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MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist
Multiracial Unity Action Council
(UUMUAC)



“For the Unity of the
light and dark skinned
people of the world.”

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The Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus to carry out and foster anti-racist and multiracial unity activities both within and outside the Unitarian Universalist Association through education, bearing witness and other actions, and expansion of our membership both within and outside the walls of our congregations.

We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.

The Vision Statement

We envision our congregations, denomination, and society as not being color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating members of the world’s rank and file by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their cultural heritage; and as treasuring diversity in the context of the “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unitarian Universalism.

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Liberal Values Under Attack Among Unitarian Universalists: An Essay Based on the “Manifesto for Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian Universalism”: A Call to Action for All Progressive Members of the Various Branches and Descendants of Liberal Christianity [article developed for the Christian Century Journal]

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Dr. Anne Schneider, and Dr. Dick Burkhart, Members, the Board of Directors, the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council (UUMUAC.org)

Introduction

This essay is based on a Manifesto for Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian Universalism. It is a call to action to all the branches and descendants of liberal Christianity.

According to Rev. Dr. Martin Marty of the University of Chicago, Unitarian Universalism (UU) represents a distinct innovation as a derivative of liberal Christianity. It seeks to manifest a creed-less church, based on humanist principles and democratic governance to be sure, but keeping many of elements of traditional Christian worship and liberation theology. It would be a shame to see this experiment fail. **(paraphrase by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell)**

Over the last five years divisions among UUs have escalated, especially over certain theories being taught in universities concerning race. These are doctrines which many UUs understand as contrary both to the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and to the core UU principles (our guideposts in place of creeds). Our organization, the UU Multiracial Unity Action Council, is a new national organization dedicated to this legacy, including through worship services and anti-racism workshops which honor the multiracial unity championed by MLK. UUMUAC also facilitates outside-the-bubble dialogue which animates our UU principles toward nurturing a more resilient and just world.

We know that what is happening among UUs is impacting, or will soon impact, other liberal Christian churches too. The ideologies of concern have been major contributors to the cultural wars in the larger society. They focus on the identity politics of race, especially as rooted in postmodern philosophy, often referred to as the “whiteness studies” of “Critical Race Theory” (CRT).

We are especially disturbed by the consequent “cancel culture”. This continues to cause serious damage (censorship and intimidation, anti-male and anti-white bigotry, sanctions against ministers who challenge illiberal ideology, even witch-hunt style actions). Now add to this, unfounded allegations of an endemic “white supremacy culture” to justify certain power plays, together with a national leadership which has either tolerated or endorsed these abuses.

Congregational autonomy is under attack by this leadership and our democratic processes have been undermined or replaced by more authoritarian methods. The

ends of “racial equity” are admirable but the “means” are not – without even an acknowledgment of alternative approaches that are far better grounded in the social sciences and “best practices”.

Modern racism, or what some of us call neo-racism, is multifaceted and nuanced. It deserves a deeper, more compassionate and Christian /social humanist understanding, not knee-jerk dichotomies or racial hierarchies of blame and shame.

So, let’s consider three questions in more detail: (1) What’s the problem? (2) How do we develop new attitudes based on old truths? (3) Why is all this important?

The Problem

The historic vision of racial justice and **equality** based on multiracial unity is being undermined by fallacious accusations of racism and white supremacy not only among UUs but also in society at large. A particularly dangerous accusation is that systemic racism still dominates a desegregated society such as ours, disguising the fact that it is racism in particular institutions and individuals which still exists.

Some UU ministers are being cancelled without legal due process for opposing false allegations such as that the US is a racist nation corrupted by systemic racism, even in 2021. This ignores the popular votes of the last 4 presidential elections and the vast increase in integration, interracial marriage, and multiculturalism since the civil rights era. That is, the evidence is that a majority of Americans today are non-racist, according to the common meaning of racism as “prejudice or discrimination based on race”, even when this is interpreted to include policy choices in addition to individual interactions.

Another false and insulting doctrine is that all white people who object to being labeled as racists must suffer from a contrived malady called “white fragility”. This has led to diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings which resemble Maoist struggle sessions or “gaslighting” for advocates for racial justice or other non-racist participants who refuse to be guilt tripped, fueling a schism in liberal religion and society.

Others object to historical race reductionism – narratives that reduce the less savory aspects of US history to the narrow lens of racial injustice, masking the fundamental roles of economic self-interest and of dogmatic religion. A particular version of this is the doctrine that the US has had a white supremacist culture since 1619, even though white supremacy (“that white people are racially superior and should therefore dominate”) was never a dominant ideology outside the old South and is a fringe phenomenon today. All this is boosting the identity politics of race, expanding the opening for opportunistic politicians to scapegoat racial minorities or feed off ethnocentrism.

These doctrines also promote the ideology of victimhood culture, where one racial group (whites) are deemed to be both privileged and oppressive and while all others are to be treated as oppressed victims. This ignores the long history of struggling working class and underclass whites, which has actually expanded in recent decades, made visible by an epidemic of “deaths of despair”. Presumed oppressor / victim status also

violates the ethical principle which censures “double standards”. This ideology also undermines the democratic principle of moral equality, which animates our Seven Principles. These are as follows:

- (1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- (2) Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- (3) Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
- (4) A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- (5) The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in our society at large.
- (6) The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- (7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Thus, our first principle expresses an aspiration to transcend the divisive identity politics of race, class, and religion. The practical consequences of failure to treat each other with respect are not just individual but societal – cultural wars fueling political polarization. In turn, these civic battles, stoked by demonization, obstruct our aim to create a more egalitarian, just, and sustainable world order, the subjects of our second, sixth, and seventh principles.

Cancel culture is a direct, frontal assault on our fourth and fifth principles, shutting down open and honest dialogue. This in turn divides people even more into media bubbles, while the resentments of the demeaned or persecuted build up, opening the arena to conspiracy theories, demagoguery, or worse. For cancellation done in the name of racial justice, this illiberal backlash may end up re-victimizing the working-class people-of-color who were supposedly being protected from micro-aggressions. Clearly these dogmas, often championed by Critical Race Theorists, are also hurting professionals and students of all colors as well, even those who think they are benefitting from these dogmas, what some of us call, neo-racism.

New Attitudes

We must revitalize an old truth, expressed in the 1930's labor organizing slogan "black and white, unite and fight". It's time now to include not just “black and white”,

but all races among workers, students, professionals, immigrants, and cultural groups.

