

# BUILD CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS DESTROY RACISM

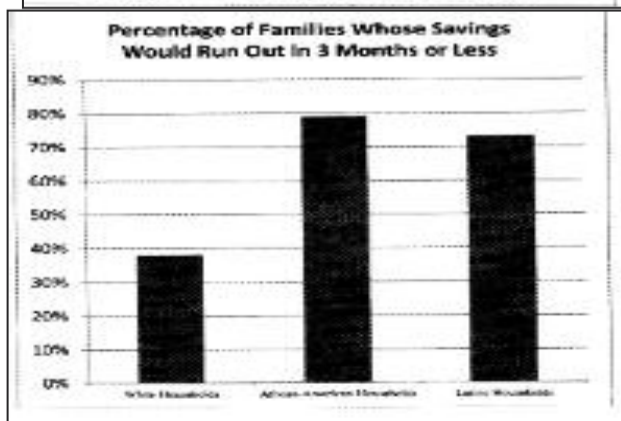
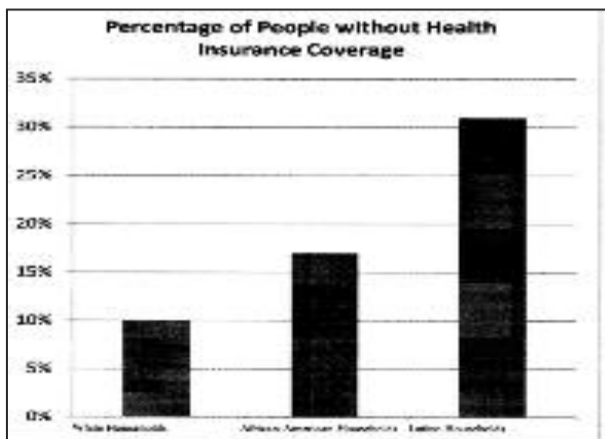
We workers mine, transport and process all the raw materials in the world. We make everything, yet control nothing. Sometimes we recognize our common struggle, like when the masses in Tahrir Square, Egypt, express solidarity with Occupy Oakland in the USA. Yet, even in these moments, we fail to assert our power. The fact is that we, the international working class, could run the world.

The capitalists know this and fear it. What Marx said long ago still applies: “the specter of communism” haunts them. So the capitalists devote huge cultural, social, intellectual, political and repressive resources to combat it. With nationalism, nothing has proved more effective for them than racism.

While racism obstructs our potential unity, the masses have smashed major aspects of it many times. In the USA, the Civil War smashed the institution of slavery (then the flagship of racism). Later, the Civil Rights Movement, together with inner-city rebellions, dismantled Jim Crow segregation (the new flagship of racism).

Racism helps the bosses so much by demoralizing and dividing the working class that they have worked hard to rebuild it every time. As Michelle Alexander shows in *The New Jim Crow*, racism in the USA is as violent and powerful today as it was in the a century ago. Today, it hides behind legal principles and the so-called “War on Drugs.” US capitalism has more black men in jail, on parole or probation than were enslaved in the 1850s.

One way that capitalism has redesigned racism is by burying the basis of class consciousness: the idea we are more alike than different.



## HOW PROPAGANDA WORKS

The bar-graphs above show how the mainstream media, think-tanks and NGOs present US social problems. The top graph comes from the Center for Disease Control (2008 press release). The lower graph is from the Pew Research Center (July 2011). Similar graphs appear continually. They seem to confirm that black and latin families are hit the hardest by social and economic stresses.

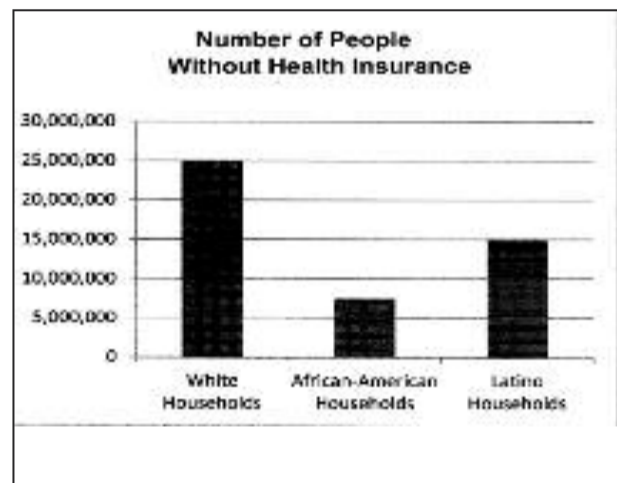
However, they also have an effect on us: these graphs leave us feeling pessimistic about the chances of defeating racism. They imply these conditions mainly affect blacks and latinos.

Under capitalism, it seems, whites in the US do okay. This implies that it's next to impossible to build a multi-racial alliance large enough to effect any change. In short these graphs, when presented in this way, are effective propaganda!

