiah and refused to be critical of him to any extent. Another question posed to them was on what they would do if someone were to try to get in the way of a revolution. The answer was violence and death against the opposition saying simply that they would kill them. These answers create an uneasiness and uncomfortableness, as their responses are so extreme. Marx promoted violent uprisings which seems to go against his other assertion that socialism should be democratic.

Marx promotes a democratic proletarian government but does not specify if the transition to that new system should also be democratic. This brings us to the question of revolutionary violence. Later on, this essay will address questions of violence and whether or not there are legitimate forms of violence or not depending on the various historical and present-day circumstances. Engels warned that violence should only be used in non-democratic countries where a socialist agenda could not be implemented any other way but that powerful countries such as Britain and France should try to implement socialism democratically (Harrington, 63). Transitioning into a new society today should, if avoidable, not be done at gunpoint, as freedoms and democracy disappear. Later, the essay will touch on how logistically, a Marxist idea of revolution would not be feasible in a country such as the United States.

Marx's writing is both utopian and anti-utopian. His vagueness and inconsistency allowed for authoritarianism and/or totalitarianism to cloak itself under the guise of socialism, beginning with the Soviet Union. Marx failed to account for the possibility of states taking total control over their people during times of economic crises and systemic changes, although he addresses this possibility in some of his later writings. He also failed to anticipate how capitalist systems can easily take control over socialist reforms and use them to their advantage.

Additionally, Marx overestimated the ability of the proletariat to internationalize itself; that is their ability to unite themselves with workers around the world. He underestimated the power and influence of nationalistic tendencies that block the progress of socialist goals. This essay is also going to further examine how socialism has failed in the past in theory and practice, how socialists should respond to questions of anti-colonial violence and anti-racism, as well as how socialism might be implemented as a possible reality in the present day and in the future.

Socialism on the Question of Anti-Racism

“The historical development of world capitalism was influenced in a most fundamental way by the particularistic forces of racism and nationalism. This could only be true if the social, psychological, and cultural origins of racism and nationalism both anticipated capitalism in time and formed a piece with those events that contributed directly to its organization of production and exchange. Feudal society is the key.”

(Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*)

The issue of socialist organizations assuming that racism can be solved by eradicating class can be addressed by examining Cedric Robinson’s chapter one of *Black Marxism*, called “Racial Capitalism”. For one to assume that a classless society will have no racism, one must assume that racism was designed by capitalism to uphold it. Racism does play an important role in upholding capitalism by preying on minority groups to establish poverty and separation, however, racism precedes the establishment of modern capitalism. Because racism precedes capitalism, it cannot be eradicated by its absence. Capitalism did not create racism to divide the working class. Rather, racial capitalism and capitalism are one in the same thing because racialized social organization and antagonistic differences predated and seeped into the molding of capitalism itself. In both feudalism and capitalism, the marginalization of different people acts as an economic rationale. Both systems rely on dichotomy.

What is called racism today began to develop first during the Middle Ages in Europe, as it was dividing it based on territory, religion, culture, and appearance. For example, looking at religion in Medieval Spain, philosopher Adam Hochman’s article “Is ‘race’ modern” explains that Christians firmly separated themselves from Jews and Moors, denying them the possibility

of conversion to their faith because they believed that their fault was “ ‘in the blood’ ” and that they were “...deemed to be unalterable...and no amount of baptismal water could change this.”

Robinson further explains that in feudal Europe, people such as Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, Romans, and the Irish were often subjects of slavery. The many differences were later subsumed into the category of race during the Early Modern Era. During this era, when globalization and the colonization of peoples outside of Europe began to take place, all Europeans, because they were becoming metropolises in relation to other continents, had to find a way to distinguish and position themselves from the rest of the world. This is when the word race began to be used. Therefore, “the tendency of European civilization through capitalism was thus not to homogenize but to differentiate—to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into “racial” ones” (Robinson, 26). Fields further analyzes the effects of this phenomenon in the United States. The first indentured servants and slaves in the United States were white European immigrants. However, as more and more immigrants came to New England, it became harder to use them for labor because they had more mass strength and began demanding compensation. So, the bourgeoisie turned to the Atlantic Slave Trade. Africans did not have the same mass support as did Europeans and faced cultural barriers between themselves and the Europeans. Ultimately, they were easier to enslave and the race ideologies that flowed into the developing capitalist world allowed for an easy justification for their enslavement. The bourgeoisie would have gone to the moon to get cheap or free labor power but Africa was closer (Fields, 102).

Both feudalism and capitalism encourage divisions based on prejudice because it makes the control objective over citizens easier. As we have said, there is the argument that racism cannot be eradicated without first getting rid of capitalism. Of course, differences in economic

class can perpetuate and be one of the causes of racism. Some may still argue that racism can be eradicated in a socialist system because racism existed in feudalism before capitalism, not socialism. However, this argument can be rebuffed when looking at the theories of Barbara Fields, an American historian whose work focuses on social history in the United States. One of her influential works, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," expresses the lasting impacts of ideology. Ideologies, according to Fields, are not ideas because they are in themselves realities. Racial ideologies, the specified mode of being that becomes attached to a certain group of people and develop in various ways in each new epoch and territory, are dangerous for this reason. Additionally racial ideology is dangerous because it is "impossible for anyone to analyze that is trapped on its terrain" (100). She then addresses present problems arising from these lasting ideologies. Firstly, that of race relations. For example, British and the Irish relations are no longer considered race relations but when the relation is between an African and European country, they are. In doing this, Europeans have racialized themselves and others. Secondly, there is an assumption that every action or decision a black person makes is due to their race and additionally their culture. The only way to combat racial ideologies and myths which lead to oppression, is to find their origins and find "the strength and effectiveness of resistance to it." (Fields, 98-100, 103-105).

Categorizing people into hierarchies using ideologies such as racism, makes the justification of who will profit the least in society, easier to implement. Robinson and Fields disagree on the intrinsic nature of racism in capitalism. Fields, by showing that slavery began with white Europeans in the United States, wants to show that capitalism does not necessarily need racism; that it could have used any form of oppression. While this is true in an objective

sense, capitalism did in fact use race as a form of systematic oppression and therefore race is intrinsic to capitalism. However, just because race is intrinsic to capitalism does not mean that racism does not exist outside of the economic sphere nor that race cannot outlive capitalism. Racism permeates all areas of life and is a constantly evolving phenomenon, as well as the ideologies that enforce it. This argument between Robinson and Fields on contingency and intrinsicity is somewhat unproductive and takes away from the more important questions of how racism actually exists and maintains itself within a capitalist society. Rather, a greater focus should be on the arguments made by Jodi Melamed, who emphasizes the importance of connectedness to strengthen communities and create a better society.

Jodi Melamed's article, "Racial Capitalism", published in 2015, accounts for the black radical tradition that has emerged as a response to racial capitalism. Melamed quotes Robinson's definition of the black radical tradition as "the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" that stems from "a shared philosophy developed in the African past and transmitted as culture . . . a revolutionary [Black radical] consciousness was realized and the ideology of struggle formed." In interpreting the black radical tradition, it becomes evident that much of the history of indigenous and black people involves being stripped of their culture and forcefully separated from their communities. It involves an invasion of being; an invasion into their individuality and collective identity. Their identity becomes based on the most superficial aspect of their being, that of their appearance. Their identity has already been predetermined by others and every aspect of their being is disregarded and subsumed into harmful stereotypes. Additionally, this forms in them a diaspora of double consciousness; the feeling of having two identities, of belonging to two territories but also to none at all. They are

left to deal with a part of themselves that was forcefully fabricated by the state which has destroyed lives in exchange for profit accumulation. This is a legitimate form of violent capitalist, colonial oppression under the guise of legitimization through justifications such as the military, security concerns, and laws. Additionally, it is imperative to examine the revolutionary resistance and violence that Robinson attaches as part of the black radical tradition as a response to state violence because there exists within it a hypocrisy. The oppressed person's violence and resistance is condemned and deemed illegitimate. The state then uses their violence that it itself brought into their minds to form separatism. It does this by attaching their violence to their racial identity rather than their objective of freedom and fulfillment (76-80). In short, racism allows for the oppression of certain groups that would "otherwise appear to violate social rationality" (Melamed 78).

Additionally, Melamed argues that neoliberal democratic capitalism tries to paint itself as anti-racist and as a central hub to serve the interests of the people. But as racism is intrinsic to capitalism, it is not anti-racist in and of itself. It cannot be separated from racism no matter how democratic the capitalist system may be unless somehow racist ideologies are eradicated and capitalism finds another form of justification for the oppression of certain groups of people. It is clear now that capitalism must reduce the value of certain groups of people. To add onto this concept, it should be pointed out that although racism and capitalism uphold each other, the independent anti-racist struggles should not be allowed to be subsumed into the general class struggle because this allows for complacency in activist initiatives. The two are intertwined but also exist separately.

