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Marxism: Another Racist Bourgeois Science?

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Abstract: **I highlight three enigmatic conditions of Marxism in South Africa. Firstly, the avoidance of the racialized property relations by white communists, which I argue is indicative of their unwillingness to address the sociohistorical material conditions of the black working class. Secondly, the critique of the seizure of bourgeois property by communists in South Africa suggests that they are bourgeois ideologists masquerading as Marxists-Leninists. Thirdly, historically Marxism was presented in South Africa as a racialized bourgeois science which in principle resonated with the socio-economic conditions of the black working class, while in practice it was devoted to pursuing the bourgeois interests of the white workers, the labor aristocracy. That is, it concealed itself in the pretext for a universal vision of revolutionary freedom for all the working classes of the world, except for black workers. Consequently, Marxism failed to recognize black social, economic, and political problems (our racialized experiences) as a consequence of systemic and structural injustice. This alludes to the failures in the indigenization of a Marxist project as an epistemological system with which to critique a racialized political economy that functions as a crucial ideology for the bourgeois capitalist class in South Africa. I relate these failures to the early communist anti-blackness prevalent in white-organizations like the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), South African Labour Party (SALP) and the International Socialist League (ISL).**

Keywords: **Communists, Marxism, capitalist economy, racialized property relations, white supremacy, black working class, Land.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in their classic pamphlet titled, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, originally published in 1848, argued that "[i]n all these movements, they [communists] bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 35). My submission to their argument is in a form of substantive analysis broken down into three enigmas, that are intended to point out the distinguishing features and hypocritical contradictions of this class, at least in the context of a bourgeois state called South Africa, in its failure to do exactly this ⊢ to raise the question of existing property rights. The first enigma is that: In South Africa white communists tend to hide their views on racialized property relations, to avoid addressing the material conditions of the black working class with all the seriousness, earnestness and truthfulness that it deserves. That is, despite the glaring sociohistorical conditions of inequality, the question of property, which Marx and Engels (2013) presented as a definitive element of, or prelude to, communist revolutionary program, is not central; it is displaced from the initiative of the white communists' rhetoric or vocabulary, essentially their discourse.

Therefore, framing this question as a prime condition for political action is somewhat a task that neo-Marxists do not see aligned with their social consciousness, which reveals, in more ways than one, their inability to assume the "cudgels for the working class". It however comes as no surprise then that, since the foundation of the white-dominated Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), what has always been of paramount interest to the communists is "not only to impose on the black workers their imported language but also reserved the right to "guide" them" (Mafeje, 1986: 98). This unconventional guidance, blind to its own illogicality and limitations, conformed to the nationalist tendencies of racial supremacy and racism that were deeply entrenched in the hegemonic ideologies of color discrimination, which poisoned even those, amongst Marxists, who had anointed themselves Bolsheviks and Trotskyists of South Africa. This non-vanguardist exclusionary left-wing politics of the labor movement, based on race, was despite the glaring fact that Lenin, who was seen as the idol by many white communists in South Africa, had showed interest in South African affairs; so much that he read,

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among many, a book written by Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu titled, "*The Black Problem: Papers and Addresses on Various Native Problems"* published in 1920 in London.[1]

White communists in South Africa[2] never really gave an impression that they perceive changes in property relations as the precondition for, and principal condition of, class struggle; because they know too well that property ownership, in this police state, is characterised by systemic injustice predicated on racialized monopoly. This pro-colonial stance however does not set them apart from bourgeois socialists who replace the significance of true "political reform" with a "change in the material conditions of existence, in economic relations" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 30), even though this change has proven incapable of producing significant changes to the existing "bourgeois relations of production" through revolutionary means, but advocate for the ineffective "administrative reforms" that preserves these existing relations. To put it more crudely, such reforms are not meant to radically intervene in the racialized interplay involving "capital and labor" in South Africa. This lack of decisive political intervention reinforced "a definitive social relationship between black labor and white capital, which is not affected by any colonial anachronism in the South African society" (Mafeje, 1986: 98). The embracement of this social relationship put these white interlocutors in favour of a political power that represents a bourgeois revolution that does not steadily erode or revolutionize the colonial social and economic conditions that enable the class distinction between black workers and white workers, sustaining the brutal exploitation and oppression of the former. Under these circumstances a communist is no longer "a revolutionary subject capable of overthrowing the capitalist order" (Radice, 2015: 272). That is, he is no longer a true ideopraxist and conduit to lead the groundwork for the radical rupture of class antagonisms, nor is he a true bearer of the working-class consciousness for the historical mission to liberate the proletariat. If anything, like the bourgeois, he sees the great masses of black working class as "a mere instrument of production." And this, in and of itself, explains why in 1921 the key question of discussion[3] in the CPSA, between white communists, was not, as Marx and Engels would have thought, the question of property, but was deciding whether they should incorporate black workers in their white labor movement.

