

CARTON 4121

RELUCTANT REFORMERS

REVIEWS

1975

2017/193

country, democracy, capitalism, laissezfaire economics, executive privilege, wiretapping, imperialism, assassination, imprisonment of an inordinate number of the Black population, genocide, Executive Order 9066 (concentration camps), and so on.

The people of this country are so indoctrinated with individual freedom "do your own thingism" and personal gain, that it is beyond the thought processes of our people to consider the existence of a system where activities are done for the good of a group, family, tribe and/or larger society. The authors' statement concerning the pros of competition and personal gain is untrue because there are societies in the world where the individual is only as important as the group from which he comes. Check out *African Religions and Philosophy* by John S. Mbiti (Doubleday, 1969).

In addition their statement is invalid because it assumes that personal gain and individual freedom are the norm in America. As former slaves and presently colonized we know this not to be the case. Significant personal gain has remained among a few super-rich families in this country for centuries.

In short, I maintain that Poussaint and Comer's child rearing practices will merely perpetuate a racist system and socialize Black children to be better Americans rather than strong healthy Afrikan youth emotionally prepared to make a viable Black nation.

Advocating Black Studies which the two psychiatrists do throughout the text, again poses no real threat to the system, since the underlying values they learn will be those of the European oppressor.

It is obvious that this text was written to reaffirm the values of the middle class, and indeed with its middle class attitudes and price (\$9.95) it commits a serious error. While written for "middle income" parents, Comer and Poussaint make constant references to low income parents, children and behavior. This not only gives an unbalanced view of Blacks, but it continues the separation of a people with European scholarship tools and labels. Poussaint and Comer's traditional training in psychiatry is not ignored in their analysis of problems, which, while generally not labeled are a result of the family structure. The Oedipal and Electra complexes (the love of a child for the parent of the

opposite sex which causes problems and competition with the same sex parent) are typically resultant of the present European nuclear family structure. Blacks, of course take on everything the European does, so now we too have Oedipal struggles, oppositional child syndromes and the like. People of Afrikan descent need only to look at our present and past kinship ties and family structure to find a healthy way of relating to our family members.

The values throughout this manual, beginning with the very young child, build up a system of thinking and behaving very similar to the European and end with the chapter on adolescence, where we find it "too late" for our youth with questions such as "I have a teen-age boy who thinks of dark-skinned girls only as a 'piece of pussy'. How did he get such an attitude?" While the authors of this book and I concur that this is a racist attitude, the values held by this youth and his parents were not spoken to.

Reader beware!! This text is seductively cool in its presentation but its advice is counter-productive. A hint can be gained with the statement which puts forth their attempts to "force society to drop racist social policies and attitudes." The error of this statement should be evident after more than 100 years of struggle.

My final comments are that this book, if it must be read, should be read with extreme caution as it does not even accomplish what it proposes in its earliest pages; and that is to "prepare black children to deal with the questions and issues of race in a way which will be the most beneficial to their overall emotional, social and psychological growth and development." Our children would fall short of this expectation if the advice of this manual were followed, for we would be bringing up another generation of Blacks with oppressive ideals, behavior and attitudes—in short another group of well-seasoned slaves.

Nsenga Coppock

RELUCTANT REFORMERS

Robert L. Allen

Washington: Howard University Press.
1974. \$8.95.

This book brings and analysis of movements in the purpose of de racism to social reform movements; the w communist n movements in terms of its na dynamics.

If *Reluctant Reformers* it must be understood is couched in perspective," which exists conditions that develop from now exist. O notion subordination of Black structure of consideration

A prime example of the race war his postulate that one must understand the id sees beyond socialism, or of 'ism' (as to see beyond europeans; which is sy white chauv that has not communism

A reader equ the book's p derive some

Chapters II concrete data dates, event of the six along with provided, c examine and consistent v masses of happened in the european people.

This book brings forth an historical survey and analysis of six major social reform movements in the United States for the purpose of determining the relationship of racism to social reformism. Those social reform movements surveyed were the Abolition, Populist, and Progressive movements; the women's, labor, socialist and communist movements. Each of these movements is discussed individually in terms of its nature, leadership, and internal dynamics.

If *Reluctant Reformers* is to be of any value, it must be understood that Mr. Allen's study is couched in what he calls a "materialist perspective," i.e., the notion that everything which exists now is the result of material conditions that existed before, and everything that will exist in the future must develop from a change of conditions which now exist. Of course this very dangerous notion subordinates race as the paramount consideration in the oppression and liberation of Black people to the concept that the structure of society is the most important consideration.

A prime example of Allen's misconception of the race war being waged against Blacks is his postulate that racism is an ideology and that one must go beyond ideology if he is to understand the social relations that produced the ideology. Apparently what Allen sees beyond ideology is capitalism, or socialism, or feudalism, or some other kind of 'ism' (as the basis of society). What we see beyond ideology is a basic unity among Europeans; we see a European-worldview which is synonymous to white racism, white chauvinism, and white supremacy that has nothing to do with capitalism or communism, etc.

A reader equipped with an understanding of the book's point of view is better able to derive something from its contents.

Chapters II through VII provide excellent concrete data which pinpoints names, dates, events, issues, and the rise and fall of the six reform movements. This data, along with the bibliographical sources provided, can be valuable, if used to examine and interpret from a point of view consistent with the majority interests of the masses of Black people, to examine what happened in these movements in terms of the European's use and manipulation of our people.

The final chapter, "Capitalism, Racism and Reform," discusses the reform movements through a process of "historical synthesis" which places them in the "larger flow of American—and world—history." In this connection, Allen indicates that a simple comparison of these movements is unsuitable to understand the impact of racism and that some other analytical framework is needed. That other framework that he makes reference to concludes in the final chapter that both racism and reform are a result of capitalism.

The affinity for this kind of analysis by large numbers of defector negro intellectuals is related to the absence of the necessary theory that would put to rest these amalgamation/integrationist theories which are leading us to our destruction as a race. What we need is "to develop a theory of history that will serve as a central thread in the creation of the now developing, long over due Afrikan Philosophy."

Conrad W. Worrill

BLACK MAJORITY: NEGROES IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA FROM 1670 THROUGH THE STONO REBELLION

Peter H. Wood

New York: Knopf. 1974. \$10.00.

Peter H. Wood's *Black Majority: Negroes In Colonial South Carolina From 1670 Through The Stono Rebellion* is one of the latest studies in a host of available and forthcoming works which will eventually lead to a re-writing of American history.¹ The book presents a wealth of new and old material in a new light concerning the African adjustment to their enslavement in a strange and alien land. The book demands the serious attention of young and old Afro-American scholars precisely because of the information it offers us concerning the central question of our history: How did Africans become Afro-Americans? It discards the old models of enslavement, which viewed slavery as "Samboization," the results of paternalisms, or cultural deprivation.²