Next, we will further examine the issues of integration and separatism concerning racism in socialist groups in the United States. The question of the integration has been one of constant disagreements. First, we are to look into the Spartacist League, also called the Workers Vanguard Party in the United States which argues solely for integration and is against any separate organizations by communities searching for unity in common struggle. For the Vanguard Party, is it only about “cutting through the racial divide and building unity in the class based on a revolutionary program to fight black oppression” (1). The Workers Vanguard Party is unitary, highly disciplined, and militaristic. They claim to be the leadership of a single movement to revolution. They are tightly organized, centralized, and have no unions. There is therefore, hierarchy and a lack of democracy within the organization. This can be traced back to the party's origin, which took place under the Tsarist regime. The party was a secret militarized organization against the government. In advanced countries today, this type of extreme party need not exist as such. The party was established by Lenin, who developed a statist and undemocratic style in his initiatives towards socialism. His actions came to be in direct contrast to the mass parties of workers and peasants that Marx had wanted. The party has no community organizing, no coalitions, and is focused on domination and control.

The Leninist Vanguard Party in the United States asserts that the only way to gain black liberation is through a united multiracial vanguard party. The problem here is that it denounces any other political parties and is extreme in its belief in the use of militarism and secrecy. Through this claim, they are asserting that the issue of class is the only element that oppresses black workers, which is simply not true. They have a very limited view on the way to gain black liberation and liberation for all. They present themselves as the only solution to the racist and

capitalist dilemma and condemn all other groups with a disturbing fervor. They assert themselves as being the sole embodiment of the path to liberation as if they represent the ultimate untapped truth of our time. These socialists believe only in integration, so it is important to show that nationalist organizations of oppressed people do not cause a degradation or fragmentation of the socialist agenda.

However, the Vanguard's claim that racial divides weaken the working class power is true. They are correct in asserting that there will be no liberation for any person from the capitalist system if the workers are divided by hate. I would like to argue that the existence of many progressive groups with various political opinions are all important to the development of a better society. All black liberation groups should be allowed to exist but other groups should be open to minority groups and make efforts to not create barriers that could affect new membership. A dominantly white socialist group does not have the right to deny the organization of minorities into reserved spaces for themselves when they have little to no understanding of their experience. I do agree that it is in the interest of white workers to strive for the liberation of black workers "because it is the only way that they will make any advancements for their own emancipation from wage slavery." (8)

One should not ultimately dismiss all liberation efforts even if they are not socialist. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement that ramped up in solidarity and intensity with the death of George Flyod in 2020, would not have gained as much traction as it did if it had been presented as a socialist movement. The movement is a liberal one. The Workers Vanguard critiques the movement for focusing mainly on the issue of racism and not connecting it enough to class. While liberalism is "a dead end for black liberation" as it maintains the ruling class and

is relatively lackluster, the initiatives that it takes on from mass forces of discontent, do raise awareness and can help alter racist ideologies.

The Workers Vanguard newspaper, issue number 1177, released on March 17th, 2023 titled “Liberalism: Dead End for Black Liberation For Black Trotskyism” argues that the liberal response to Trump polarized the working class between white supremacists and minorities. It argues that they were “placing the blame for black oppression on the racism of white workers rather than the ruling class” so that nothing could truly be changed (8). The anti-racist liberal response is understandable because of the extreme racist stances being taken by white supremacists and while it is true that the ruling class establishes racial divides, one cannot simply deny the issue of racism between workers which cannot be solved through a one-party militaristic vanguard party. To do this is to deny the self determination and autonomy of various groups of people. The ruling class, especially during the Trump administration did help to facilitate a polarization of racial hate in America but in no way is the ruling class the only source of systemic racism. As has already been pointed out multiple times, getting rid of the ruling class will not eradicate racism. Trump simply opened up a space for white supremacists to more openly express their opinions. Socialism must realize and face the white worker’s racism head on.

Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement

“By the mid 1960s, along with much of the Black freedom movement around the country, the cadre that would go on to found DRUM began to reject the assumptions at the core of integrationism as well as the liberalism of the mainstream civil rights movement. The ideas and organizations of the Black Power movement began to influence the militants of Detroit and would be thrust into the international spotlight during the 1967 uprising.” -Denise Lynn

We have spent time examining how racism exists outside of class and now we will take a closer look at how racism actually does exist and is perpetuated by economic factors by looking at the development of the auto industry in Detroit. This section is being included to show how oppressed minorities chose to organize themselves in a socialist manner and how they respond to their oppressive conditions. We will see how community and black nationalism helped drive liberation for black people working in the auto industry. We will also examine the role of integration and separatism. Before doing this, for clarity, we must first make the distinction between the two opposing forms of nationalism. Nationalism is a complex phenomenon that constitutes various meanings. For rich countries, nationalism means believing that one's country is superior to others, and encouraging strong loyalty to one's nation. Nationalism is often a far-right ideology. It is conservative and tends to restrict international relations. However, nationalism works differently in colonized countries and for minorities within metropolises, such as the black automobile workers in the United States. Colonized countries or countries that want to resist imperialism use nationalism as a mode of defense. Nationalists in exploited countries are often left-wing and fight for economic or political independence, liberation from oppression, and better living conditions. For them, nationalism is a means of cultivating unity and strength. However, nationalizing countries or letting them become independent can create less than ideal conditions for countries. For example, it can happen that a powerful country that has exploited a poor one leaves its territory at the right moment and "gives" it its independence. The problem is that the colonizer country does not grant the country any aid to repair the immense damage caused, leaving the country in a critically damaged economic and political situation. It is also important to recognize that some people may be nationless due to genocide and displacement.

Nationalism as a form of resistance both in international and national contexts, allows oppressed peoples to collectivize in a way that protects their identity as well as in a way that preserves a space to process common struggle. Black nationalism is a mode of self-determination that developed in the Black Belt South and “constituted an oppressed nation because Black people formed a majority and the Civil War failed to liberate them.” (Denise Lynn) Nationalism and socialism can coexist when their purposes of liberation align.

General Baker, one of the important members of DRUM, or the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, which was formed in 1968, and the book *I Do Mind Dying* by Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, explains a brief history of the movement. From 1916 until 1970, many African Americans moved from the south to the north in search of better paying jobs and the promise of less racism. Many went to work in the automobile industry in Detroit. Henry Ford employed thousands of them and this created a strong loyalty towards him from about 17,000 African American workers, despite his lack of good intentions. Ford kept his factory in check by ensuring that there be ethnic separations between workers so as to block communication among workers and disincentivize them to organize. Ford hired masses of black workers for cheap labor and kept them separate from their white working counterparts to avoid unionizing. However, the opposite also occurred. The Chrysler Company was creating desperation among black workers by consistently firing mass amounts of them every few weeks to keep job insecurity high so that workers who were desperate just for a job would work harder and accept whatever conditions they were to work under (Georgakas and Surkin, 28).

The segregations within factories caused further discrimination between the white workers and the black workers. Black workers and white workers alike were exploited; however,

black workers faced much worse working conditions. In their factory segments, there were no safety regulations and the work week consisted of 10 to 12 hours per day, 7 days a week. The assembly line also continued to speed up and the companies did not compensate with more workers. It became more and more difficult to keep up physically with the job. Black workers were also not allowed advancement opportunities in the workplace and so remained in the most dangerous, low paying segments of the industry. The only way for their complaints to be heard was to go through a grievance procedure in which letters were sent in to corporate leaders where they then proceeded to sit in a stack of other complaints for months. When they did complain they were often disproportionately punished by the company. Any participation in protests could lead to an end to governmental aid or a sentence to prison. This was to discourage worker participation in decision making. The United Auto Workers Union (UAW) that was meant to represent the workers, had a coalition with factory management who were concerned about surplus output. The union and the management became one in the same thing, simply representing the business interests of the auto plants (Georgakas and Surkin, 26).

During the Great Depression, most auto workers became unemployed. Unemployment counsels formed which worked in efforts to house people and respond to the hunger strike of 1932. The sit down strikes of the auto workers consisted of white workers and black workers. They were reactionary strikes, as they were unplanned and many non-automobile workers took part without being asked. However, during these strikes in which people were demanding jobs, the police shot and killed some of the black workers. The outcome of these events was the establishment of black labor groups. They were so adamant that they eventually got a union contract at General Motors. The workers tried to do the same with Ford in 1941 but it was largely

unsuccessful due to the number of African Americans who were loyal to him. Despite strong unionizing efforts, the various automobile plants began to diminish in Detroit as well as in other cities. The plants moved to the suburbs, separated from each other. The plants also began to internationalize themselves. Both of these instances resulted in a higher level of unionizing barriers (General Baker on the History of Struggle in Detroit).

There was some difficulty in forming solidarity across racial lines in the auto industry. White workers would walk out of their jobs when black people tried to work alongside them and they held higher paying, safer jobs. For example, in “1943 we also have a case of 25,000 white workers at Ford’s Packard Plant in Detroit walking off after three Black workers were promoted.” Additionally, white policy and white police forces acted as an army enforcement in the black ghettos as they patrolled the streets (Mohammed Elnaiem).

