



SOCIALIST PARTY OF MICHIGAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2024 Workers of Michigan Unite!

The “Great Replacement” Scam

How Racist Conspiracy Theories Attempt to Divide the Working Class

Early last month Michigan representative Josh Schriver made headlines when he posted an image referring to “the great replacement theory” on his Twitter/ X account. In a clarifying statement, Schriver painted himself as the victim of “race baiters” and “victim politics” and doubled down on his assertion that there is a coordinated effort to reduce the white population.

The Great Replacement Theory is an anti-Semitic and racist idea originating from white nationalist circles that has increasingly been finding more mainstream acceptance after being parroted by figures like Tucker Carlson and Elon Musk. It essentially posits that through a combination of immigration and “cultural Marxism” a secret cabal of elites (typically Jewish billionaires like George Soros) are attempting to reduce the population of white people.

There are many different ways to approach and debunk this abhorrent idea, but we at the Socialist Party of Michigan want to hit on a couple of important points that have not been covered much in the media. This theory must be analyzed in historical context, and “Great Replacement” is just the newest iteration of a long staid tactic of trying to marry the ingrained bigotries of certain white middle class- and class collaborationist white workers- to insurgent labor movements.

In the lead up to WWII there was much hullabaloo from the Nazi Party and their friends in the American capitalist class (e.g., Michigan’s own Henry Ford) of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” the idea that a secret cabal of Jewish elites was funding and orchestrating revolutionary movements across the world. These revolutionary movements were lead and organized by workers responding to the material conditions and reality they worked under. Harsh working conditions, harassment, poverty, and oppression are the fuel that make worker’s movements burn- but for a ruling class that would rather delude itself it is easier to blame some secret cabal.

In the U.S., the ruling class has had some degree of success in tricking workers of European ancestry to the “wages of whiteness” and has often lead to a class collaboration with the rich rather than a unity of workers across the color line. “Great Replacement” is just the newest impulse of ruling class propagandists to twist reality and pit workers who perceive themselves as white against everyone else. Indeed, it isn’t much of a coincidence that Schriver himself represents the wealthiest (and whitest) parts of Southeastern Michigan.

Lastly, we should remember that “whiteness” as a concept is, historically, a relatively new phenomenon whose goalposts have been moved at the convenience of the ruling class. Irish workers in the 19th century were not considered white until the bosses were concerned about their potential unity with black workers. Many poorer European, non-English speaking immigrants were not considered white until they become convenient emissaries to colonize the American west and war with Native Americans.

Let’s be clear- the only “great replacement” going on is the ruling class and their attempt to replace class consciousness with racial resentment.

Radical Recommendations



*Black Scare/ Red Scare
Theorizing Capitalist Racism
in the United States* by
Charlis Burden- Stelly

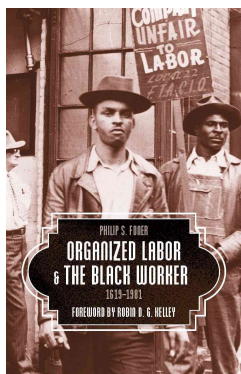
Many historians tend to separate the struggle for Civil Rights for African-Americans and the suppression of Socialist labor movements as distinct historical episodes. Stelly's book paints them as mutually reinforcing phenomena, and how the Socialists proximity to blackness, or a black American's participation in Socialist organizing, were seen as existential threats and one-in-the-same by the ruling class of the day. By facilitating a "Black and Red" scare, the Capitalist Racist Society of the U.S. sought to keep workers divided by bigotries and to force Black radicals to the margins of society. When we see many of these propaganda patterns re-emerge in the new Black Scare/ Red Scare of the 21st Century, Stelly's work becomes all the more important in sketching out how the ruling class responded in the last century to emerging Black and Labor radicalization. From University of Chicago Press.

Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981

By Philip S. Foner

A classic among leftist organizers and scholars, Foner's book is a comprehensive history of the role and impact of black organizers in the American labor movement.

Foner's book provides both the highlights and the low-lights of the relationship between the black worker and organized labor. He examines both the class collaboration of white unions that refused to bring black workers into its ranks and organizations like the Knights of Labor and the International Workers of the World, who broke down the color line and rang truth to the creed "Workers of the World Unite!" From Haymarket Books.



Radical Recommendations

From Revolutionary Left Radio:

Friends of the Congo: The Congolese Struggle for Self- Determination

A sprawling conversation with two Congolese organizers about the history of the Congo- the genocide enacted by King Leopold II, the coup that toppled left president Patrice Lumumba, the legacy of European colonialism, and how the race for rare Earth minerals like Cobalt (necessary for smart phones and electric cars) is continuing that history of exploitation into today.

Rest in Power Aaron Bushnell

"My name is Aaron Bushnell. I am an active duty member of the US Air Force, and I will no longer be complicit in genocide. I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest, but compared to what people in Palestine have been experiencing at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal.

Free Palestine."

-Aaron's last words, before setting himself on fire in front of the Israeli Embassy

Events and Announcements

-A statewide Women's Appreciation Rally for Palestine will be taking place Saturday, March 9th at the Michigan State Capitol (100 N Capitol Ave, Lansing). It will be a "cultural gathering for the appreciation of Arab women across the globe with features that highlight Palestinian resilience." Organizers encourage attendees to bring a kite to fly. The rally will be from 2PM- 630PM.

-Kalamazoo Non-Violent Opponents of War are holding weekly vigils in Kalamazoo in front of the Federal Building at the corner of Park St. and W Michigan Ave Sundays at 11:30AM. Recent and current vigils are focusing on the genocide in Gaza.