We call for finding common ground, instead of stoking divisions for the power and privilege of racial elites all stripes who profit from keeping average people disunited by “white fragility” types of diversity training and other double standards.

Our struggle is to reach out to people in the pews – to help pull back the veil so they can recognize the toxicity of identity politics, whether based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. These cultural battles have fueled many of the great scourges of humankind – war, genocide, racism, and persecution – through the ages and continue today.

UUMUAC is calling for collaboration across class, identity, and culture. We’ve already implemented plans for this purpose, including a newsletter, an online discussion group, online worship services, conferences, participation in meetings and forums, and support for dissident initiatives and targeted individuals. At present we are organizing an international conference to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2022, and our Religious Professionals Task Force is working on new ways to support heterodox ministers and other religious professionals.

Our purpose is to rebuild the trust and solidarity that we had during the Civil Rights Movement, what some would call “the Kumbaya, my Lord” moments, by replacing the destructive finger-pointing ideologies of neo-racism with initiatives to find and honor our common humanity, while learning from our differences.

The Importance of the Ideas Expressed in Our Manifesto: The Quest for Reconciliation

To begin with, we affirm the immense cultural contributions of black folks and other folks of color to human civilization. But we reject the neo-racist dogmas of white privilege, white fragility, white implicit bias, and most of all, white supremacy as still ongoing realities within our present-day desegregated culture, a culture created by the contributions of whites to as well as nonwhites. To this end we call for the UUA to fully restore the democratic process for all those who claim to have been harmed by racial incidents, including legal due process for all claims of harm, yet avoiding assuming or assigning blame where there is no realistic reason to do so. Then there is the situation of historical harm; that is, the harm caused by ruthless political economic policies of US American capitalists. In much of UUA ideology, these policies – deportation of Native Americans, seizure of Mexican territory, enslavement of black people, for example --are blamed on white people of all classes and immigrant status combined with the neo-racist notion that all white people today are beneficiaries of these actions.

Such thought suppresses the fact that millions of white people opposed those policies and this should be acknowledged by the UUA, for it would go a long way to creating a spirit of reconciliation between those who fought against racial injustices and those who suffered from them. This could mean, for example, applying the concept of reparations to all rank-and-file folk who were victims of being held to involuntary servitude– Black White Latinos Native Americans Asians Immigrants.

Now here is the point as related to the specific situation of the UUAC. There has been a variety of complaints leveled against our members, both professional and laity, under the broad category of "harm" defined as the continuation of historical wrongs or as some current incident declared to be racially harmful. We argue that we must reject complaints based on the concept of racialist harm without strong evidence that it was racially motivated and not simply based on some ideological, linguistic, or identity differences, for clearly this would be an important step in moving toward synergy. By using the democratic process and legal procedures, we need to make sure that such accusations of race-based harm are grounded in the facts of the situation, especially around the issue of intentionality.

But today one of the most harmful term, a key high impact term, is the phrase white supremacy used by UUA leaders as a noun or an adjective in describing a variety of socio-political and socio-cultural elements identified with "the white race." This term has a specific history and a popular meaning referring to a particular period in world history and to a particular ideology. To use the term white supremacy today as spokespersons for Critical Race Theory use it as a general application to all things white or deemed to be white, racially speaking, is creating inappropriate definitions of "white supremacy", with all its negative history and connotations, is a misuse designed to create racial and cultural conflict, rather than unity and a major discussion at the next UUA General Assembly on this fact would again create a spirit of reconciliation. In other words, the concept of white supremacy should only be used in its popular understanding to describe the white supremacists in our society, and by using it appropriately, we create clarity and lay the basis of mutual understanding.

Mutual understanding becomes the basis for our vision of reconciliation, especially when we bring the multiracial unitarian universalist perspective to the table and as applied to the UUAC this would allow UU's committed to the Seven Principles to resume their place as a united, major part of the progressive/liberal movements in contemporary religious life.

To summarize and conclude: The purpose of us writing this article for a traditional Christian journal yet noted for its contradictory commitment to liberal Christianity was to share with its readers what is going on in a religion that once prided itself on being liberal and humanist, Unitarian Universalism, symbolized in our Manifesto. We did this to offer a model of how we are seeking to deal with the neo-racist movement within our own faith with a potential goal of achieving synergy, the unity of opposites, through dialogue and debate, under the power of our Fourth Principle: the responsible search for truth and meaning. What we have sought to do is to transform our brief manifesto called "Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian Universalism" (which we had submitted as an ad but was turned down), transforming it into a longer article, at the suggestion of a representative of the *Journal*.

This turned out to be an excellent suggestion as it has allowed us to add the kind of detail that might be useful for other religious groups undergoing the struggle between multiracial unity and neo-racism and to share our belief that unless such synergy is achieved, then the UUAC will experience a major schism, which would be a major setback in the evolution of our faith.

We conclude by saying that the best way to deal with racism now and in the future is through multiracial unity, as it was done in the past. We assert, and have historical evidence to show, that the best way to do this is to adopt/adapt the UUMUAC goal: the unity of the light- and dark-skinned people of the world, specifically the members of the

rank-and-file: workers, students, and professionals. For, biologically speaking, our melanin content is the only genetic feature we have to indicate some kind of universal physical differences. We in the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council dedicate ourselves to ideologically fighting racism in all of its modern forms, including that represented by "cancel culture".

We place before the readers of this journal and the members of our own Association of Congregations the choice declared by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his last book on the issue of race, *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community?*

“What is Woke Religion and How to Resist It”
a review by Dick Burkhardt of
Woke Racism: How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black Americans
By John McWhorter (2021)

The black Columbia University linguist and activist John McWhorter really takes the Left to task for promoting a cult-like ideology that exploits the current US moral panic over race. And we thought we'd left Orwellian ideologies behind, like the McCarthyism, totalitarianism, and fundamentalism of the 20th century. This short, eloquent, and timely book is directed at both whites and blacks, though whites – both the new acolytes and the skeptics - have the most to learn.

McWhorter calls this new ideology “woke racism” or “third wave racism” but it’s the same as what many now call “critical race theory”, as broadly conceived. I’d describe it as “the identity politics of race, especially as rooted in postmodern philosophy and race reductionism”. But to McWhorter it’s an actual religion, which he sometimes refers to, tongue-in-cheek, as “KenDiAngelo” religion after its two high priests – Robin DiAngelo and Ibram Kendi. There’s a whole chapter describing the doctrines and rituals of this religion, especially the treatment of heretics, more often called “cancel culture”.