DRUM wants to show why black struggle rejects integration by looking historically at how people within their movements have turned against them in the past. These people were white and in positions of power and often pushed back against specific black demands and were sympathetic to racist sentiments of their fellow white workers. In the film, *Finally Got the News* on the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, created by both white and black revolutionaries, we are told by Ron March, one of the founders of DRUM that “white workers came to support [them]. Some wanted to work with [them]. But they found out that management knew how to divide the whites. [They] decided that [they] could work best by organizing alone. [They] told whites to do the same thing. Once they did that, [they] could work with them on a coalition basis.” (39)

Between 1964 and 1972 there were rebellions across the country in over 300 cities. Through black nationalism and integrational protests with both black and white people, the race riots and rebellions were successful in changing the politics of Detroit. The political

establishment had incorporated far more black people, including the election of a black Mayor. More black officers also entered the police force. Other positive outcomes included the rise of Black power organizations and stronger leftists sentiments. It was also successful in developing its own educational resources. For example, “by 1969, the newly announced League of Revolutionary Black Workers had its own headquarters, newspaper, and even a high school youth movement that put out a newsletter called *Black Student Voice*.” (Mohammed Elnaiem) DRUM disbanded in the mid 1970s and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers ended in 1971. Both ended as a result of disagreements over a long-term strategy, which has continued to be a challenge for many socialist groups today.

Theoretical Socialist Thinking on Racism

Political activist and intellectual Cornel West, has written an article “Toward a Socialist Theory of Racism” that will allow us to further analyze the relationship between anti-racism and socialism. West begins by critiquing Marx saying that he “subsumes racism under the general rubric of working-class exploitation” and “ignores forms of racism not determined by the workplace.” (1) Racism does not only exist as a divide-and-conquer strategy of the ruling class. Politics and workplace struggles seep into life outside of the workplace and vice versa. Marx fails to address the psychological and cultural viewpoints of those who experience racism. This is important because “cultural practices are the medium through which selves are produced.” Cultural aspects “cut across modes of production” (2). To be fair, Marx’s focus was on the workplace and how racism aids in upholding capitalism, but his singular focus allowed for a socialist ignorance around racism and allowed for anti-racism efforts to be taken in a less serious manner.

West addresses Marxist ideologies and comprehensions of race and racism as he points towards its weaknesses as well as to its strengths. He explains four key Marxist conceptions of racism. While it may seem obvious to some that racism exists outside of capitalist ideology, it is still important to examine because Marx has been so influential in forming socialist thought which in turn affects how socialists react to the issue of racism. The misconceptions are handed down and practiced. Much of socialist thinking is guided and influenced by Marx. Some such as Eugene Debs, a white socialist activist who was elected to run for president of the United States five times by the previously existing Socialist Party of America, has gone so far in believing racism to be upheld simply by class exploitation that he insists that “any attention to its operations “apart from the general labor problem” would constitute racism in reverse.” (1) He is essentially worried that anti-white racism would appear if too many color-conscious programs and ideologies formed the way people think about race outside of economic structures. As a socialist following the narrow vision of racism conducted by Marx, he wants to strip everyone of their specific identities. To him, everyone should be identified simply as an exploited worker; that everyone has the same needs and the same goals towards liberation. To him, it is dangerous for the success of liberation from the ruling class to diverge any focus away from class struggle. Taking away identity is a form of being “color-blind”. It is obvious that this thinking would create blockades and discourage black people’s involvement within socialist parties and programs. The second conception of racism influenced by Marx acknowledges that people of color face more difficulty within the economic sphere because of a lack of access to jobs and lower wages. However, this recognition is still restricted to the workplace. The third conception of race through the lens of Marx is known as the “Black Nation Thesis”, originally published by

the American Communist Party in 1928, which sees Afro-Americans as an oppressed nationality, especially those in the Black Belt South. This conception is somewhat more beneficial to our understanding of racism as it recognizes a “crucial cultural dimension” of it. It was not recognized however until Stalin provided a definition of a nation in 1913. His definition of a nation is “a historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” However, the Black Nation Thesis still believes that their separate existence as a nationality is “a result of general and specific working class exploitation”. The last Marxist conception of racism, which was inspired by W.E.B DuBois and Oliver Cox, rejects the limited view of the Black Nation Thesis and claims that “racist attitudes have a life and logic of their own, dependent upon psychological factors and cultural practices.” (1) Cultural practices influence the formation of the self and racism acts as a virus that changes the makeup of oneself and one's psyche. Cultural practices have the power to deploy “racist discourse and actions” that allow for domination that cuts across all modes of production because they are “bounded by civilizations.” (2) Culture can strengthen a community but when imposed, can break it down and act as a mode of internal colonialism.

A new socialist analysis of racism would have a genealogical inquiry, a micro institutional inquiry, and as socialists have already done, a macro institutional inquiry into the issue of racism. West is examining the racism existing within genealogy, which is a study of family history. He wants to explain that racism exists as a form of subjectivity whose effects are ever changing and influencing each other; that racism acts as a complex of subjectivity whose effects cut across historical time. West wants to use this inquiry to examine the metaphors and

concepts utilized by Europeans to position themselves as dominant over non-Europeans. Within the genealogical inquiry into the way in which Europeans have formed “supremestic discourses-there are three basic logics-Judeo Christian, scientific, and psychosexual discourses.” West explains that the Judeo-Christian logic bases itself upon the story of Ham in the Bible who fails to provide decency to his naked father Noah and so as a consequence, his skin is turned dark. The scientific discourse lies upon biologically differentiating human bodies through observation. It essentially uses pseudoscience experimentation and research to form racist logics that form “notions of black ugliness, cultural deficiency, and intellectual inferiority”. The psychosexual racist logic “arises from the phallic obsessions, Oedipal projections, and anal-sadistic orientations in European cultures which endow non-European (especially African) men and women with sexual prowess”. Those who are non-Europeans, are “associated with acts of bodily defecation, violation, and subordination” (3). These white supremestic discourses of identity ultimately take away individualism by taking it upon themselves to determine the identity of the other.

Next, a micro-institutional analysis would look at how white supremesist discourses are upheld through various methods and factors and how they change the identity of the oppressed person. He specifically speaks of the history of resistance by black people in the United States. Their resistance forms out of a response to their condition and from the fact that their “identities were created against a background of both fear and terror” (3). He then very briefly goes on to explain how the Evangelical Church played a role in black resistance by either supporting it and creating a safe haven or by suppressing and working against them. Christianity and morality is a mode of liberation in some circumstances and a mode of oppression in others. Morality is

subjective and its norms are formed by life circumstances under various modes of oppression. Stanley Aronowitz, author of *The Crisis in Historical Materialism: Class, Politics, and Culture in Marxist Theory* explains in his chapter “The Question of Class” that black theology “is consonant with Christian, middle-class morality” but that its underlying goal is that of liberation as “their *interpretation* of Christian theology tends to decode its subversive, emancipatory content” which West agrees with. Morality may look different in various class structures, for example, “life in the ghetto or slum communities evolves and reproduces its own norms through practices that are counter-hegemonic as well as conformist” and “among these is the refusal of many strata of the underclasses to regard stealing and even killing as moral crimes...”. These types of violence are a symptom, a reaction, of their economic conditions as well as their internal condition influenced by various forms of colonialism, such as cultural colonialism. We will look further into violence as a symptom of oppression in the next chapter. Aronowitz further explains that for these underclasses “the ghetto (for Jews, for Arabs in Paris or for blacks and Hispanics in the U.S.) is never merely the absence of conventional material or moral culture” rather “it is, among other things, a site of new practices at the levels of everyday life and art, both of which maintain and reproduce the bonds of community against the norms produced from without” (138). Forms of morality and Christianity are internalized into one’s self identity and can cause the continuation racial oppression but also it “may resist the transformation of the members of the internal colony into a pure labor force within the elements of resistance.” (139)

West helps us to think about how to effectively examine how the invasion of the self against minorities is predicated on the actions of those in power. Socialists themselves must examine how their own organizations might enforce an identity onto others or erase an identity,

which is exactly what they do when they deny attention to any identity other than that of a worker (3).

While looking at West, we can suggest some responses and plans to address the problems surrounding the relationship between socialism and anti-racism. West argues there needs to be more participation of socialist groups in anti-racist struggles and anti-imperialist struggles. It is evident that the socialist movement is still largely a white-dominant group, which creates a “cultural barrier” for black participation. Therefore, socialists around the world need to reach out to others outside of their groups to participate in coalition work, while supporting the empowerment of minorities in practical ways. Additionally, democratic socialists should enter into intentional dialogues within multiracial movements that address the “power relationships and misconceptions” that often emerge (5).