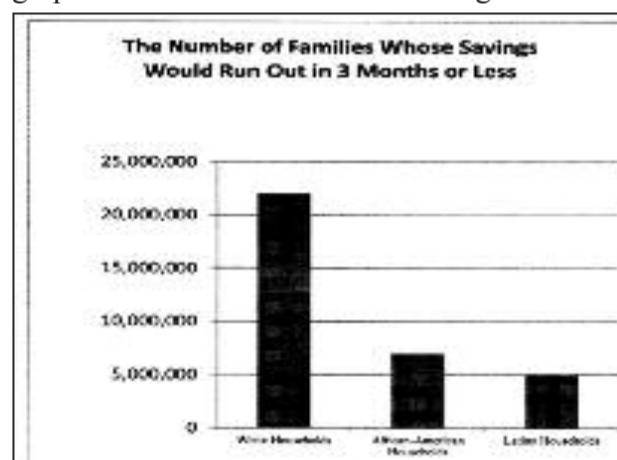
## THE WAY WE SEE IT

Let's take the “health insurance” graph. Using QuickFacts (US Census Bureau) lets us substitute absolute numbers for the percentages.

In 2010 the total US population was 310 million: about 200 million were white, 40 million black and 49 million latinos. We can calculate that 9.9% of 200 million means 19.8 million whites without Health Insurance. Seventeen percent of 40 million means 6.8 million blacks without it. And 30.4% of 49 million means 14.9 million latinos without it. Now the graph looks different!



Similar calculations let us re-draw the second graph to make an even more stunning statement:



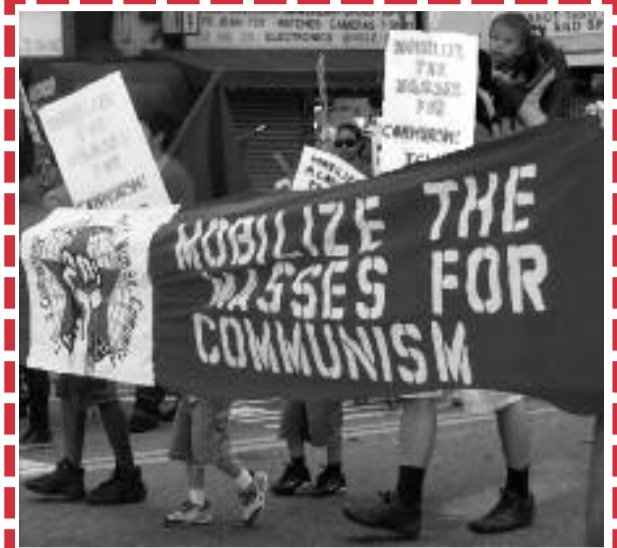
The constant use of “racial-percentage” graphs becomes a silent (visual) but powerful (mathematical, seemingly unbiased) argument that supports racist or nationalist world views that hides our common class interest. The numerical graphs, in contrast, show that capitalism doesn't work for white workers either. We can use them as a silent but powerful argument that supports a class analysis: we are more alike than different.

But we don't want to use only “number” graphs, either. That would falsely suggest that racism isn't an issue. In truth, race and class are so closely inter-connected that we can't usefully discuss one without the other. Racism (and nationalism, usually a reaction to it) worldwide over are primarily class issues. They are products of capitalism and provide sets of ideas (ideologies) that are extremely valuable to the bosses. They displace our ability to consistently identify ourselves as members of an international working class.

## DEFEAT RACISM WITH COMMUNISM

Communist revolution for a share-and-share-alike world will be an unfulfilled dream unless we defeat racism. Racism, more than anything else, stifles class consciousness.

Class consciousness is the understanding that we workers produce everything of value, we



ICWP has published our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. It's available in English and Spanish. Order your copy or copies. Please send donations for the costs of printing and mailing. We also ask for your suggestions and criticisms.

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form the overwhelming majority, and we can run the world. It's the realization that all we lack to fulfill our historic role is the mass revolutionary communist party (ICWP).

“Class,” said President George Bush Sr., “isn't for America. We are not going to be divided by class.” All modern Presidents have pushed this idea. The US refuses to collect statistics based on class. It's not just the Government. The media, the education system, even the liberal NGOs ignore or downplay the significance of class.

Above all else, capitalism is a class system where a tiny minority – the owners of mines, farmland, factories and banks – profit from the labor of the vast majority of us. It can't be sustained without the armed violence of a State. That State, however, would be ungovernable without the racism that divides us.

The statistics here show the interrelation of racism and class oppression in the US. A future article will show a similar story elsewhere around the world. Everywhere, workers have more in common than different. Everywhere, racism is used to divide us and keep us wage slaves.

Racism is primarily a class issue. It plays such a vital role for capitalism that we can say it will never be defeated as long as capitalism survives. To defeat racism we must build a mass communist party – the ICWP.

**MARCH ON  
MAY DAY  
UNDER THE  
RED  
COMMUNIST  
BANNERS  
OF ICWP**