Here’s his trenchant overview of woke racism: “All deemed sufficiently unaware of this sense of *existing while white* as eternal culpability require bitter condemnation and ostracization ... a zealous brand of inquisition that seems to hover over almost any statement, ambition, or achievement in modern society... it forces us to render a great deal of our public discussion of urgent issues in double-talk that any ten-year-old can see through... third wave anti-racism forces us to pretend that performance art is politics... did you know objectivity, being on time, and the written word are ‘white’ things?... [and] if that seems off to you, then you are one with George Wallace, Bull Connor, and David Duke?” (p 5-6).

McWhorter begins with a table of 10 precepts that could qualify as the catechism of this new religion, except each precept has a confusing anti-precept. For example, “When black people say you have insulted them, apologize with profound sincerity and guilt” but “Don’t put black people in a position where you expect them to forgive you” (p 8). The point is always to tar “all whites as racist and showing that you know that they are racist”. The problem is that this toxic “reductive and prosecutorial” attitude is taking over not just university culture but American culture at large” (p 12).

McWhorter asks why has this nonsense been allowed to spread? His answer is that today “being called a racist is all but equivalent to being called a pedophile”. That is, the word “racist” is being wielded like a club to bash anyone who dares to object. Or [PAGE 7](#)

if that doesn't do the trick, you'll be labeled a white supremacist. And "to deny it, is to confirm it" (p 13). This sort of "double-bind" is vicious and vile but has a long pedigree in dogmatic and fundamentalist religions and totalitarian ideologies.

What McWhorter doesn't cite is that contradictions and confusion are a staple of cults seeking converts – see the books by Steven Hassan on how cults operate to break down rational thought and control your mind. In this case they insist on the delusions that white "self-mortification is political activism" while "being black is ever and only oppression from the white man" (p 17). Yet the acolytes who evangelize such concepts "view themselves as having been chosen", so McWhorter calls them "The Elect" and likens them to the self-righteous inquisitors of old.

McWhorter is serious about the religion thing: "An anthropologist would see no difference between Pentecostalism and this new form of antiracism" (p 23). He begins with "superstitions", such as that ritual confessions of supposed racial sins will somehow magically dismantle the power structures of society, let alone that these will be rebuilt into antiracist power structures, or the implicit assumption that all this would be relatively peaceful.

Others, such as Toure' Reed, have pointed out that we could replace the ruling class by ritually purified antiracists and it would make little difference unless there was also a program with formidable popular support to replace our current neoliberal global capitalism with a far more just and sustainable society. There is no such populist program today, so it's far more likely that our new antiracist rulers would become as corrupted as the current ones. Certainly, the Obama presidency shows how little difference was made by even a brilliantly articulate and compassionate leader of color.

Then McWhorter takes on the "clergy" of this new religion – Ta-Nehisi Coates, Robin DiAngelo, and Ibram Kendi. For example, the Coates' "Case for Reparations" was "received, rather, as a sermon", not as a serious political proposition. DiAngelo leads people through ritual confessions, leaving them feeling very satisfied at having "done the work". Pointedly, she offers no political program or guidance toward doing anything practical for racial justice. Kendi preaches to us about "how to be an antiracist" and convert the "heathen" of racist deniers who have not heard "the Good News". All this is not the smugness that it seems but normal for religious people" (p 35).

There is even an apocalyptic aspect – that great day when America "owns up to" racism and finally fixes it. Yet McWhorter observes that in the year after the murder of George Floyd, "America has become conscious of racism ... to a degree so extreme, so sustained, and so sincere that history offers no parallel". Instead, the Elect act like Eric Hoffer's "True Believer" – "appealing to an idealized past, a fantastical future, and an indelibly polluted present" (p 37). For the Elect "actual progress on race is not something to celebrate but to talk around. This is because, with progress, the Elect lose their sense of "purpose" (p 40).

Most visible of all, "The Elect Ban the Heretic ... What the Elect call *problematic* is what Christians call *blasphemous*" ... They are posing as injured in order to demonstrate the 'violence' of the views with which they disagree and thus prove that those views are evil" (p 44). This harkens back to the primordial concept of *taboo*. "We've been taken from the "political activism of Martin Luther King to the faith-based commitments of a Martin Luther" (p 50).

Vulnerable older religions are often subverted or divided up by religious upstarts. McWhorter cites the current turmoil within Unitarian Universalism, which I know all too well as a life-long UU and seasoned activist for justice. The UU hierarchy is

predominantly white, well-educated, affluent, liberal and now quite feminized. Thus it is highly vulnerable to the white-guilt messaging of the Elect, despite the long and honorable commitment of leading UUs to racial justice, especially the solidarity they demonstrated, even martyrdom, during the Civil Rights era.

Recently several of senior justice ministers have been branded as heretics for fictitious “harms” when they offered measured words of dissent from doctrines or practices of the Elect who had taken over positions of authority. The UU principle affirming our “free and responsible search for truth and meaning” was simply ignored. McWhorter cites two of those targeted, the well-regarded Rev. Richard Trudeau and Rev. Todd Eklof, the latter being subjected to a veritable witch-hunt.

But it’s not just white males who’ve been persecuted by this inquisition – the list also includes a senior white female and a senior black male. I find the abuse of elders who object to woke language or doctrine to be particularly repugnant. On a personal note, I am a member of group which supports UU dissidents and opposes the woke takeover.

Another chapter focuses on the attraction for blacks of “therapeutic alienation”, or “noble victimhood”, especially those still feeling insecure, learning how to navigate the new freedoms since desegregation. South Africa saw something like this after the collapse of apartheid – with freedom comes opportunity and responsibility, but with few cultural cues as to how to proceed.

Post-colonial societies face the same dilemma – people inexperienced in governing often learn in the school of hard knocks. I’m also reminded of the moral and civic immaturity of the US ruling class compared some European countries, who’ve had a thousand years of hard knocks behind them.

In addition, McWhorter takes on the lowering of standards for blacks as counterproductive, even condescending racism. Permitting more violence in the schools hurts blacks the most, even if comes from other blacks, not whites. Sending unprepared blacks to Yale just means that few of them will succeed, whereas they might do far better in a second-tier university.

