



The Invention of the White Race, Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control

Theodore W. Allen

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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.

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