A spectre haunts South Africa ⊢ the spectre of racism! This racism is the reason why black people "suffer […] social […] and economic disadvantage by virtue of the colour of their skin" (Slovo, 1983: 85). It is the reason why land and capital[4] in South Africa are largely concentrated in the hands of white settlers, a fact that both white communists and petty-bourgeois socialists alike tends to overlook or forget. Though they know too well that the presence of white settlers in South Africa is the consequence of the "emerging world economy of capitalism in the seventeenth century" (Magubane, 1986: 2). This emergence meant that South Africa fell into the hands of a bloody monster ⊢ international capitalist economy ⊢ that generates its surplus through the ruthless plunder of mineral resources and native labor-power. This process later planted the seed for the "continued presence of economic inequality along racial lines" (Schneider, 2003: 39). Despite the knowledge of the historical material conditions of South Africa, most of these neo-Marxist reactionaries do not picture a transcendental proletarian revolution that begins with the claim of restoring the black working class' dignity through an organised process of state led land-revolution. That is, they do not believe that class antagonism, which stems from inequities in the ownership of the means of production, to a certain extent, can be resolved by continuously problematizing the racially skewed economic relations. In other words they do not believe that, "[c]apital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 16). This belief would have led them to a class political awakening that produces a refurbished historicist critique of the structural-functionalist conditions of capitalist production, which would open up the revolutionary potential of the labor movement, "where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 13). No wonder why some neo-Marxists in South Africa are in favour of

[1] To read further on this see, for example, A. Davidson, 'Lenin on South Africa', *The African Communist*, 91 (1982), 73-9; I. Filatova and A. Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (London 2017), 935–958, pp.937.

[2] For an analysis on the influence of the neoliberal policy of the African National Congress on the working class politics in South Africa 20 years after Democracy, see S. Ashman and N. Pons-Vignon, *Numsa, The Working Class and Socialist Politics in South Africa* (2015).

[3] See Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017); A. Mafeje, *South Africa: the dynamics of a beleaguered state* (1986).

[4] Ashman and Pons-Vignon, *Numsa, The Working Class and Socialist Politics in South Africa* (2015), pp. 102, they argue that the colonial capital in the post-apartheid South Africa remains intact.

market-driven solutions on land reform that reflects the apartheid order of society. And again, no wonder why they have bought in to the fiction of white farm genocide and adamantly dismissing the land expropriation Bill as an initiative that oversteps its logical boundaries.

This dismissal of social transformation reflects the pro-apartheid views of their distant cousins, white neoliberals, who "argue that land should not be redistributed to blacks because it would compromise agricultural efficiency" (Schneider, 2003: 39). These neo-liberal Marxists see a state led programme of property dispossession, like the redistribution of land through expropriation, intended to undo the legacy of apartheid injustices, as a hateful and racist embarkation that violates the sanctity and property rights of white people. This, again, does not distinguish them from neoliberal economists who employ economic models that justify the preservation of "economic apartheid" and who vehemently reject "the redistribution of land, income and assets as a "dangerous fantasy"" (Schneider, 2003: 24). This is not surprising at all especially when taking in to account that "[i]n spite of their disagreement over the relationship between apartheid and growth, the neo-Marxists influenced other neoliberal views" (Schneider, 2003: 36). Their influence is muted on how the racist system of apartheid extracted its economic value from black people's labor-power. This extraction is not a coincidence; it is part of the economic imperative of the capitalist class, since cheap black labor[5] is the interface between the extraction of surplus-value and capital, where exploitation becomes a fundamental undertaking that makes possible the bourgeois relations of production. This is an indication that by its very nature "apartheid was designed deliberately to guarantee a supply of cheap, survile, black labour. Every communist knows that but every communist is not free of racial indoctrination" (Mafeje, 1986: 103). To end these racialized "relations of production" is to end existing social conditions, and likewise, to end these conditions is to end the existing property relations and class distinction; but to end the existing property relations and class distinction is to end the paradox of whiteness vis-à-vis blackness[6] and this seems to be the real meaningful work that neo-Marxists are not willing to do.