Declaring that critical thinking and study skills”, even STEM studies, are “acting white is nonsensical. And Kendi’s dogma that disparities in racial outcomes must be due to racism, really takes beating at McWhorter’s hands. He points out that dysfunctional black cultural characteristics are real and can’t be erased overnight by blaming and shaming whites. Or that many statistics for Asians and Jews are better than those for whites, with select black statistics being better too.

As to solutions, McWhorter restricts himself to three actions that would be relatively quick and easy: (1) End the war on drugs. (2) Teach phonics. (3) Reinvigorate vocational education. The first two of these are already happening in places, whereas the third has gotten little attention from the elites. Note that Peter Turchin cites “elite overproduction” as a key historical factor in the fall of overextended and corrupt regimes, now manifested by too many underemployed and dissatisfied college graduates, ripe for the demagoguery of the Elect. Better funding and more respect for voc-ed would also help liberal politics to regain traction with the working class.

McWhorter concludes that for whites woke racism “forces us to think like people of the Dark Ages without knowing it. It’s scary, it’s unfair and regressive, and it’s just plain wrong” (p 58). While for blacks, “the Elect’s harm to black people is so multifarious and rampant that anyone committed to this religion and calling it antiracist walks in a

certain shame” (p 137).

His advice if you’re attacked by the woke: The Elect are true believers who won’t be convinced by argument. But nonetheless, stand your ground – state your moral principles and the facts as best you know them. Then refuse to be vilified - ask for evidence, citing the normal meanings of words and the damaging social and political consequences of woke ideology, until they realize that you can’t be intimidated. If necessary, find allies and consult a lawyer to fight back. Don’t apologize for fictitious harms just to placate.

FIGHTING RACISM IN UU CHURCHES

by Rev. Richard Trudeau

With the rallying-cry "dismantle our white supremacy culture," the majority of national UU officials--in the UUA, in the UU Ministers Association, and in both UU seminaries--are pushing (and pushing, and pushing...!) an ideology that they claim will reduce racism in UU churches.

Since we in UUMUAC are organized to fight racism, and almost all of us are UUs, we are of course led, first and foremost, also to focus on racism in UU churches. One would think that this would make us natural allies of national UU officials.

Unfortunately, by categorizing whites as "oppressors" and blacks as "oppressed," the national UU ideology tends to increase one's awareness of, and to heightens the significance of, a person's race. It *labels* people. It makes the color of one's skin more important than the content of one's character. It encourages whites to feel shame and blacks to feel aggrieved, stoking anger on both sides. National UU officials are, in short, pushing an approach to reducing racism in UU churches that can only have the effect of *increasing* it.

We in UUMUAC therefore find ourselves in the awkward and unwelcome position of opposing the national officials of our own religion!

“Abstract Nonsense” a review by Dick Burkhardt of Fools, Frauds, and Firebrands - Thinkers of the New Left

By Roger Scruton (2019)

This book exposes, with both logic and wit, the abstract nonsense that masquerades as philosophical profundity, especially of the revolutionary, Marxist sort. The moral: Be suspicious not just of impenetrable prose and jargon but also of rhetorical flourishes that soar high above the realities of everyday existence – the simple joys of chores and handy work, the food on the table, the struggles and celebrations of family life, the camaraderie of the enterprise or voyage, the tragedies of accident, disease, and war.

Prime examples of hypocritical nonsense are the tracts of French or German philosophers of thoroughly “bourgeois” origins who pretend to speak for the “proletarians” who are presumed to have a “false consciousness” when they lack the revolutionary fervor of the elite leftist intellectual. Instead of these philosophers laying out practical programs for reforming the economy and government, real-world trade-offs and learning curves are obscured by utopian visions, mazes of abstract “contradictions”,

eternal power struggles, or ethereal speculations on what is knowable or unknowable (“deconstruction”).

A common theme is the attack on Enlightenment values – such as reason, science, democracy, and universal values. These attacks continue today in the form of the “critical theory” originated by the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse) and its development into postmodernism by the French (Foucault and Derrida). James Lindsay labels the result as “Identity Marxism” with “Critical Race Theory (CRT)” being its best known manifestation. In popular usage, as broadly conceived, this could be described as the “identity politics of race, as rooted in postmodernism, victimhood culture, and race reductionism”.

Yet most people who use the language and doctrines of CRT are ignorant of its origins in critical theory or postmodernism, or even that they are speaking CRT. That is, except at the graduate level, its doctrines are often taught as revealed truth, without calling it CRT, to obscure its roots in illiberal, unethical, and anti-Enlightenment philosophy. This book shows how many intellectuals who claim to be fighting for “liberation” end up in a morass of Orwellian doublespeak, including implicit presumptions that the “ends justify the means”.

A prime example is that the word “revolution” has acquired a reputation for extreme violence and ultimate failure (French Revolution, Russian Revolution, etc.). Thus postmodernism, which sees the manipulation of language as a key aspect of power, has now replaced “revolution” by the word “dismantle” – more ambiguous and without the same aura of violence, meaning “tearing down” nevertheless. Still, this indicates that unethical and undemocratic force will be required, not just reform. In fact, practical reform is often dismissed as “incremental”.

A similar tactic is to weaponize existing language by purported redefinitions. Here a prime example is the accusation that the US, or other European-type societies, have a “white supremacy culture (WSC)”, as if the US has always been dominated by doctrines and practices of white racial superiority and oppression. In truth this has never been dominant in the US and has been in long term decline, now only at the margins. Yet some theorists of CRT have claimed to see WSC in “traits” that have no relation to white supremacy as commonly understood.

Meanwhile others execute their WSC attack using the false logic that “correlation means causation” - suggesting that if institutions or practices dominated by white people seem to be oppressive, then the cause must be racial, not other factors, such as economics, which has been the dominant factor historically, or religion, which has also driven much persecution.

This use of language often leads not just to oppression (“cancel culture”) of those committed to Enlightenment values but serious misdiagnoses of problems. A particularly nefarious way this happens is by discounting concepts based on their origin, not content, leading to ad hominem or racial attacks. For example, the work of eminent social scientists may be dismissed if they are identified as “white”, assuming a victimhood culture of whites as oppressors, exactly like the Marxist identity of the “bourgeoisie”.

This became a notorious feature of the 1619 Project of Nikole Hannah-Jones, for example. Scruton attributes this kind of cynical ploy to Foucault: “Hence by sleight of hand, he is able to present any feature of social order – even the disposition to heal the sick – as a covert exercise of domination”. At one point Foucault even asserts that the revolution “can only take place via the radical elimination of the judicial system” (p 109-110).