As has been stated, because democratic socialism fights for a more libertarian and egalitarian society, especially in the instances of institutionalized racism, it is the social formation that will be most beneficial to anti-racist initiatives if conducted correctly. Though socialism itself is not the complete answer to solving racism, its economic structure provides relief from the capitalist modes of oppression which it uses to its advantage. Socialism can provide worker’s management of companies, higher access to equal education, access to housing, and access to medical care for all. By investing in these social stratas, we can remove the macro-institutional modes of oppression and begin to undo other channels of racism.

Now looking further into Aronowitz, he helps us to critique socialism's relationship to racism in a light that goes beyond traditional Marxist theory. He states that, “for much of the American left, the question of political struggle means the exclusion of any sectors but the

industrial working classes.” Ultimately, Aronowitz is critiquing class reductionism, meaning that he wants to show that forms of oppression should not be reduced to economics and that multiple fractions of classes have developed other than just Marx's proletariat and ruling class, which affect, in turn, how racism interacts with class. It is important to analyze the fragmentation of class because if it does not exist as one homogenous class, it makes unity all the more difficult.

Aronowitz explains that with the passage of time, the middle class has come to be the class majority, but they still struggle to consistently sustain themselves despite not being in the working class. This is due to the ever increasing wage gaps, which are especially present between black and white people. The black freedom movement therefore needs coalitions and allyship but also sources of common community. According to Aronowitz, black people will “require their own institutions of social and political power as well as retain considerable control over economic resources.” (132) This idea existed in DRUM, which was not willing to be integrationist with white people but rather wanted allyship. Aronowitz explains that the black freedom movement did not use integrationalism because it never won them any significant gains from the time of the Civil War (132). For complete transparency, it must be said that this is no way a suggestion to support racial segregation but to allow for the needs of marginalized communities to be met.

Additionally, Marx fails to realize that the oppression of minorities is not simply economic. As West briefly touches on as well, it also includes a kind of internal colonialism within metropolises through national oppression and cultural and ideological imperialism. Ignoring internal colonialism “divides the revolutionary movement along *national* lines rather than *class* lines” which creates a lack of attention given to oppression within metropolises (124).

Marxism has failed to account for the complexity of classes that would form during the modernization of capital that help to maintain racism in advanced capitalism (124). There formed the dual labor market, or labor segmentation, at the end of oligopolistic capitalism. The first market is the primary market, which is the most monopolized sector and is characterized by technological advancement, higher wages, and a higher rate of unionization in the manufacturing and state sector. This market centralizes capital and achieves domination in market shares. The secondary labor market consists of small and competitive firms with low technological innovation due to their cheap labor supply and lack of capital. Jobs in the secondary labor market are often retail and wholesale work and also includes “those on welfare, single mothers, the aged, and young people.” (125) This market is vulnerable to foreign competition due to the migration of capitalism which is in constant search of cheaper labor. Due to this, the number of unions in this market sector have plummeted. This scenario happened to the automobile industry as mentioned in the previous section, as automobile companies were making efforts to reduce labor organization. Aronowitz takes the idea of colonialism that is used to find cheaper labor and connects it to this fragmented labor market. He says that the market that has formed, is “conjoined with the *development* of underdevelopment, with certain regions consigned to permanent poverty in the social division of labor.” (126) In the next section of the paper on colonialism and violence, we will see how Marx fails to understand that colonialism is not always responsible for the development of countries but that on the contrary, it can cause perpetual, lasting underdevelopment and poverty.

Marx was unable to theorize the role of the middle strata in modern capitalism. Additionally, rather than there just being the exploited industrial working class, there is also the

underclass made up of minorities such as illegal workers, the handicapped, many sections of women, black, hispanic, and asian fractions, the unemployed, and the underemployed. This class is also known as the underground economy in secondary labor (128). The formation of the underclass does not align with the traditional working class but Marx clumps them together. Marx understood this subclass only as a “phenomenon of immigration into advanced countries of Europe and as differentiating international modes of production”, nothing more (127). The underclasses themselves have rivalries against one another and if “a socialist movement...refuses to recognize the separate existence of such underclasses—rooted in sexual, ethnic and racial hierarchies, [they] will be rendered powerless to assist in the formation of the new bloc needed to affect social transformation.” (133) Differences in class cannot be explained by relations to property alone but need to also be explained by phenomena such as racism and sexism (128).

Aronowitz also speaks of the need for alliance between various groups rather than just integration, which relates to the way DRUM and the Black Revolutionary Union Movement organized themselves. However, the nationalization of a group does not come without consequences. Many white people, who were leftists or liberals that supported black liberation during the civil rights movement, felt “confused and resentful” of black leaders when they “began to make the change from integrationist perspectives to cultural or political autonomy...” Because of this, in the views of white people, “many black and Hispanic men became part of the problem, rather than being part of the solution.” (136) Further, the white people during the 1960s, had a reason to dismiss their previously held responsibility for black liberation by turning their focus to the women’s emancipation movement, which was congested with whiteness. In

turn, this created resentment from black and Hispanic men towards women and white people, creating further divisions among lines outside of property differences.

Socialism on the Question of Colonial Violence

A socialism that thinks about the morality of violence and colonialism will create a stronger movement as it will better solidify appropriate responses to a world that involves constant violence. While I cannot claim to fully understand the human relationship to violence, it is necessary to examine its use in terms of liberation efforts. I can simply offer my own normative claims based on my current conclusions. However, we can look to differing theories of colonial violence to help determine the most productive way to analyze it. Looking towards the brief socialist theory of colonial and anti-colonial violence through Marx, there are multiple critiques to be made. While Marx does not condone anti-colonial violence, he at the same time, supports colonial violence against oppressed peoples. His ideas of socialism's relationship to colonialism in the chapter "On Colonialism", also written by Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, provides a rather insufficient and damaging view. This section will respond to his view and offer an alternative perspective in which to think about colonialism by examining the theories of Frantz Fanon.

Firstly, as a general outline, Marx, as explained through the view of Okello Oculi in his article "On Marx's Attitude to Colonialism" believes that a transition to socialism within a country that is viewed as undeveloped in the capitalist world, must become civilized through bloodshed caused by outside exploitation so that its capital can develop and be redistributed. In his view, it is only through capitalist development that a country will be able to make a transition into socialism. He further believes that once the country has been capitalized through colonialism, it will eventually gain national independence and revolutionize itself into a socialist economy. To Marx, colonization is an inevitable part of capitalist development that must take

place. He acknowledges the inherent violence of colonialism towards oppressed peoples but sees it as an unfortunate outcome of what must take place. Marx in his descriptions, uses problematic racist language, using words such as “barbaric” and “uncivilized” to describe non-European countries, which according to him, are stagnant societies stuck in their traditional ways. His eurocentric views stem from ignorance and racism which perpetuates the racism existing in the psyches of socialists and non-socialists alike that aid in justifying colonialism. Marx had no “serious knowledge of tribal societies” and had never visited the countries in which he spoke about. Racist and pro-colonial sentiments have no place in the efforts towards socialist change. While the question of development in the transition to socialist societies is complex, the use of colonialism as a mode to development needs to be refused. Marx is quick to chastise the violence that occurs in religious practices in India but is hypocritical, as he at the same time supports those people’s destruction through colonial violence, which is typically fashed with murder, rape, and slavery. He is so adamant about freeing European oppressed people from their chains of capitalist slavery but makes an exception for so-called underdeveloped countries. He justifies not only their economic slavery to capitalism but also justifies all forms of slavery in countries that are not white dominated (462-463).

Marx has a peculiar attachment to capitalism. It acts as both the ultimate enemy and as a toxic lover. He believes all must suffer under it as an alienated individual so that they may ban together as one revolutionary working class to create a path to socialism. He is even described by Oculi to be frustrated and disappointed with the communal methods of production and self-sufficiency in Indian villages because they held production limitations and did not produce the alienated worker who only has his labor to trade for survival. He wants a continuous growth

of economy, science, and society to the point where he chastises modes of existence that lie outside of capitalism. This is not to say that other forms of societal organization do not have their flaws but Marx's frustrations are not enough to justify his capitalist colonial means of development (as a side note, Marx's theory falls apart as it has been realized through time, that socialism is not the inevitable nor natural outcome of capitalism). Marx gave socialists an easy way out from taking the catastrophe of colonialism seriously, just as he did with racism. While it is true that societies with sufficient surplus value have an easier time successfully transitioning into socialist society, it has been witnessed that oftentimes, colonialism acts as a hindrance to this process. Forced colonial capitalism does not always lead to the productive development of the colonized country. In fact, colonialism is so destructive that it causes a reversal of development, less so than existed before. Insisting upon inserting global capitalism through colonialism to create an international angry mob of proletariats is ethically backwards and has often failed. Marx's colonial theory is a "justif[ication] [of] insane criminality" against human dignity and human rights. Though he claims to understand the violence ensued in colonial efforts, his theory "suffers from the lack of a close study of the nature of colonial political economy as it existed in colonies themselves." (470)

Marx understood that "as long as colonialism lasted it was unlikely that the material conditions of the colonized peoples would improve" but he failed to understand the grave, lasting consequences of colonialism. Colonialism is a process, not an event. Undoing colonialism is not simple and freedom cannot be won once and for all after gaining national independence. Marx assumes colonialism to be temporary, as if it does not tear apart the very fabric of a society. One lasting effect of colonialism, for example, that also proves colonialism is harmful to

development, is the issue of economic self-sufficiency. During and after the colonization of a country, that country is unable to invest in themselves and their own resources to build and develop infrastructure. Rather, they are forced to use the money given to them by metropolises to produce exports. The export policies that the British had towards India after independence for example, were restrictive in that they cut India off from other international markets and their products were bought at “notoriously low prices.” Almost all surplus goods were exported for the benefit of metropolitan economies. For the colonized people, the only surplus they gained was “the surplus of peasants and poverty.” Marx could have suggested other modes of development by “focus[ing] more on *trade* as the basis of intercontinental interactions rather than colonization.” (470) He could have argued for the redistribution of economic resources in a way that is beneficial and ethical, despite how unlikely it may be for metropolises to agree to. Ideally, he would have developed a theory which provides suggestions for other types of development or one which studies and recognizes the legitimacy of other forms of social formation and how those formations may be able to continuously reform themselves to provide fulfilling lives. Just because colonialism has become an integral part of capitalism does not mean it need not be contested.

