

# MASILO LEPURU | Beyond Du Bois and the problem of colour line in SA

Exploring centuries of racism and the ascendancy of Chinese racial capitalism

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perpetual victims of agents of racial capitalism.

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In the first few years of the 20th century, W.E.B. Du Bois argued that “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the colour line”.

Du Bois was correct about the problem of racism but was wrong about this being of the 20th century and homogenising the darker races such as Africans, Indians, and the Chinese as victims of white racism.

Racism has been in existence for many centuries before 1903 when Du Bois made his statement. African people have been victims of racism for many centuries at the hands of Asiatics such as Arabs, Chinese and Europeans just to name a few.

Asiatics as people from the continent of Asia have enslaved, exploited, and dominated African people for “two thousand seasons”.

It is in this sense that the clash of race and civilisation is at the heart of the centuries-long interaction between African people and Asiatics. Debates in international politics and relations are currently dominated by the ascendancy of China as a superpower.



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While the US is intimidated by this rise of China, Africa in general and SA in particular has embraced it by establishing bilateral trade relations amounting to billions of rand. SA has joined Brics.

While Brics is a topical issue in relation to the international economic world order, there is no consensus about its nature and potential. There seems to be nothing revolutionary about Brics as far as radically changing the current Euramerican order.

Both Russia and China as imperialistic superpowers are competing to replace Euramerican imperialism on the continent. Africa with its wealth of minerals is coveted by these three superpowers 21st century imperialists.

China as an imperialistic superpower is spreading its economic tentacles across the continent of Africa. SA is replete with China Malls controlled by Chinese traders who represent Chinese racial capitalism.

The Left in SA use the term white monopoly capital. The term attempts to explain the nature and degree of capital

accumulation by white settlers in SA; it does not provide an adequate definition of capitalism as an economic system.

Racial capitalism is a better term. In SA, we have white racial capitalism and Chinese racial capitalism. The Chinese traders are agents of Chinese racial capitalism which brutally exploits African people, especially migrant workers.

While the Ruperts and Oppenheimers are agents of white racial capitalism since the conquest of indigenous people in 1652, the usage of the term white monopoly capital runs the risk of marginalising Chinese racial capitalism.

Both whites and Chinese as Asiatics rely on racial ideas to establish racialised labour relations. They both have a long history of a civilisational and racial superiority complex.

It is this long history which informs their racist treatment of Africans who work for them. Whites use terms such as “k\*\*\*\*\*r” while the Chinese prefer terms such as “heigui ” to refer to African people.



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The racist history of the term k\*\*\*\*\*r is well known in SA. The Chinese term heigui which means “black devils” is a less known racist name. Racial capitalism as a term adequately captures this cultural and civilizational superiority of the Chinese and whites much better than the term white monopoly capital.

White monopoly capital is just a phase of racial capitalism under the dominance of whites both locally and internationally. Capitalism is not just about the concentration of wealth and the hegemony of accumulation.

Race and racism precede capitalism. Capitalism is a cultural and civilizational manifestation of an economic system under racist people. Africans, especially in Durban, have been victims of Indian racial capitalism for many years.

Until Africans restore the land and self-determination both politically, culturally, and economically, they will remain perpetual victims of agents of racial capitalism. The so-called “China century” is also characterised by the problem of the colour line, except that the “yellow race” is continuing the exploitation by the “white race”.

The naive multiculturalism and liberalism of the African race will not save it from racial capitalism in all its different forms.

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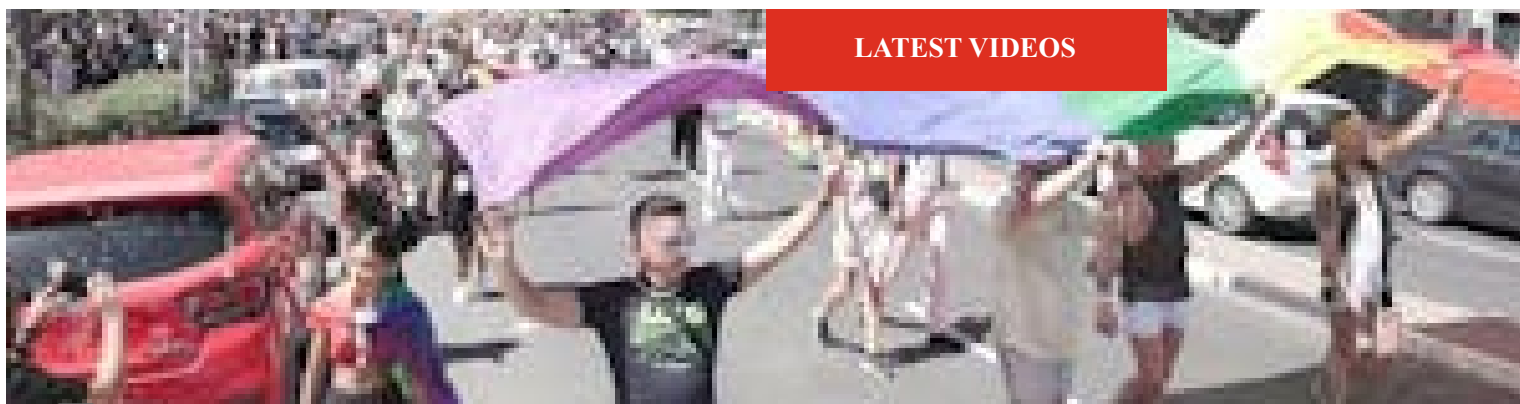
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