The second enigma is that: Some of these so-called Marxists-Leninists are bourgeois ideologists masquerading as communists. Because what kind of communists would oppose or critique the seizure of bourgeois property, given that their primary task, if they ought to have any, is to abolition bourgeois property? This counterrevolutionary attitude, their racial indoctrination, became the lifeblood of liberal Marxism in South Africa. It explains why there hasn't been any formidable mass movement in the past three decades in South Africa, beyond rhetoric and abstract theory, or doctrine, led by communists, which practically makes the claim for the dissolution of racialized property relations in this country. This lack of serious ambition to overthrow "bourgeois supremacy" is a visceral fear of change that shed light on their profound ideological connection to the neoliberal economic theory[7] in its defence of the existing state of affairs. It shed light on why we cannot expect them to understand the line of march. And it also brought in to light their discourse as premised on a communistic revolution, with no political strategies, whatever, whose genealogical immaturity prevents the practical metaphysics of revolutionary resistance from coming alive against the formal structures of racialized capitalism. That nurtures social relations of oppression which prevents the labor movement from transcending its political telos that is attributable to desires of achieving a "bourgeois liberty and equality." Although there has been a time in the past when the South African Communist Party (SACP) was seriously committed to supporting a more radical redistribution,[8] its stance has since evolved.

[5] See A. Kgokong, *The Kitwe Papers: South Africa's Crimes* (1968) for an analysis on the direct correlation between cheap black labor and economic growth in South Africa, pp. 23; H. Simson, *The Myth of the White Working Class in South Africa* (1974), pp. 193–195.

[6] This paradox of blackness vis-à-vis whiteness in the work place is also discussed by E. Johanningsmeier, *Communists and Black Freedom Movements in South Africa and the US: 1919–1950* (2004), pp. 157.

[7] For a comprehensive analysis on how neoliberal theory opposes redistribution, see G. E. Schneider, *Neoliberalism and Economic Justice in South Africa: Revisiting the Debate on Economic Apartheid* (2003).

[8] See M. Lipton, *"Restructuring South African Agriculture"* (1993), pp. 364; Schneider, *Neoliberalism and Economic Justice in South Africa* (2003); D. Fortescue, *The Communist Party of South Africa and the African Working Class in the 1940s* (1991).

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The contemporary Marxists are a generational offspring of the Jewish Bund[9] and the International Socialist League,[10] which formally introduced "labour radicalism" in South Africa in 1921 ⊢ that dissenting tradition of class politics, a Marxist tradition. Most of the founding communists were "Russian Jews"[11] who had immigrated to South Africa "in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries […] fleeing anti-Semitic pogroms" (Filatova and Davidson, 2017: 937). Others were English immigrants who came to South Africa in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[12] These young radical socialists were former members of the South African Labour Party (SALP) and the International Socialist League (ISL), white-dominated organizations. These radicals, "under the influence of the Russian Revolution or […] Bundism in Europe or South Africa",[13] formed the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921, a Marxist-Leninist party (though initially it was not vested in Marxist-Leninist ideology). William H. "Bill" Andrews, a radical unionist, Sidney Percival Bunting (a lawyer) and his wife Rebecca Bunting, radical anti-war socialists; were English-speaking founding members of the CPSA.[14] The communists in South Africa admired Soviet Russia and forged ties with the Communist International ⊢ also known as the Comintern, a revolutionary International socialist body.[15] But this first generation of communists in South Africa failed, at least at a time when it mattered the most, and when white tyranny and capitalism had already showed their vicious collaborative character, to appeal to the black working class.[16] As Archie Mafeje has sought to explain:

"Not only did they look upon the African workers in the mines as "semi-savages" but also reflected none of the great debates in Russia concerning the future of the peasant commune, as against what happened in Western Europe. The same short-comings persisted after the foundation of the Communist Party of South Africa, as is evidenced by events during the 1922 miners' strike where some members of the CPSA went so far as to join white vigilantes to quell the "Black menace""[17]

This illustrates the deep-seated resentment these white interlocutors harbour for the great masses of the black workforce in South Africa. This fear of the "Black Peril" is the eternal currency for the characterization of black workers as the semi-savage "Other" belonging to a barbarous race. This shows that Marxism in South Africa masked itself as a social theory of liberation while in reality it was used as a medium for administering racialized class politics by white supremacist labor organizations like the SALP, ISL and CPSA,[18] (although from 1924 onwards ISL and CPSA began recruiting blacks), which appealed exclusively to the white working class. Marxist historiography in South Africa is an appendage of white supremacy, which is why white communist radicals "never found a formula for reconciling the interests of white and black labor" (Filatova and Davidson, 2017: 941). If in the Marxist playbook one of the stages of retaliation is by smashing into pieces the machinery and setting the factories ablaze,[19] what does this stage look like for black people in South Africa? That is, what is it that they ought to burn down in retaliation to racism? Whatever it *is*, they have nothing to lose; because if it is

[9] For a detailed analysis of the history of the Bund and how Jewish immigrants brought with them to South Africa the Jewish socialist tradition, see M. Israel and S. Adams, *'That Spells Trouble': Jews and the Communist Party of South Africa* (2000).

[10] On the origins of the International Socialist League, see Fortescue, *The Communist Party of South Africa and the African Working Class in the 1940s* (1991).

[11] For a detailed analysis on the connection between the Jews and the Communist party and how these Jewish radicals were often "written out of the official history of Jewish life in South Africa", including Joe Slovo who was seen as "a dangerous embarrassment" to the Jewish community, see Israel and Adams, *'That Spells Trouble'* (2000), pp. 146–147; S. Johns, *'The Birth of the Communist Party of South Africa'* (1976), pp. 375-376.

[12] See Johanningsmeier, *Communists and Black Freedom Movements in South Africa and the US* (2004), pp. 156.

[13] See Israel and Adams, *'That Spells Trouble'* (2000), pp. 151.

[14] See Johns, *'The Birth of the Communist Party of South Africa'* (1976); Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017).

[15] On the early relationship between the Comintern and the ISL and CPSA, see Johns, *'The Birth of the Communist Party of South Africa'* (1976), pp. 374; Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017).

[16] For an analysis on how the introduction of communism in South Africa coincided with racialism see Johanningsmeier, *Communists and Black Freedom Movements in South Africa and the US* (2004), pp. 156.

[17] See Mafeje, *South Africa* (1986), pp. 97.

[18] For an analysis on the exclusionary nature of these organizations see, for example, Fortescue, *The Communist Party of South Africa and the African Working Class in the 1940s* (1991).

[19] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (London 2013), pp. 10.

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a universal truth that "the working men have no country"[20] it should also be known too that the working black men have no home. As Marx and Engels has put it:

"[W]age labor [does not] create any property for the laborer… It creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage labor, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage labor for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage labor."[21]

This homelessness and statelessness was made possible by the state sponsored labor legislations like the "Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924", the "Wage Act of 1925" and the "Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926",[22] to name but a few, that provided a vivid explication of the overwhelming determination for the suppression of black workers. These Afrikaner petit-bourgeois laws revealed the white society's conviction to dehumanize the great masses of black working class; depriving them essential labor rights that would have rendered them a sense of employee dignity and guarantee the recognition of their human rights, privileges that were only preserved for the white working class. This discriminatory practise carries exactly the same impulse as the British imperialism when it assigned "black and white labor different tasks in the productive process reflecting their assumed 'inequality' in the scale of evolution" (Magubane, 1986: 6). The long-lasting legacy of this master-and-servant relations can never, whatever, be erased without critiquing the petit-bourgeois white supremacist economic nationalism, its rationale; in favour of the proletariat economic revolution that would cancel out the ideological misconceptions rooted in ontological racial entrapment that confined Marxism, in South Africa, within the liberal political vanguard of whiteness. This critique, however, does not mean indulgence in abstract Marxist theoretical fantasies and apocalyptic premonitions as credible alternatives that are intended to justify the illogicality of white supremacy, its ideals and ideas, naturally welded in the Marxist traditions in South Africa. Aided by this white economic nationalism, white essentialism prevailed in instances where one could have thought that common ground would have broken down the gravity of racial boundaries or mended the rift between the struggles of white workers and black workers. This however defeated the essential purpose for which labor movements were meant to serve: To be the nonracial standard-bearers of the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggles. These expressions of white supremacy deepened during the "Rand Revolt of 1922", a strike against wage reduction and the rendering of semi-skilled mining labor to black workers, as Mafeje has put it:

"When the 1922 white miners' strike erupted, the African workers refused to be left out in an impressive demonstration of strength. The CPSA came out in support of the segregationist white workers on the grounds that they were the "core of the proletariat" and that "their success would liberate all the proletariat."[23]

The communists, who not so long ago were reciting racist lampoons on the black working class, took upon themselves the responsibility of guiding the white strikers; often compelling them, through sinister whispers, to take extreme measures, while at times urging them to reject "the color bar" which the white workers perceived as their protective shield. When the strike escalated, black workers got attacked by white workers right in front of these communists, only few of them tried to call for racial solidarity.[24] These attacks foreclosed any possibility for the communists to claim having defended black workers, amidst the strike, more so when such hostility was carried out by the same white workers who were under their supervision. This suggests that 'white working-class racism' was a political strategy that the communists aided in some way. It is therefore important that we do not de-historicize, gloss over or try to find excuses for this kind of politically orchestrated racist behaviour; but reprimand it with the utmost harshness. Thomas Karis described this party's program as "rigidly ideological and pro-Moscow" (Karis, 1986: 268). Under the guidance of policy directives of the Comintern, the party's advocacy for the independent native republic became instrumental in attracting black workers. When, at some point, the party was "unable to reach the "semi-tribal" black workers, it turned to the black petit-bourgeoisie who predominated in the African National Congress" (Mafeje, 1986: 98). The black petit-bourgeoisie had already been accustomed to, and

[20] Ibid., 20.

[21] Ibid., 16.

[22] For a comprehensive analysis on these draconian labor laws see G. H. Calpin, *There Are No South Africans* (1941); L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (2014); Simson, *The Myth of the White Working Class in South Africa* (1974).

[23] See Mafeje, *South Africa* (1986), pp. 109.

[24] On the attack by white strikers on black workers see Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017), pp. 950; Johanningsmeier, *Communists and Black Freedom Movements in South Africa and the US* (2004), pp. 161.

schooled in, left-wing class politics; hence in 1924 they were recruited to join 'the white man's party'. One can always make an indictment on the decision for the inclusion of black workers in the party as motivated by political expediency. Thomas William Thibedi and Gana Makabeni were the first black communists to join the CPSA.[25] In 1927 James La Guma became the first black South African communist to travel to Moscow, in the Soviet Union. Albert Nzula became the first black secretary of the CPSA. J.B. Marks and Moses Kotane studied at the International Lenin School and the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV), and when the South African Communist Party (SACP) took over from the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), Marks and Kotane, soaked in Marxist-Leninist traditions, ascended in the leadership ranks of the party.[26] Other notable black communists who had joined the party earlier included the likes of Edward Khaile, John Gomas, Thomas Mbeki, John Beaver Marks and Edwin Mofutsanyana.[27]

What are the historical processes that led to property rights and ownership in South Africa creating racialized distinctions through which it became possible to see, for example, the real plight of the black working class? Since their material conditions are a consequence of this racialization under which they became seen as instruments of labor, as commodity.[28] In the late seventeen hundreds, colonization brought in South Africa a sweeping capitalist revolution[29] that changed the fate of the region for the generations to come. This capitalist revolution was a "political economy of capitalism based on mineral extraction" (Magubane, 1986: 8). In this revolution, which was heralded as a great white bourgeois civilization, black people were recruited to work in the mines, in the urban areas, for the extraction of surplus-value and its accumulation as capital. For Marx and Engels this situation is typical of the bourgeois society, where "the condition for capital is wage labor" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 14). Growing urbanization and industrialization also increased labor migration which removed, disproportionately, the black male laborers from their families in the rural areas; and this not only destabilized the black family unit but also turned them into urban proletariat. At the heart of this historical movement was a bourgeois initiative, a capitalist economy, in which black people would come to play a significant role. As Leonard Thompson would later explain that, "[w]hites were incorporating Africans into a capitalist, white-dominated economy. Many Africans were obliged to pay rent, or to surrender a share of their produce, or to provide labor services for the right to live on land that white people had appropriated" (Thompson, 2014: 111).