Looking further into the issue of development, we will examine the document, “Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa, the Caribbean, and America” published in 1975 and written by a Marxist named Walter Rodney. The piece looks into issues of underdevelopment within the realms of Pan-Africanism, liberation movements, and post-colonial times. A question that beckons from the reading that deserves closer examination is the role that the black petty bourgeoisie of Africa plays or does not play in upholding class separation and capitalism. The

petty bourgeoisie who, though they owned and controlled little economically in comparison to their European counterparts, have played an impactful role for Africans.

It could be argued that combining the bourgeoisie and the working class in pursuit of revolution against capitalist and imperialist systems may and often has in various countries, led to failure or lackluster outcomes immediately or years following revolutions. Despite any affirmations of dedication to the international class struggle and Pan-Africanism, the goals of the petty bourgeoisie are ultimately in contrast to that of the working classes.

The problem that arises after liberation is that the leaders of previously colonized countries must still rely on the metropolises that were oppressing them. Even if the country wants to change their class structure, it is difficult to do so because there is not enough capital to socialize itself with to establish vital structures such as hospitals or their own air force. Capitalism has already been imposed upon them and so they must configure the best way to use it to their advantage, but this is difficult to do. Various newly independent states remain under the control of metropolises for investment purposes. However, countries such as the US or China or those within Europe, impose fairly strict controls over how the investments should be used. The ways in which the investments are demanded to be used are counterintuitive to what would help the countries develop, such as building an infrastructure of education, housing, and wages. Metropolises also force an increase in exports from their resources, preventing them from reinvesting them back into their own society. Because capital is international, it is difficult not to be dependent upon it. Therefore, there needs to be more solidarity between developing countries and metropolises in which the redistribution of economics becomes more mutually beneficial.

Collective bargaining, demands, unitive strength, and protests towards metropolises must be continuous before and after revolutions.

Additionally, despite the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie, the driving force and majority behind national independence movements against colonialism were the peasants. The leading bourgeoisie treaded carefully around the decisions they made with outside powers as well as around their public political stances. Many pursued efforts in their own class interest but maintained a seemingly leftist progressive approach. However, as Rodney expresses, the petty bourgeoisie were reformists, not revolutionaries. As a whole, they did little to thwart imperial territorial dictatorship over African countries, aiding in the further separation of the continent, “which led to fragments called Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic and so on.” It is important to note that the national liberation movements were successful due to the dedication and consistency of revolutionaries to counteract imperialism, not because of their representatives. However, after gaining independence, the problem of outside countries maintaining economic and political control over the regions remained due partly to the leniency of policy choices by the bourgeoisie. These leaders no-longer have a strong incentive to cloak their disdain for the Pan-African movement nor for marxist-leftist ideologies because they have now secured positions which are beneficial to themselves. Colonial powers and the African petty bourgeoisie both maintain the existence of the other through their common interest in capital.

Rodney strongly argues that African diasporas and separations of both the past and the present cannot be fully understood if the issue of international class struggle is not accounted for. The effects of colonialism are wide-spride and intricate in every aspect of African life as they use the African petty bourgeoisie “to penetrate and manipulate African society.” Scholars such as

Frantz Fanon help us to further understand the lasting effects of the colonial violence that Marx fails to realize. We will examine how not only communities and societies as a whole become undeveloped by colonialism but how the colonized individual becomes undone and damaged psychologically in ways that perpetuate violence within the colonized person themselves. We will also see how racism is perpetuated in this process. Fanon will allow us to realize that the violence internally assumed by the colonized person is a *symptom* of the colonizer's brutal, unmerciful demolition of their society, individuality, and identity. We will examine how socialists can take on a Fanonian view when contemplating violence and the hypocrisy within different forms of violence. Rather than trying to immediately moralize certain kinds of anti-colonial violence or chastise them, we must first understand their violence as a result of colonial violence inspired by the intent to oppress. Socialists must take the Fanonian view of anti-colonial violence when asking themselves if there are certain kinds of anti-colonial violence that need to be condemned. What kinds of violence (such as weaponized gender-based violence and the harming of children) make us deeply unsettled and make us develop an individual questioning of violence? It can be witnessed that many people believe in revolutionary violence as a mode of liberation when inevitable but that there are some who only support pacifism in all circumstances. To begin the next section, we will first look to violence as a general concept that socialists must contemplate.

The question of revolutionary violence has been contested among socialists and non-socialists alike. Violence has historically been an aspect of revolutions in transitions to communist societies as well utilized as a statist approach to socialism which uses violence and

terror to maintain the society that has been built. However, states such as Russia and China have destroyed the idea of what socialism is meant to be. Though violence may sometimes be necessary in pursuit of change, it is not the end goal of socialism. An article called “Socialism as Pacifism” written by Bryant William Sculos in 2018, explains that “the goal of socialism is to create a world beyond the violence of global capitalism...”

Violence can be argued to be legitimate and justifiable in cases of self-defense and in cases in which violence is the only option to liberation. Because the oppressor uses violence as a form of repression, which continues the cycle of violence, it should be condemned. Certain forms of counter-violence are legitimate because they are used in “the defense of life.” However, according to Sculos, counter-violence needs to use other modes of liberation alongside it to be successful. He makes it clear that socialism prefers non-violent struggle and that the use of other forms of resistance such as “...organizing, intervening, marching, protesting, running independent candidates in elections, and various forms of civil disobedience” should be used as well (Bryant William Sculos).

Pacifism exists as a solution to violence in theory but it is unrealistic. While pacifistic-modes of resistance should be used, pacifism has also been abused by liberals who use it to ignore the violence inherent in capitalism. Pacifism promoted by liberals makes empty progressive promises to the public. All forms of violence, by pacifists, have been propagandized as anti-democratic, destructive, and evil. For example, elementary schools will recognize and praise Martin Luther King but ignore or chastise the Black Panther Party. While violence has the potential to be all evil, it is also un-objectively a mode of obtaining liberation that has been used throughout history.

Because socialists must examine modes of liberation, as liberation for all is their goal, it is a natural response to ask in what circumstances violence against an oppressive state is to be used and when violence against a state is even feasible. As an example, let us look to the United States. The capitalist state has the upper hand when it comes to the power to deploy violence. They have “exceedingly disproportionate access to, and ability to deploy without conscience, deadly weaponry.” Additionally, policies are used by the state to enact violence through “punitive policy agendas like hyper-policing, mass incarceration, “right to work” laws, and “welfare reform.”” If it ever comes to it, the only way a violent revolutionary program would work in the United States would be for people working in positions with access to weapons of mass destruction to be discrete in their socialist views and gain control over the weapons. However, it is unlikely for there to be such levels of disloyalty within the United States army. Weaponry has advanced with capital and the threat of nuclear warfare is ever present. Marx’s vision of revolutionary movements using 19th century weapons are no longer relevant. Revolutionary movements in the 20th century are more difficult because of sophisticated western weapons. Socialist movements would need access to their own drones and advanced communication systems separate from already existing governmental resources of weaponry. This would require large funds for opposition groups that are simply not available. Additionally, confronting the most powerful military in the world would be nearly impossible and would most likely have detrimental violent results. In the United States, it is more feasible and tactical to use other methods of gaining liberation through democratic organization (Bryant William Sculos). We can now ask, if revolutionary violence against an oppressor is not necessarily feasible, should it still be used as a form of protest, even if the system will remain unchanged afterwards? I

believe that this decision must be left to each oppressed individual who must decide how to grapple with their oppression and psychological condition.

As mentioned, a significant contributor to our understanding of revolutionary and anti-colonial violence is Frantz Fanon. We will now delve into his work to put this question of violence into perspective. Fanon's chapter "On Violence" in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, originally published in French in 1961, talks of the dichotomy, the two separate existences, between the colonizer and the colonized, or oppressed and the oppressor, which often contain racialized elements. Fanon believes that the colonial phenomenon is always violent and will never not be. A question that could then be asked is can colonialism ever be defeated without violence?