While Foucault created rationalizations for destructive power plays against the bourgeois, Sartre found a pseudo-religious way to gain support from the demonized bourgeois themselves: He became “the confessor of the middle class” over its

condition. The bourgeois of Sartre's iconography is a myth; but he bears a resemblance to the ordinary city-dweller who, seeing himself distorted in this portrait, is troubled by the thought of moral possibilities...He enthusiastically confesses to purely hypothetical crimes" (p 98). Today's version of this phenomenon is the "white allyship" of CRT, as promoted by Robin DiAngelo - a way of "virtue signaling" and protection from the accusation of racism and "white fragility".

In the last chapter Scruton summarizes his conservative philosophy, as an alternative. At first it sounds quite reasonable: "Our concern as political beings should be, not to abolish the powers that bind society together, but to mitigate their exercise" (p 277). Because "the attempt to achieve a social order without domination inevitably leads to a new kind of domination, more sinister by far than the one deposed...the iron law of oligarchy" (p 278). That is, it takes an oligarchy to overthrow an oligarchy, in fact a more powerful and violent one.

Instead, a "changed way of life does not come from politics. It comes from religion and culture" (p 280), especially spiritual resources. The revisionist Italian Marxist philosopher Gramsci understood this and made cultural takeover into a strategy for revolution. This has now been implemented by critical theorists in the US, who've already taken over much of the educational system.

Scruton judges three ideas to be fundamental to such change: (1) civil society, (2) institutions, (3) personality (p 280). Civil society is the network of local associations of all sorts – from governmental to recreational to artistic – that bind people together and set the norms. But it is the institutions which form a "mediating presence that softens politics" (p 282). These institutions necessitate forms of discrimination, hierarchy, and accountability outside the control of the state, obstructing dictatorship and totalitarianism. In this system, "collective agents are also corporate persons, answerable for their actions and subject to law" (p 284). An independent judiciary is essential.

So far so good. But then we come to a critical assumption: that "common law is usually self-correcting" (p 55), a kind of legal "invisible hand" (p 56). In fact, this barely hints at the dominant role of the economy in any system of governance, by far the most important insight of Marxism, which has been a failure in so many other ways. That is, governance, though not determined by economics, must adapt to it, the central fact that Scruton does not address. Other conservatives assume that the free market is the way to adapt, yet never address how to design the governance system to mitigate the spectacular failures of the free market in practical and timely ways, instead of self-correction by depressions, wars, societal upheavals, and the like.

Roger Scruton is so effective at skewering the abstract nonsense of radical philosophies of revolution, that I'd hoped for a more effective analysis of "lessons learned". For example, over the last 40 years since Reagan was elected, the free market in the US has been handed all kinds of perks and subsidies, only to yield a dramatic escalation of economic inequality. This, in turn, has led to cultural and political polarization, even demagoguery and threats to democracy itself.

In other words, this conservative era of impressive economic growth, though amazingly successful for the 1%, has been a spectacular failure for the left-behind majority. This is precisely because the law, instead of self-correcting, has been captured by the "bourgeoisie" to enrich itself, with so little mitigation that homelessness has now spread across the land. Both radicals and conservatives are stuck in their ideological ruts, unwilling to consider political economies which actually do work, such as the social democracies of Scandinavia.

" Thanksgiving Day and White Supremacy" by **Rev. Robert Murphy**

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the famous feast in Plymouth Colony. It was the most famous church supper in American history and it was sponsored by what is now a Unitarian Universalist congregation. Needless to say, I'm talking about the event that's now known as "the first American Thanksgiving Day."

That's right. Those people in the Pilgrim hats who appear in holiday cartoons and in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade are some of our religious ancestors. Many of the Pilgrim and Puritan congregations - including some famous congregations in Boston, Salem, Cambridge, and Plymouth - are now member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association. How and why these venerable congregations moved towards liberal religion is a fascinating story and it's important. However, it's a story that can wait for another day. For the moment, focus your attention on the American Thanksgiving Day and its celebration.

Thanksgiving Day is one of the big moments on the American calendar. Every child past the age of six has heard the story. In the midst of political and religious excitement, there are two things that need to be said about the American Thanksgiving Day.

First: It's needed. Second: Get it right.

Start with a moment of gratitude. Despite epidemics and pandemics, massive wild-fires, mass murders, climate change, and other tragedies, by some miracle, the American people have survived. We can address historic injustices, we can protect our natural environment, and we can celebrate our interdependence. Neighbors can care for each other. We can say "thank you" for everything that is healthy and beautiful in today's world. Gratitude is important. It's always important.

Meister Eckhard, who was one of the great philosophers and mystics, said, "If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough." Some of Meister Eckhard's opinions were denounced as heresy, and he's still controversial in some places, but we can appreciate his wisdom. In his best moments, he may have gone to the heart of healthy religion. In Japan, many Buddhists pause at the beginning of each meal to simply say, "Thank you." That's enough. No references to history or theology.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

There's something else that can be said in America on Thanksgiving Day.

The American Thanksgiving Day celebration has become a celebration of white supremacy. It's a strange situation and it's tragic. Because the heavy emphasis on colonialism and on the celebration of the white man's ways is racist and it hurts all Americans. For reasons unexplained, our national holiday is associated with a particular group of white folks at one moment in the history of Massachusetts. Religious buildings, government buildings, restaurants, and markets, in Florida and in Illinois and in California are decorated with pictures of the Pilgrims and the ship "Mayflower." It's a strange situation and it's tragic. Reject white supremacy.

Some historians say that the first American Thanksgiving Day took place on a Virginia plantation or close to El Paso. In Florida, much is said about Saint Augustine. Still, what's offered in response to Plymouth Colony is often just a tempest in the white man's tea pot. White historians talk about an historic event that marked the triumph of white people during the colonial era. And, no, it really doesn't matter if the event took place in South or in the North. It was a white man's party,

although some people in the first nations may have acquiesced. What followed in America's story was some nasty business that's seldom acknowledged on Thanksgiving Day. The White House may mention this group or that group among the Europeans but, for some reason, the President of the United States says very little about the Indians.