This is proof that through colonial and apartheid legislations, undergirded by neoliberal economic policies, South Africa was designed in such a way that the bourgeois class was characteristic of a white person's socio-economic conditions and aspirations; whereas in real terms the working class represented a black person's material conditions. This however meant that the custodian of the means of production, e.g. capital and land, a "typical man", is exclusively white; while the custodian of the exploitable labor-power is disproportionately black. This paradox was prevalent in the farms, industries, diamond and gold mines (under the auspices of the farmers, industrialists, and mining corporations) where the indigenous population was toiling under precarious labor conditions for minimum wages,[30] only to keep them alive under the despotic rule of white power. As was accurately predicted in 1963 by Hilgard Muller that "the industries in white South Africa will be dependent on the labour of Bantu" (Muller, 1963: 63). It is for this reason that Walter Rodney levelled criticism squarely on "[t]he racist theory" which he argues was responsible for reinforcing and spreading the narrative of black inferiority complex, leading to "the conclusion that [the black man] deserved lower wages" (Rodney, 1981: 150). The racialized relations of production that were enforced through bourgeois legislation were a determining factor of asymmetrical wealth distribution in South Africa. In broad terms, this racialization meant that "the working class was split into two strata, white and black: the white, privileged, well paid, and free; the black, unprivileged, poorly paid, and unfree" (Thompson, 2014: 118).

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[25] See Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017).

[26] Ibid.

[27] For a comprehensive review of black communists that joined the CPSA See Johanningsmeier, *Communists and Black Freedom Movements in South Africa and the US* (2004), pp. 162; Filatova and Davidson, *'We, the South African Bolsheviks'* (2017).

[28] For deeper insights on how the black proletariat is used as an instrument of labor see Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (2014); W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981).

[29] For detailed analysis on the consequences of this capitalist revolution see Simson, *The Myth of the White Working Class in South Africa* (1974); Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (2014); Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981).

[30] See Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (2014).

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This racial splitting of the working class was targeted on ensuring that white workers benefit immensely from the spoils of the capitalist racist society. These benefits are created as evidence that though white workers would call themselves Marxist-Leninists, and at times even organize strikes, their connection and loyalty to the ideology of white supremacy are never lost, and never will be. Because it is this connection that gifted them the status of "labor aristocracy", and it is this connection that, when all is said and done, stands as a reminder that no amount of working-class consciousness will be credible to forge a real sense of comradery that transcends the ideology of whiteness ⊢ its ideas and ideals ⊣ between them and their black counterparts. This is why, for example, as a collective, they never paused to question the injustices caused by these benefits. Thompson describes how the differences in their living conditions became more pronounced:

"In Kimberly, white workers were free to live in the town with their families. During the 1870s, however, Africans became required to carry passes and to live in segregated parts of the town, or, if they were mineworkers, to live in all-male compounds attached to the mines. After 1885, moreover, the African mineworkers were not allowed outside the compounds throughout the duration of their contracts."[31]

In the diamond and gold mines,[32] under the command of imperialist companies like the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, British South Africa Company, De Beers Consolidated Mines, Johannesburg Consolidated Investments Company,[33] etc. the great masses of black working class were bearing the yoke of exploitation. The legitimation and rigidity of white tyranny was expressed through the reinforcement of racial supremacist laws that regulated labor relations, for the preservation of white economic privileges. This reinforcement highlighted, first and foremost, "the complex interaction between class interests and racism" (Schneider, 2003: 31). That is, in the value chain of colonial labor, white workers represented the political aspirations of whiteness which exceeded the universal laws of labor equalities. In the eyes of racial capitalism the white worker and the black worker are not the same, despite having equal or more labor productivity, and must be treated unequally. This labor system anchored on racial dichotomy "generated prosperity for whites and poverty for blacks" (Schneider, 2003: 35). The difference in how white workers were perceived, as a privileged class, compared to black workers, an undeserving class, was the driving force behind the conditions in which "[w]hite workers earned about eight times as much as Africans and were free from supervision of their living arrangements. The mines even provided them with heavily subsidized housing" (Thompson, 2014: 119).