Fanon argues that liberation of a colonized people "can only succeed by restoring to every means including, of course, violence." (3) As a Marxist, Fanon supports the use of violence in revolutionary pursuits. Colonization and decolonization are violent because they both consist of force. He makes it clear that decolonization is an ongoing process, "not an event", and in and of itself, is not the end goal (2). Therefore, it can be said that decolonization is the response to colonization. It is the mode in which to bring about liberation from oppression. The end goals of decolonization are meant to bring about a life of freedom, fulfillment, and peace outside of the oppressor's influence. However, the decolonization process that Fanon is speaking of is riddled with uncomfortable realities of violence, that many do not wish to acknowledge. In fact, according to Fanon, the colonized person himself, will sometimes avoid the realities of their own colonial condition. He argues that the tension and rage which builds up inside the bodies of the colonized from the daily mental and physical torture inflicted upon them, easily results in

violence against their fellow men. He argues that this is a way for them to ignore that the only alternative to their violence against each other is to turn to the colonizer in armed struggle. Additionally, he argues that the colonized person's use of violence against each other can be used by the colonizer as a way to delegitimize the rationality of the colonized and further justify their colonial objective. The colonized person's violence allows the colonizer to attach the colonized person's race, religion, or nationality to their violence, rather than to their objective of freedom. Their struggle becomes invalidated and perpetuates discrimination (17, 18). This is a reality that Marx failed to realize. Additionally, Fanon argues that the colonized person's violence is "a cleansing force" in that "it frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (51). Just as the colonizer's violence tears at the fabric of their reality and their identity, their own violence can be used as a method of regaining and freeing themselves.

The question of violence is an uncertain one that predicates itself on historical and national conditions. Violence is something to be utilized with strong discretion, as it is destructive and brutal. However, it can be argued that its use is at times, progressive and productive, especially in instances of self-defense and liberation. To decolonize is to literally disorganize, destroy, and dismantle an entire society that was *forcefully fabricated* by the colonist (1, 2). How is the colonized person not going to resist with violence when violence is colonialism itself? How is the colonized person not going to resist with violence when the colonizer "brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject[?]" (4) Because violence has been resorted to as a form of resistance historically time after time, it shows that the colonizer would never willingly adhere to the desires or dignity of the colonized people.

We will now look at the incredibly violent, colonial, and genocidal situation between Israel and Palestine that began on October 7th, 2023, keeping in mind the explanations of violence given by Fanon. Socialists should ask themselves if differing ideas of violence are harmful. They should ask themselves if there should be an appreciation for the diversity of views that oppressed people hold towards revolutionary violence, keeping in mind the psychic desperation of the oppressed person, which makes their violence often inevitable and understandable. We should keep in mind questions such as, should socialists judge the tactics of Hamas? Are their actions justifiable or not? What happens when some Palestinians believe that suicide bombings are an effective mode of liberation? What happens when some believe that sexual violence is a justifiable wartime weapon? Whose lives are grievable and under what circumstances are they grievable? Is the call for a ceasefire enough? The situation between Israel and Palestine seems to be an impossible one to solve and I cannot provide concrete answers to these questions that are also in the minds of many bystanders who are trying to determine where to position themselves on the question of violence as it itself continues to unfold with amounting atrocities each day.

Israel and Palestine

According to the Gazan Health Ministry, more than 34,000 Palestinians have been killed, most of whom are women and children, during Israel's genocide in Gaza that began after Hamas's attack against Israel on October 7th, 2023.

The question of the right to self-determination and right to existence is complicated in the situation of Israel and Palestine. I argue here that Israel does not have a right to exist or a right to self-determination because of its late establishment in 1948, gained through violence and the

colonization of Palestine. However, some may then argue that that would mean that other metropolises who have caused horrific tragedies across the world also should not exist. Israel is also a religious based state and it is conflated whether or not a state based on religion is legitimate. The left is against the idea of a religious state because it privileges one religion over others in the citizenship of the state, creating divides and religious oppression. Socialists raise the question of if a religiously based state can or will defend the equal rights of all. In some ways, such as through the liberal Zionist tradition, answers to this question have been attempted, but have failed.

Identity politics are increasing among oppressed groups and the nationalistic tendencies of political leaders are aiding in polarizing the citizens against each other. During the rise of Israel's Hadash, there was no left wing political party put forward to challenge them. The left has according to the Socialist Alternative, has fused into the right in both Israel and Palestine and the “the dimming of political differences among the Arab-Palestinian minority in the name of “national unity” eventually plays into the hands of Israeli right-wing rule, which is interested in isolating the public in order to ease the policy of repression.”

Some people in the Socialist Alternative support the two-state resolution but also recognize that it is currently not a feasible solution to the colonial problem. Many Palestinians do not trust the promise of a two state solution, believing that it would only contribute to their national oppression. There is “no trust in the potential for a joint struggle of workers and youth of both national groups” and they believe that a two state solution would be accepting defeat in the struggle to establish national liberation. A two state solution would in fact only lead to the “founding of a neo-colonial puppet state for the Palestinians, and not genuine national

independence.” It would also not work because the government of both sides would take over the territories of the other if possible and Netanyahu has made it abundantly clear that he has no intentions of not reclaiming previously held Palestinian territories. Additionally, “neither the PLO nor Palestinian political parties Fatah and Hamas, have any road they can propose in order to “occupy” Israel ...” therefore, “the pro-capitalist leaderships of both those parties seek at the bottom line to lean on alliances with imperialist powers so that those will pressure Israel for some concessions.”

Israel is a powerful, militaristic country supported by powerful metropolises such as the United States and is ignored passively by countries on the sidelines who do not dare to threaten countries with such military strength. A solution to the problem could be a secular one state solution. This solution would involve Palestine maintaining governance over the land and the dissolution of Israel through a ground invasion by surrounding countries that support Palestine. However, again this is highly unlikely to take place. If this were to take place, “millions of Israelis Jews would [have the potential to] become an oppressed national minority and the national conflict would continue in a terrible new form.” Ultimately, it would be ideal for Jews to exist peacefully among Palestinians under a Palestinian state. It would also be ideal for socialism to exist in the area to allow for “the sharing of Jerusalem, water resources, guarantees for the rights of minorities, the right of return, and the borders.” (Socialist Alternative)

In 2011, Israel sent bombs into Gaza in which Hamas responded with rockets, though they were admittedly not as effective as Israel's weaponry. This was the 4th war since 2008 in the region. Netanyahu needed to weaken Hamas for the purpose of propagandizing its population.

High levels of clashes began to ensue between Palestinians and Israelis due to violent gangs attacking Palestinian groups in Israel, home evictions in East Jerusalem, and the storming of the Al Aqsa Mosque by Israeli security forces. Increasing amounts of nationalist slogans, such as “death to Arabs” were being witnessed. During this time, Biden did not offer any criticism towards Israel. He instead provided \$735 million in weaponry deliveries to Israel right before the 2011 war. The United States and Israel are hardly challenged for their actions by international leaders and they are intentionally not subscribed to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to avoid consequences. Israel proves itself to be a colonial state not just through their actions towards Palestine but also in that they “assisted the Jordanian monarchy to crush the 1970 Black September uprising; was one of the last partners the Apartheid regime in South Africa maintained; has assisted for decades the armament and military training of dictatorships around the world, including the former military dictatorship in Chile and the militias which committed the genocide in Rwanda; and symbolically it offered the Egyptian autocrat Mubarak political asylum.” Internationally, the use of the term apartheid, originally used to describe South African segregation, has been used to describe Israel. Israel's own human rights organization B'Tselem, has declared Israel to be an apartheid regime. Human Rights Watch has also concluded that Israeli “authorities have dispossessed, confined, forcibly separated, and subjugated Palestinians by virtue of their identity to varying degrees of intensity.” (Socialism Today)

Netanyahu was on trial for electoral corruption in 2019 and at the time, did not have full support of the Israeli public. Because he “failed to achieve a ruling coalition majority in 4 successive general elections” he had “plenty of reasons to encourage a distraction and surge of nationalism” by leaning on the far-right, pro-settler party Knesset. Not only does Netanyahu’s

support of right-wing political parties hurt Palestinians but it hurts Israelis by heightening the conflict and creating further divisions among their citizens and by laying the grounds for civil war and increased violence (Socialism Today).