The American Thanksgiving Day has become the Yankee equivalent of Confederate Memorial Day. It's the celebration of white folks who said something or did something to promote white folks. Confederate monuments and memorials have been removed from public places in the United States, and there's a need for a similar cleansing in November. It's possible to honor the American Thanksgiving Day without celebrating the Pilgrims. Keep the cranberry sauce, if you like, and enjoy your cornbread and your pumpkin pie, but don't be trapped by the past. Rise above the racism and the regional chauvinism that puts a stain on America's harvest holiday.

Tell the truth about the American Thanksgiving Day. In 1789, George Washington issued the first Presidential proclamation that called for a national day of "public thanksgiving." No mention of Plymouth Colony or any other colony. At that moment, most Americans wanted to move beyond imperialism. Seventy-four years later, Abraham Lincoln issued his holiday proclamation, and, again, no mention of the colonial experience. Lincoln's goal was to unite the nation and to heal its wounds. Despite years of research, I've never found a Congressional statement that calls for an annual holiday in honor of Massachusetts and the Pilgrims. Since the 1940s, some of the American Presidents have, sometimes, praised the white settlers who "conquered the wilderness." Ask for new and better behavior in the twenty-first century.

What's needed is an American Thanksgiving Day that all people can enjoy. It should be a multiracial, multicultural, and multiregional holiday that brings Americans together to celebrate our good fortune and to anticipate the future. No need to sing hymns about Plymouth Rock and to dress children in colonial costumes. If the President of the United States wants to pardon turkeys, that's fine, although there are other topics to address. Be grateful that the turkeys haven't been appointed to public office.

Move along to more important matters. Acknowledge that the first American Thanksgiving Day took place long before the Europeans arrived. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people have honored the three sisters - corn, beans, and squash - for many centuries. And other indigenous groups have their own customs during the autumn months. Beyond the Americas, harvest festivals are almost universal. Jesus of Nazareth observed Sukkot and his actions are recorded in the Gospel according to John. Sukkot is an ancient harvest festival that's important for many Jews and for many others who are involved with the Abrahamic traditions.

Canada has its National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Church and state powers colluded for decades to oppress indigenous peoples in Canada. In the United States, similar crimes occurred, but they've seldom been acknowledged by national leaders. What's needed is an American Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Perhaps it should be observed in November and perhaps it should be observed at some other point during the year. In any event, there's a need for apologies from religious and political leaders, there's a need for reflection, and, more important, there's a need for reparations and the return of tribal lands.

It may happen. Americans may be able to get things right on Thanksgiving Day. Start by reclaiming and reshaping the harvest festivals in your community. And let your religious and political leaders know what you're doing. Letters to

Congress and to the President of the United States may be useful. Keep asking, "Why are you honoring the Europeans settlers and the conquistadores and the missionaries who overwhelmed the indigenous peoples? What's your message and your vision for the American Thanksgiving Day? What are you trying to accomplish?" Every religious organization can ask these questions, but for Unitarian Universalist congregations the questions are especially important. We're the people who have often defined and shaped the American Thanksgiving Day, and we need to get it right.

Ask for truth and reconciliation, with justice for all of the indigenous groups in what is now the United States of America. After that, look around in your neighborhood and in your nation. Winter is coming, my friends. Even in Florida, there's a need for neighbors to help each other with preparations for the cold weather season. Millions of people are unemployed and many have been hit very hard by recent disasters. Organize the programs that are needed for food assistance, for fuel assistance, and for the other basics. We need better programs for education and public health. Say "thank you" and ask for a bit more. Organize, organize, organize.

Why I do not support the adoption of the proposed 8th principle-- John Britt

Systemic racism continues to make a mockery of our societal promises of equality. There is so much work left to be done in health care, employment, housing, education, law enforcement, the courts, the prisons, media etc. An urgent call to action is required to mobilize all of us to take advantage of this moment. That said, I do not believe the proposed 8th principle is the way to capitalize on this opportunity.

- The proposal is not a new principle – it is a call to action. The moral/theological foundation for all anti-racism work already exists within our current principles. Many UU's have been acting to address racism for decades using that foundation and will continue to do so. In the 1960's Westside mobilized to fight against redlining in Seattle. In 2011/12 Westside mobilized to advocate for marriage equality. Members have mobilized to address climate change, immigration rights, police brutality and other justice issues. None of these issues are explicitly named in our principles. That's not what principles are for. Our principles are moral/theological touchstones. We are called upon to reinterpret what they mean over time and to discern what actions are called for to honor, defend, and promote them. Similar calls to action could be developed around other principles. One implication of the 7th principle might be that we should, "commit to actions to accountably release ourselves, both individually and collectively from dependence on the planet destroying products of fossil fuels". A worthwhile commitment, but one that is readily derived from the existing principle. Consider this: When racism is dismantled the words we will use to describe the outcomes-justice, equity, compassion, peace, dignity, are already reflected in our existing principles.

- Our principles point us toward the world we seek to build, not to our moral flaws and failings. While calls to action appropriately direct our attention and energy to problems that need fixing, our principles have a different orientation and purpose. They direct our

attention toward the kind of world we seek to build, the positive result of overcoming our human failings and flaws. If adopted, the 8th principle would be the only principle that draws our attention to a specific human flaw (racism). Other faith traditions make lists of “sins” and are on alert to extinguish them. That has not been the tradition within Unitarian Universalism. What about all the other undesirable attitudes and behaviors that are part of the human condition? Do we need separate principles to call them out as well? At the level of our principles, we are better served by language which directs our attention to the world we seek to create, not to the endless and sometimes discouraging ways we fail one another.

- Accountability belongs to all our principles. Actions, not recitation of platitudes change the world. That said, it is inappropriate to attach accountability to any one principle. To be accountable for acting upon our principles is our life’s work as Unitarian Universalists. Attaching the word to one principle distracts us from its centrality for the rest.
- Spiritual wholeness and Beloved Community will occur as a result of accountable commitments to all our principles. While working to dismantle racism is critical work, neither spiritual wholeness or beloved community will come to pass unless we act accountably on all our principles.