This segregation, which produced "the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth",[34] is exactly the kind of labor conditions that white communists in South Africa defended, to appease their white constituencies. Their support for the utilization of white chauvinism and racism to their fullest extent, as means for political mobilization, within the labour movement, introduced a 'liberal' revolutionary program that only spoke for white workers. The third enigma is that: This, in and of itself, insinuates that Marxism was introduced in South Africa as a racialized bourgeois science which in principle resonated with the socio-economic conditions of the black working class, while in practice it was devoted to pursuing the bourgeois interests of the white workers, the labor aristocracy,[35] under the assumption that their whiteness represents an

[31] Ibid., 118-119.

[32] Ibid.

[33] For an analysis on the role of these imperialist companies in the exploitation of mineral resources in South Africa and other African countries see Kgokong, *The Kitwe Papers* (1968), pp. 20; Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981).

[34] Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (2013), pp. 26.

[35] Ashman and Pons-Vignon, *Numsa, The Working Class and Socialist Politics in South Africa* (2015), pp. 96. They dismiss this concept: "we reject the argument that organized workers are a form of labour aristocracy." Simson, *The Myth of the White Working Class in South Africa* (1974) contends that: "It is commonly asserted in the literature on South Africa that the working class is comprised of an aristocratic or elite white section and an oppressed black section. This contention is false, and arose on the basis of both arbitrary bourgeois class concepts and 'economistic' communist class theory." Their views provide no basis strong enough to challenge the evidence of racialized labor conditions in South Africa. Such views fail even to recognize the politico-ideological impulses of whiteness that enforces the colonizer-colonized dialectics between white workers and black workers. That is, they fail to recognize that this dialectic, produced by colonial structure, renders the white working class an aristocratic status. But when read carefully, it becomes clear that these arguments are somewhat a defensive expression of whiteness.

existential elitist category of 'white master-race'. The parallelism between Marxian ethics and white supremacy remains an indubitable truth; leaving Marxism in a cage fight with morality. The empirical history of communism, etched in the wisdom of white absolutism and idiocy never known to mature communist societies, became a formula for the ambiguities of its social character as a labor movement engaged in the supposed national struggle for justice and equality for the proletariat. In the local Marxist literature, white Marxists and Stalinists often use socialist-oriented rhetoric to compensate for the absence of true political solidarity that transcends deep instinctively biased positions that appeal to racial supremacy, without advocating for socialization of property. In the post-apartheid South Africa their publications are often replete with philosophical conceptions of the humanistic and socialistic generalities of material experiences of the working class, that do not overtly or consistently express the specifications of racialized labor factors that distinguishes black laborers from white laborers. Such tendencies reveal, at once, their inability "to enrich the storehouse of real Marxism" (Slovo, 1983: 85). They reveal their lack of political consciousness that would have enabled them to fulfil the historic mission of the socialist revolution, as a transitional stage, by emphasizing the property question, the livelihood of black people, and the unity of the proletariat beyond the barriers of race. They cannot effectively achieve this mission without leaving behind "all pretense at upholding the principle of a Leninist vanguard."[36] True Marxist socialism requires the linearity and flattening of class interests, by labouring towards systematically breaking down the high walls of racial asymmetry and erase dialectical entanglements that poisons their structures of authority. This lack of symmetry points to the general "misapplication of historical materialism by some dogmatic Marxists and Stalinists" (Mafeje, 1986: 118).

For the majority of black people the question is not so much whether Marxism can recognize our social, economic, and political problems as a consequence of class antagonism; but whether Marxism, as a system for scientific inquiry, can recognize our racialized experiences as a systemic and structural injustice and still enable us to locate our place in the modern world. That is, whether it is capable of recognizing our authentic way of being in the world without confining us within narrow models of sociality that emanates from Western modernity that imposes its limitations on our realities. Because in practice if it is true that "Marxism has universalistic pretensions and yet is founded on European history at a particular juncture" (Mafeje, 1986: 97). Why it is that neo-Marxism was punctuated, at a practical level, at least in South Africa, with a white world-making ideology that completely failed to render black workers a political agency for the creation of a visible space of security that transcends violent displays of Otherization and racial oppression? Historically, as I have tried to show above, Marxism was presented in South Africa as another racist bourgeois science concealed in the pretext for a universal vision of revolutionary freedom for all the working classes of the world, except for black workers. This alludes to the failures in the indigenization of a Marxist project as an epistemological system with which to critique a racialized political economy that functions as a crucial ideology for the bourgeois capitalist class in South Africa.