Socialists must take a stance against any national oppression and violence by focusing on the power of the citizens on both sides. Hamas and Fatah do not represent all of the Palestinian citizens and Israel's targeting of their civilians is a direct attack against all Palestinian people and their right to exist. In 2011, only 30% of the Palestinian population supported Hamas. Fatah rules the West Bank and purposely keeps Palestinian leaders weak and divided. Similarly, Netanyahu does not represent all Israelis. 48% of Israelis believe that Arabs should be expelled from Israel and 46% do not. 45% of the population believes that they must take back the territories they lost in 1967. In 2011, more Israelis supported Palestine having their own state than those who do not but this has changed since the beginning of Israel's recent attacks on Palestine. There are trade and workers unions in Israel that support the reduction of violence for both sides of the divide but they are weak and make up a minority. These sections of the population have the responsibility of trying to sew unison along sectarian divides and against the far-right in Israel and in Palestine.

It is important for socialists to recognize the violence inflicted on workers in both Palestine and Israel and to realize the need for a strengthening of the people themselves. Socialism can aid in the liberation of the masses from national oppression by promoting the establishment of independent organizations. There needs to be a community of self-defense that is not rooted in right-wing religiously dominated organizations. These groups would need to be democratic and "if required armed." However, self-defense formations are threatened by security

risks and governmental violence. On both sides of the national divide, there have been mass protests against their governments and both run the risk of death and imprisonment. In Palestine, this threat comes both from Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

According to the Socialist Alternative, there was a mass strikes of teachers in the West bank, proving to be the largest workers struggle in recent years and it “succeeded in rocking a bureaucratic trade union, shook the Palestinian Authority itself, which serves as a subcontractor of the occupation, and brought back on the agenda the perspective for a movement of broader layers into struggle.” Ultimately, socialism in the area would “allow the necessary investment of resources for the Palestinian refugees – a just solution which requires a struggle to guarantee conditions of welfare and equality in the region, and advancing of direct dialogue and consent, which would include recognition of the historic injustice and the right to return.” (Socialist Alternative).

The current crisis in Gaza is being worsened by a lack of freedom of movement between Egypt and Gaza as well as a closed border between Israel and Gaza. There is an extreme lack of resources going into Gaza and the number of people suffering from Israel's man-made famine is rising each day. However, if the border were to open between Israel and Gaza, we should keep in mind that it would allow the further infiltration of Hamas and a reactionary Arab movement in Israel. Hamas will continue to fight in the area because Israel cannot control their military settlers who are enacting on ethnic cleansing. Borders would need to contain international peacekeepers that maintain security guarantees for all between the borders.

International Response: Democratic Socialists of America

Looking at the international responses from the DSA to the Israel-Palestine conflict, we can see that the issue has caused divides in the organization and has even led to members leaving. Though there is mass support for Palestine by the DSA, the conservative side of it refuses to see the necessity of anticolonial violence or the right to defense. The DSA also has members who are fearful of the consequences of standing in solidarity with Palestine.

Many New York politicians with ties to the DSA are distancing themselves from their associations with the organization because of the NY rally that was backed by the group. Reports indicate that some young members of the DSA during their demonstrations of support for Palestine may have made light of Israeli deaths. Conflicts such as this one are bound to create extremes on both sides due to the intensity of the situation. Rather than shirking away from the DSA, these politicians should have made a statement according to their actual opinions on the genocide while condemning any lack of empathy shown for crimes against humanity experienced by any person. These people within powerful positions could have aided in the promotion of the socialist values they claim to be aligned with but rather they chose to preserve themselves from public criticism (Emily NGO and Nick Resiman).

Maurice Isserman, a previous member of the DSA, claims that the DSA is endorsing the actions of Hamas because of the New York City rally. He claims that the concern for Palestine by the DSA is simply to serve the “DSA’s new sectarian leadership, furnishing a convenient stick to beat DSA’s moderate wing if it wasn’t willing to embrace the most extreme positions on the Palestinian question—up to and including denying Israel’s right to continued existence.” Challenging what she has said, as it has been previously mentioned, the question of the right of

Israel's existence is one that should be questioned. She makes another claim that people who “can’t take a stand condemning a right-wing terrorist group that set out to murder as many Jewish civilians, including children and infants, as it can lay its hands on, has forfeited the right to call itself democratic socialist.” I claim that there are certain kinds of violence that are deplorable and unacceptable, such as weaponizing gender based violence and the killing of children. However, this does not negate the fact that Palestine has the right to use violence to defend itself.

Isserman is also angered by the extreme leftists in the organization, whom she claims endorse Hamas’s violence. It is unfair to categorize all of these people in this way and is statistically incorrect. Many of them support a free Palestine but do not support Hamas. A distinction here is that there are some leftists who claim to understand why Hamas responded with violence, seeing as they have faced years of oppression by Israel. However, even those who believe this are not necessarily supporting the cruel forms of violence in which Hamas soldiers chose to enact, such as the raping of children (The Nation). Palestinian soldiers did commit crimes against humanity but it does not mean they have no right to self-defense. Believing in the defense of life through violence does not mean every act of violence should be endorsed.

Conclusion: What Next?

“How do you radically reform a system while working within it?” (Harrington, 53)

One of the barriers of transitioning into socialism in the United States is that it has an emphasis on American exceptionalism and individualism rather than a focus on the power of communities and collective action. Striving for individual success is a large aspect of the American Dream. However, despite this ideology being ingrained within them, many later feel they were disillusioned by the promises of individual pursuits when the reality of economic struggle sets in. Even so, most Americans “keep their heads down” and continue to accept their conditions. They feel that there is no way to change their situation and are bogged down by the constant assertion that their poverty is their fault and that they just need to work harder. This assertion of personal fault for economic failure and struggle is purposely supported by the individualist agenda of the United States (Sunkara, 159). Socialists therefore have a responsibility in promoting community and collective action against the fragmentation tendencies of capitalism. However, this must not be taken to mean that individual identity should not exist.

Socialism must not simply respond with a new economic agenda but it must also realize that its values and ethical dimensions are just as mobilizing and powerful. Socialism must also include a “shift in culture, in psychology, in the very self-conception of individuals who have previously accepted a subordinate condition” (Harrington, 265). However collective action is “often riskier than accepting the status quo” (Sunkara, 215).

Another obstacle to transitioning from capitalism to socialism is that many people doubt that citizens will have the incentive to work hard under a socialist economy. This can be

responded to by realizing that many people already do not work hard under capitalism. Many are cynical about and bored with their jobs. Capitalism does not safeguard work ethic as much as it is assumed to. Additionally, people do not work just for profit. Working can be a source of meaning, pride, and obligation. There are still wages under socialism but there is more economic planning determined by a democratic process which determines the value of wages. People still work hard under socialism to gain the modes of sustainment that are guaranteed by the state.

Additionally, socialists face the obstacle of creating a concrete plan for taking action during capitalist crises that happen when aggregate demand is not being created. According to Harrington, even though socialism is not the natural outcome of capitalism, capitalism still “...remains prone to crisis” (215). Socialists must be ready to take charge during times of crisis and provide alternative solutions when the time comes, unlike the historical failures of socialism during these circumstances. For example, this happened in Germany when capitalism collapsed after the first world war. The socialists tragically missed their chance to take influential measures due to divisions among themselves and the absence of a concrete plan and homogeneously accepted definition of socialism (Harrington, 14, 57, 58). Socialist compromises within capitalism have also failed. Crises that have stemmed from capitalist failures during times of capital transition, such as during the Great Depression, are often “blamed on the welfare state” that capitalism used to try to fix itself.

Democratic socialism today need not be entirely based on Marxism and nor should it be. Marx did not realize until the 1860s, after which he published multiple influential theories, that the working class is not as consolidated or simple as he imagined it to be. As capitalism has developed, its social classes have as well. The modern working class is highly fragmented and

pitted against each other. There is simply no one united revolutionary working class that will change the whole of society. The working class has become spread out and is no longer just characterized by industrial factory workers. The modern working class is also “much less impelled to trade-union and political action than the old” (Harrington, 258). This capitalist fragmentation of classes creates another barrier for the development of socialism. In the past, young people began working as soon as they were physically able. However, with the rise of higher education in the 1960s, young people had the “leisure and knowledge to discuss injustice and to challenge not only the education system but the structure of society as well” (259). The younger generation became separated from previous generations by age. Additionally, classes became fragmented by the entering of women and minorities into the workforce in which they faced discriminatory economics and workplace environments. According to Harrington, “once race, ethnicity, gender, and age became militantly self-conscious as a result of changes in the structure of society, they acquired a power they had never before possessed” but they also weakened the Left by “dividing it between competing constituencies of the old and the new” (261). If unemployment and the widening wage gap continue, jobs will become more scarce and competitive. This will mean a rise in discrimination against those historically prone to it. Under these conditions, “there is simply no way that anti-racist and anti-sexist demands can be put into effect” (265).

What may help develop the change in values and human organization needed for socialism, is the environmental crises and the rising concern for the environment contrary to corporate interests. Because the environmental problem is becoming a crisis which threatens the existence of humans, it is an ever increasing pressing matter with the passage of time. The more

the government ignores the people's concerns, the more likely it is for unions and backlash to form. However, there is the issue of fragmentation again here as the environmental movement threatens some people's jobs – those who work for the large corporations (264). If the two groups remain contradictory to each other, capital succeeds and trade unionists will fail (265).