In Summary:

Yes, to the call for action to dismantle racism-no to the adoption of this new language. This proposal calls upon us to carry out worthy and much needed actions- and I embrace them. In my opinion however, the moral basis (or theological, if you prefer) for working to dismantle systemic racism already exists within the current principles. Adding “Spiritual Wholeness”, “accountability” and “Beloved Community” may seem to add philosophical heft, but these concepts apply to all our principles. I believe our principles serve us best when they continue to draw our attention to the kind of world we seek to create, when we overcome our human flaws and failings. Calls to action are an appropriate way to direct our energy and remind us to take the necessary actions to create that world. What is needed is not a new principle but the sustained and focused dedication of time, talent and treasure to the issue. There are many ways UUA leadership and congregations can support Unitarian Universalists to take advantage of this unique moment to address structural racism. UU congregations can dedicate a portion of our budgets to the critical changes that are needed to ameliorate the impacts of racism. We can support other people and organizations better organized and positioned to make the needed changes. A portion of ministerial or other staff time can be devoted to relevant issues. The policies and practices that can measurably improve the health, safety, well-being and life satisfaction of POC have been clearly and repeatedly described elsewhere for decades. Let’s join together, as many have done in the past and are continuing to do. Endless recitation of pretty words, or arguing over new ones, don’t get results- let’s do the work!

“Expose of the Nefarious Tactics of Wokism and How to Fight Back”
a review by Dick Burkhart of
**Counter Wokecraft - A Field Manual for Combatting the Woke in the University
and Beyond**
By Charles Pincourt with James Lindsay (2021)

The Woke Inquisition has taken over many university departments and moved to schools, churches, non-profits and more. Sometimes it bursts forth as a vicious personal attack – a “cancellation” or “deplatforming” – most often against some hapless innocent. The target might have written something that was misinterpreted by a Woke squad trained to search for purported signs of covert racism, white supremacy, or sexism. This is much like the McCarthyites of the 1950s who were trained to look for signs of covert communism, often finding what they were looking for, whether it was actually there or not.

But this book by a professor using a pseudonym backs up and examines how the Woke takeover academic departments and how to fight back to prevent this from happening. Similar stealth tactics and deceptions are used to target other organizations. Dishonest and unethical behavior are to be expected from the Woke, because it has become a kind of fundamentalist religion (see McWhorter’s book on Woke Racism as a religion). Hint: It’s all about power, with idealistic ends justifying nefarious means = nasty power plays.

At the beginning the Woke will try to insert Woke words into documents. These are nice-sounding words assigned disputable Woke meanings, which will be invoked later to justify more serious maneuvers. Pincourt calls these “crossover words” – like “diversity, equity, and inclusion” – who could object? Well just look these up in James Lindsey’s <https://newdiscourses.com/tag/translations-from-the-wokish/>

One level up, the Woke will try to subvert fair-minded decision making. For example, they will say that a secret ballot is not needed, because they want to be able to intimidate anyone who votes against them by false references to racism, white supremacy, or sexism. More generally they often object to Roberts Rules of Order or anything similar, again so they can implement some kind of power play. A top priority for the Woke is to recruit Woke allies, usually in disguise, to facilitate their power plays.

Pincourt goes on to describe some of the nastier things he has seen. These include bullying, ad hominin attacks (= personal attacks), “assume guilt, demand proof of innocence”, “intentional misinterpretation”, “using consensus as coercion” (p 32). I’ve seen some of these myself – in a church setting.

More subtle is the “Motte and Bailey Rhetorical Technique”. In medieval terminology, “the motte is a ... tower on a mound that is easy to defend”, while “the bailey is the courtyard below the motte ... that is more difficult to defend but more pleasant to inhabit”. The point is that the Woke may start from, or retreat to, an easy to defend position – the motte – when their true goal is a more difficult to defend position – the bailey. With the motte secure, they’ll try to maneuver into the bailey, especially if they’ve constructed a trojan horse, such as special crossover words. It’s like a “bait and switch” sales job.

Finally Pincourt categorizes the Woke micro-tactics – subterfuge, exaggerating support, and quelling dissent and how they correspond to early-stage, then middle-stage, and on to late-stage entrenchment. He advises to be especially aware of the words “critical” and “diversity” and to seek alternate wording for clarity. Above all identify and train allies for resisting Woke advances, do your homework, and organize.

Note that many people are only Woke-proximate and could be educated and persuaded. To help you, Pincourt provides a substantial list of typical Woke misrepresentations and violations of logic and ethics .

The Inflection Point: We Are Still Tomorrow's Ancestors: An Essay Based on A Political Report Presented at the January 7, 2022 UUMUAC Board Meeting

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, former Chair and now Vice Chair, UUMUAC

The purpose of this essay is to present a political report to prepare us for another new year, the fourth year, since the evolution of the UUMUACaucus into the UUMUACouncil, as we celebrate our first Board meeting of 2022 without me being the chair. 2022 will be an important political economic year, signaled by the speech given by Pres. Biden dealing with the first anniversary of the January 6, 2021 riots at the nation's capital. He argued that the January 6 action signaled an inflection point in the viability of the bourgeois democratic republic, my term not his. He incorrectly argued that we are living in a democracy when in fact the term does not appear in any constitutional documents. V. I. Lenin more correctly identifies the US American form of government as a bourgeois democratic republic with emphasis on the word republic.

And the tension has historically been within the United States of America between those who fight for a bourgeois oligarchic republic versus those who fight for the bourgeois democratic republic, but in both cases controlled by the bourgeoisie. I argue that the lesser of the two evils is the bourgeois democratic republic. And, Pres. Biden correctly identifies the dangers facing the democratic republic created by violent extremists, symbolized by the rioters, and, more dangerously, by those non-violent, anti-populists who continue to deny the validity of the 2020 elections.

The key to his presentation was the idea that in 2022 the United States Imperial system [my words not his] would reach an inflection point on the question of the validity of the electoral process and how to expand it. This is basic to the democratic element in the bourgeois republic. Let me be clear: the struggle for more democratic participation in politics has historically been a multiracial one, and not just a black one, as Afrocentric neo-racists would have us to believe. During the Reconstruction Wars of the 19th century, hundreds of white people were killed fighting for the right to vote against the white supremacist Democratic Party in the South, and in the 20th century, scores more also died just for the right to vote for either party, exemplified by our four Unitarian Universalist comrades killed in the fight for voting rights.

In this struggle we the members of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council must put forward the concept that xpanded voting rights will benefit an entire multiracial population, including white workers, students, and professionals, and not just black and brown members as neo-racists argue. We must understand

that when the voting rights were curtailed against Blacks in the South during the disenfranchisement movement, millions of whites, especially poor whites, also lost the right to vote. Consequently, we must boldly oppose the notion that democratic rights primarily benefit black folks, a notion which pushes frustrated white cousins into the arms of the anti-populists who pretend to be supporters of populism. The slogan developed by Theodore Parker and borrowed by Abraham Lincoln of “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people” still remains valid as a precursor for the real democracy which will one day emerge during the historical period of the Beloved Community.

