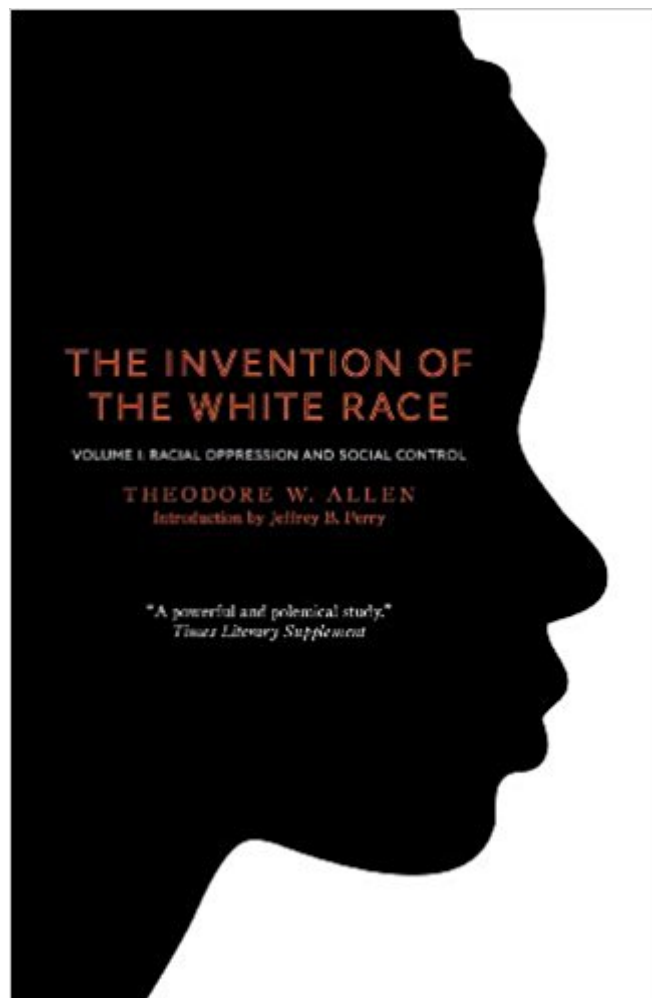




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The Invention Of The White Race, Volume 1: Racial Oppression And Social Control



Synopsis

When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no “white” people there. Nor, according to colonial records, would there be for another sixty years. In this seminal two-volume work, *The Invention of the White Race*, Theodore W. Allen tells the story of how America’s ruling classes created the category of the “white race” as a means of social control. Since that early invention, white privileges have enforced the myth of racial superiority, and that fact has been central to maintaining ruling-class domination over ordinary working people of all colors throughout American history. Volume I draws lessons from Irish history, comparing British rule in Ireland with the “white” oppression of Native Americans and African Americans. Allen details how Irish immigrants fleeing persecution learned to spread racial oppression in their adoptive country as part of white America. Since publication in the mid-nineties, *The Invention of the White Race* has become indispensable in debates on the origins of racial oppression in America. In this updated edition, scholar Jeffrey B. Perry provides a new introduction, a short biography of the author and a study guide. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I urge anyone (anti racist white folk especially) who are interested more fully understanding the social control function of white privilege and the national oppression of non white folk in the US and abroad in the form of imperialism. Allen does a excellent job at helping the reader understand the real history of white supremacy, class exploitation and crucially how they are interdependent. Although the content is very down to earth and understandable it is thick intellectually and challenges the reader to think about the nature of class society and possible alternatives. Enjoy

Good information, but really long, and I find electronic versions harder, but that's what was available to me. It is interesting in that so many slavery defenders use the Irish as examples of "worse" treatment. Comparing the long-term history of the Irish under English persecution, going back hundreds of years, is a better grounds for comparison - though there were some ways in which the Irish were treated more like the American Indians, and some ways in which it makes sense to look at Scottish slavery, all of which Allen does. The tragic thing becomes that even though the Irish in America had plenty of reasons to understand about prejudice and how damaging it could be, they quickly aligned with it as a way of protecting their own position. It is tragic that now and then people will still not see that allowing the oppression of one group may make your own status look better in comparison, but also holds you down. The material is still very timely, even though we should have had time and opportunity enough to be better by now. The funny thing is that in some ways it sounds like this volume's primary purpose was to lay the groundwork for volume 2, but it says some pretty important things on its own. Part of what the book covers in exhaustive detail is other theories of racism and their shortcomings. That makes the book drag in the beginning, but it is useful as well.

This is the work of a true People's Scholar. If you ever want to learn about the unspoken, unmentionable power structure of the US and its role in creating the concept of Whiteness and therefore Blackness, you must read this book. Every page is a delight!

Wow! A "capper" to all that I have previously studied concerning the so-called "white" race! Great book, and I'm still on Volume 1.

I am reading this and find it very interesting and an important historical work. However, the layout and editing is poor and confusing. Also redundant. Many similarly important works have been better presented. This is a work that should be easily read and remembered by all, not just professionals and scholars.

Allen begins volume 1 by reviewing the many histories of American racism written in the 20th century. Dividing the arguments into the psycho-cultural school and the socio-economic school of thought, he teases out the strengths and flaws of their scholarship. Allen then posits racial oppression as a deliberate ruling-class decision (constantly undergoing renewal) to prevent property-less European Americans from allying themselves with enslaved and free African Americans by offering the European Americans privileges based on white skin. His solution is to study "racism" rather than "race" because studies of race always devolve onto discussions of the body--onto those who are perceived to possess race--and thus avoids the real issue. That issue is the institutionalization of racism, how it functions systemically. He argues that race(ism) should be treated like any other oppression such as those oppressions practiced on people of a certain class or gender. It is a strong, well researched, tightly argued work. He proves that the "white race" can be "gotten on a technicality" because it was and is indeed an invented rather than a natural category.

Must-read

It was a good book for me!!! I am a Moorish American, and I study alot.

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