Many people who are not socialists share the same values as socialists such as “solidarity, freedom, and social justice” (266). Anger and discontent, no matter what the political alignment, is growing at an increasing rate in the United States. The growing anger in the American public can be partly explained by the wealth gap between elites and working-class people and by the increasing numbers of people who are becoming informed of current events through social media platforms. Anger is an important and valuable outcome of capitalist exploitation that needs to be harnessed to demand social justices and a socialist agenda. Trump was able to win the presidency through appealing mainly to poor, white, urban workers who were fed up with exploitation and low wages. Additionally, he was also able to appeal to their racist sentiments through his own racism. This proves that the general underlying needs of the American people are not being met and that voters will, influenced of course also by propaganda, such as white supremacy or by democratic or neoliberal empty promises of better treatment of minorities, are searching simply for more sustainable living conditions. Poor workers on both the left and the right, whether they voted for Trump, Clinton, or Bernie, want the same thing, that is, a mode of living that allows them to lead fulfilling lives that do not coincide with the constant struggle of survival. I argue again that the only real way for this to happen is through democratic socialism and that socialists need to confront white class racism head on.

Because of the rise of extremist and highly polarized politics, I believe there is a growing problem that needs to be addressed. There is augmenting hate from both sides of the political spectrum towards each other based on values concerning human rights. While the right tends to demonize and chastize efforts such as the Black Lives Matter movement, LGBTQ+ rights, and pro-choice movements, it is important to recognize that beyond these understandable tensions based on human value and dignity, there is the untapped potential of working-class power for a better life for all, that once successful, has the power to *reduce* hate and division among all.

People are so occupied with the need to survive and pay bills that they have little to no time to be invested in politics or communities that may serve them. Elections, however corrupt and ineffective they may be, are largely the only political basis that the general American public pays attention to. Therefore, whether or not social-democrats or democratic socialists have the votes to win elections, their presence in local government is necessary for recognition and they have the possibility to win. The reason I say local government and not presidential government is because a socialist will never gain a third party majority and will therefore lose time, money, and effort trying to get on the ballot. However, a socialist, such as Bernie Sanders, can run but it would have to be within the Democratic Party. Sanders' presidential campaign, at the time, added 45,000 members to the DSA where before, it maintained just 5,000 members. However, he has also caused “ideological confusion” about socialism because though his agendas were progressive, they were not entirely socialist. This does not negate the importance of socialists integrating themselves into democratic parties and then pushing for socialist change and participation within them. While it is important for various classes to unify amongst themselves, it is important not to make compromises with the ruling class that undermine their efforts.

Rather, they should push harder for their demands with the strength of class unity. Workers hold more power than they realize and capitalists do pay attention to them because they “depend on their labor for profits, and when organized, workers can withhold that labor to win reforms” (Sunkara, 224). Within the white house, socialists realize the strength and rigidity of the Democratic party. Because of this, some DSA members have shifted their views to be more conservative. This, according to the Socialist Alternative, also “stems from the absence of a strategy to mobilize DSA’s 95,000 members and the lack of a clear program for overturning capitalism.” DSA members within the democratic party hold a high responsibility towards making demands. It is said that socialists working within the party, “such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, have failed to take on Biden, Pelosi, and the rest of the Democratic establishment in a serious way. They have also “refused to wage a fight on key questions like Medicare for All, the \$15/hr minimum wage, taxing corporations and billionaires, and the Green New Deal, particularly in moments when a fight was most needed.” (Chris Gray and Grace Fors) Actions that challenge the democratic party, though difficult to sustain under capitalist pressure, are necessary.

Older generations of democratic socialists must take the mature stance of trying to level with the younger generations who have conflicting ideas of what socialism is and how it should be brought about. This would be unlike Maurice Isserman, who in his article explaining why he left the DSA, attacks new young members for their Marxist-Leninist views and for “quarrel[ing]...among themselves.” Differing opinions within organizations should be listened to and allowed to exist, because it would be undemocratic to block them. The youth must be encouraged to keep educating themselves, as they are currently the most educated and socially

aware generation of the time. Socialism needs an enthusiastic youth who have a “disciplined core” and who are “humble enough to learn but bold enough to inspire confidence” (Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik). The DSA however, must also develop a stronger baseline understanding of what it stands for and how it plans on achieving it instead of chastising young members' views.

The search for a new response to capitalism today contains the values of rejecting complacency and of imagining the very real possibility of a higher quality of life for all. Socialism first needs to reject the theory of primitive accumulation which assumes capitalism to be the natural state of existence in which societies function. Democratic socialism should be defended because under capitalism, man exists in a state of alienation both from himself and from others. Capitalism reduces man simply to his ability to produce for surplus profit and leaves him with nothing to trade but his labor and his mind. He is unaware of the fullest extent of his being that could be realized under socialism. Under capitalism, man exists day in and day out to survive. Additionally, democratic socialism is anti-statist and anti-authoritarian. Oftentimes, socialism is synonymous with totalitarianism and violence in the minds of many. Democratic socialism is also not in alignment with the social democrats because it does not believe in the ability of mixed economies such as a welfare system under capitalism because it leaves many businesses under private control without democratic decision making. Democratic socialism supports a socially owned economy with democratically run workplaces, worker’s self-management in the marketplace, and a decentralized socially planned economy. It supports the liberation from various forms of oppression, whether it be economical, social, or political.

Democratic socialism must be open to revision and criticism. A socialism that refuses to analyze itself, its past, and its shortcomings that exist in practice and in theory, will remain

attached to elements of socialist theories which counteract liberation efforts. Additionally, socialism should not be taken on as a personal identity, as criticisms towards socialism will become personal. Socialism should rather be something to strive for. An effective socialism will take anti-racism and anti-colonialism initiatives seriously, which requires an attention that goes beyond how racism and colonialism are upheld by capitalism. A socialism that ignores social ills that do not fit concisely into the inequalities of class does itself an injustice, as the liberation they seek from capitalism will be unsuccessful while many will remain in oppressive conditions. Socialist organizations must take on an inquiry into various modes of domination such as cultural and colonial imperialism so as to reduce barriers of participation in their initiatives. An effective method of reducing barriers to socialist participation would be to first recognize and listen to the specific needs of various oppressed groups and create allyship and coalition efforts with their organizations. Demands and needs of marginalized groups evolve and are subjective to historical circumstances. Depending on the historical situation, this can make integration more or less enticing and effective. While integration of groups is important to reduce divides, it would be counterintuitive to dismiss those groups for forming organizations and communities meant for themselves. These communities provide a source of safety and commonality and are just as important as integration.

An effective socialism should not be unwilling to criticize socialist theory that inevitably has flaws. This includes Marx's traditional idea of colonialism which asserts that domination of a metropole over another country is an evil but necessary phenomenon that is carried out by international capitalism. He believes it to be necessary so that the country can develop enough resources so as to be able to transition into socialism after gaining national liberation. This theory

is damaging, excuses colonial violence, and limits the imagination for other forms of development and other forms of social organization that do not fit into Marx's narrative of the alienated laborer. Further, socialism has a history of violence; in overthrowing governments to establish communism and as a method of maintaining statist authoritarian communism. Violence is used as a form of both liberation and oppression and as socialism is set on liberation, it must examine its relationship to violence and analyze the effects of violence and why certain oppressed groups deploy violence. This essay has suggested using the Fanonian view of violence. His view explains that colonial violence changes the identity and psyche of the self of the colonized person and that as a result and as a symptom, violence becomes the response.

Additionally, we have come to realize that Marx's idea of class structure as a homogenous revolutionary proletariat ended up not occurring with the passage of time. Class structure has become increasingly fragmented and the discrimination and racism accentuates class rivalry, making unity across lines more impossible to gain.

A new democratic socialism should strive to build up unions, as they lack in number especially in the United States, and strive for a worker's management of production. It needs to promote public education, health care, climate change initiatives, and the encouragement of the participation of the younger generations. Historically and currently, socialists have struggled to organize themselves because of a lack of agreement upon their agendas and modes of achieving them. It is important to try to find a common ideology but at the same time, it should not restrict various opinions. There can also be multiple progressive organizations and parties that all help to promote a transformation of society. Socialism, racism, colonialism, and violence are all inevitably intertwined and must be closely examined if a more sustainable, fulfilling life for all is

to be acquired. With new social planning, comes responsibility and the rising of the consciousness above assumptions and misconceptions.

If this essay were to continue, it would look further into the specific ways in which socialism has historically failed and would attempt to create a specific agenda for how to be prepared to deploy feasible alternatives in times of capitalist crises. It would continue to examine socialist theory to look for what is still relevant and what is not. It would also try to examine why there is still no consistent definition of socialism and would try to stress the importance of obtaining a clear socialist objective. Additionally, it would examine how other social ills, such as sexism, are perpetuated by capitalism and how they also exist outside of it, similar to what we have done with racism. It would also dedicate more focus to how class structure continues to evolve and the consequences that follow.

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