The term inflection point is defined as “a moment when significant change occurs or may occur : TURNING POINT, “ (An Online Dictionary). The question we must ask ourselves is this : what would be the role of neo-racism in generating this inflection point? As it always has done historically since 1969: to keep a multiracial rank-and-file divided against itself so that it cannot fight for itself in making needed changes in the political economic situation of the present time. First, there is the growing system of exploitation called inflation where you are working harder to earn more money that is decreasing in value. Secondly, there is the increasing social oppression in which criminal violence and police violence go hand-in-hand to ravage our rank-and-file communities, regardless of color. And, thirdly, when we combine all this with both the environmental issue of climate change, on the one hand, and the increasing danger of World War III, on the other, then we can see why having the right to vote fully is the bottom line of our political power, since we do not yet live in the time of the bullet. Or, to paraphrase Malcolm X, we are living in the time of the ballot.

Think about it: how can we “UU the vote” during the 2022 election, if we are divided among ourselves around the proposed Eighth Principle and the whitesupremacyology driven Statement of Conscience --both the forms that the new racism is taking within the UUAC itself. So we should take Pres. Biden's warning seriously: from our perspective, the Fifth Principle itself is under siege. It is under the flag of the Fifth Principle that we enter into the struggle to save our storybook book democracy.

Comrades, this is all very complicated, but this is the nature of the inflection point, this turning point, making the choice between democratic republic versus the oligarchic republic. And if you would like to see the oligarchic republic in action, go to Haiti.

In a real sense, those anti-populist rioters who were workers, students, and professionals, were victims of the kind of mental illness created by anti-black racism, reflected in dogmas of implicit bias, critical race theorizing, and the constant refrain of racial disparity. Much of this has been generated by the Afrocentric neo-racists and their allies through their ideological control of expressive media, identitarian based academic departments, and social media. And, all of this is under the control of large corporations which need a multiracial population, especially the working class element, divided so that they can be conquered through the power of false consciousness, the most powerful form being race

consciousness in opposition to class consciousness.

One thing is for sure: the only way to save our US American bourgeois democratic republic – and from a Marxist Leninist historical theist point of view –it is at this time the lesser of the many evils – is through the vigorous implementation of multiracial unity harnessed to the forces of reform, reconstruction, or revolution. From our perspective, this concept must be grounded in a social humanist religious framework, what we in the MAC call multiracial unitarian universalism.

Therefore, in the battle between authentic white supremacists, on the one side, and anti-integrationist new racists, on the other, we become the intentional voice of multiracial Unitarian Universalism. And it is a voice which must be clearly heard during the coming struggle – not only during the varied 2022 elections but at GA 2022. We must make our voices heard through whatever social, political, and cultural media we have at our disposal: Facebook, forums, sermons, letters to the editor, personal letters to our contacts, leafleting, call-in shows, church newsletters, etc. If we would save the democratic republic, we cannot leave the fight for voting rights in the hands of the Afrocentric neo-racists who are clearly emerging as the privileged agents of disruption, division, and destruction at this time of the decline and fall of the US American Empire.

“Economics vs Ideology”
a review by Dick Burkhardt of
Toward Freedom: The Case Against Race Reductionism
By Toure’ Reed (2020)

Toure’ Reed is the son of the well-known black Marxist scholar Adolph Reed and has inherited his father’s clear-minded focus on the economic underpinnings of racial injustice. His “realpolitik” message is that lasting racial justice will come from black and white acting together, not ideologies like Critical Race Theory which attempt to reduce all injustice to blaming whites, or “race reductionism”.

Now Marxism is all about class reductionism (the working class vs the bourgeoisie). Except, in this book, Reed does not talk openly about either Critical Race Theory or Marxism, trying not to reignite the controversy over Adolph Reed’s cancelled talk before the Democratic Socialists of America in 2020.

Instead, Reed advocates for a version of “black and white together” that he calls a “public-good-oriented” politics, citing Bernie Sanders’ updated version of FDR’s New Deal. He prefers this description to “democratic socialism” in the current US context. Much of the book delves deeply into the history of racial politics in 20th century America to demonstrate that success for blacks came when the black and white working classes found common ground, facts that have been obscured by today’s race reductionist historians.

Reed cites “a deeply rooted reactionary tendency in contemporary liberal discourse related to race and inequality. Democrats and many self-identified progressives not only dismissed the utility of Sanders’ platform for African Americans...but they coalesced around putatively left identitarian formulations to attack his program from the right” (p 7).

His point is that “a living wage would do much more to both reduce black poverty rates and enhance African Americans’ ability to accumulate wealth than interracial friendships every could” (p 169). And, as to Ta-Nahisi Coates, the black champion of reparations and race reductionism, Reed concludes that Coates’ writing “is a call for continuing along the same path that has failed most black Americans since the Johnson administration.” “While it is unlikely that Coates set out to be neoliberalism’s most visible black emissary of the post-racial era, his insistence that we must treat race that is a force that exists independently of capitalism has, ironically, earned this accolade” (p 158).

Reed has a whole chapter on “when black progressives didn’t separate race from class” – from the 30s through the 60s. Even at the end of that era, its veterans, A Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, proposed a “domestic Marshall Plan” or “Freedom Budget for All” (p 67) that would have lifted the working class as a whole through universal programs. Instead the Johnson era means-testing ended up eroding the racial solidarity that had been developed by many unions. He quotes Rustin that “Irish, Italian, and Jewish Americans gained political and economic power through multi-ethnic, class-based political alliances and trade union membership” (p 73), so he knew that something similar was possible for African Americans.

I learned a lot of interesting history from this book – history that has been suppressed in recent years by the new orthodoxy of race reductionism. But the lesson is simple – economics has always been the underlying driver, with racial antagonisms being exploited by the elites, as feasible, to make the “rich, richer, and the poor, poorer”. The same is happening today, as both the far Left and the far Right fuel the cultural wars, which drive the political polarization and gridlock. Universal programs like Social Security will survive even the most reactionary and racist regimes, so both Obama and Biden are really coming up short, racially speaking, by failing to aim for Medicare for All and a universal basic income.