In essence, beyond just being a European theorem of class antagonism, for the white man's party, Marxism must also effectively speak to the immediate issues of race and racism. In other words, the richness of its class perspectives must complement the need for transparency by situating the socio-economic conditions of black people within the radar of history. If Marxism really speaks for every working class, as it claims, despite geography or race, how does it look into itself through its contradictions and see its own limitations beyond the abstractions of its universal language? That is, to what extent does Marxism become aware of the possibilities to be a universal-scientific-method whose political devices appeal to the specific problems that emanates from the localities of material conditions of blackness? The failures of Marxism to open itself up to the problems of race in South Africa, meant that it will forever remain closed, not only to the people who look at it as their guiding hope, but also to itself. Taking note of these shortcomings is the prerequisite for delving in to the more specific concerns regarding its adaptation, as reflected for example by the questions which Mafeje poses:

"If Marxism is a universal scientific theory, how does it overcome its own syntactical as well as semantic limitations? In other words, methodologically, how does it relate to vernacular languages, understood in the analytical, political sense? Deep down, this might be the problem of every contemporary Marxist but some, out of dogmatism or intellectual opportunism, pretend otherwise."[37]

[36] See Fortescue, *The Communist Party of South Africa and the African Working Class in the 1940s* (1991), pp. 481.

[37] See Mafeje, *South Africa* (1986), pp. 97.

Through dogmatism, the vocation of Marxists in South Africa is increasingly about casting aspersions on the bourgeois society by clinging to their abstract theoretical fantasies and prophesies of mass future revolutionary flare ups, a kind of performatory intellectual exercise of ideological dogma that is out of touch with the racist structure of the society. This performance is often expressed by miming old communist idioms and Marxist ideologisms. These formalized analytical lamentations, all of which are empty of pragmatism, do not tell us why the social life of the great masses of black working class has reduced them to a bare existence, where they live "merely to increase capital, and [are] allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 17). The indictment against this theoretical backwardness of liberal and democratic Marxism is that it keeps the existing bourgeois relations of production and racialized property relations undisturbed. Real societal change, its weight and gravitas, can only be realized through a radical proletarian revolution of historical materialism that disturbs the bourgeois society; and that does not compromise on key principles, such as the need to transform capital into a social inheritance for all, away from bourgeois monopoly. Therefore, when capital in South Africa "is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society […] It loses its class character" (Marx and Engels, 2013: 16).

2. CONCLUSION

What I was attempting to do in this paper is to indicate at least three enigmas of Marxism in South Africa. Firstly, its avoidance of the racialized property relations which I argue is indicative of its unwillingness to address the sociohistorical material conditions of the black working class. Secondly, the critique of the seizure of bourgeois property by communists in South Africa suggests that they are bourgeois ideologists masquerading as Marxists-Leninists. And thirdly, Marxism was presented in South Africa as another racist bourgeois science that concealed itself under the pretext for a universal vision of revolutionary freedom for all the working classes of the world, while falling short to extend this courtesy to the black working class. This alludes to the failures in the indigenization of a Marxist project as an epistemological system with which to critique a racialized political economy that functions as a crucial ideology for the bourgeois capitalist class in South Africa. That is, it masked itself as a social theory of liberation while in reality it was used as a medium for administering racialized class politics by white supremacist labor organizations. The founding of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) coincided with racialism. Other white-dominated labor movements like the South African Labour Party (SALP) and the International Socialist League (ISL) operated as the white man's parties. These social relations of oppression prevented the labor movement from adopting a revolutionary program strong enough to transcend the existing bourgeois relations of production and racialized property relations. I show at length how these events coincided with the globalizing capitalism whose imperialist plunder extracted mineral resources and exploited native labor-power.

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