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SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE SOCIETY

Racism is said to be as old as human society itself. If racism is part of human nature, then socialist have a real challenge on their hands. Racism is not part of human nature. It is a particular form of oppression which stems from discrimination against a group of people based on the idea that some inherited characteristic such as skin color, makes them inferior to oppressors. People often associate racism with acts of abuse or harassment. However, it doesn’t need to involve violent or intimidating behaviour. Take racial name-calling and jokes. Or consider situations when people may be excluded from groups or activities because of where they come from. So then, what was the root of systematic racism?

First, one would have to understand the concept of race. Race is a constructed social category designed to stratify people and establish meaning in a social context. As a form of bias against other social groups, racism encompasses three related but separate aspects: prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. Prejudice refers to an emotional reaction to another individual without first obtaining factual knowledge about them. Discrimination is the action of denying equal rights based on prejudice and stereotypes. In that sense, a theoretical framework for racism can describe it on three levels. Structural racism is the differential access to goods, services and opportunities based on race. It is basically racism interlaced with institutions, governments, and even workplaces. Many individuals of color have witnessed this firsthand in either of these places. Systematic racism is a vice in society as racism is not born but taught to us. One would think this would be abolished in this century, however, there are still lingers of racism in society. The feeling of not being accepted or singles out because of the colour of your skin is a derogatory act of inhumanity and must be combated in today’s society. Internalized racism is acceptance by members of stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth.

Racism arose and became part of the dominant ideology of society in the context of the African slave trade at the dawn of capitalism in the 1500s and the 1600s. Within a few decades, the ideology of white supremacy was fully developed. Some of the greatest minds such as Scottish philosopher David Hum and Thomas Jefferson, the man who wrote the declaration of independence – wrote treatises alleging black inferiority. The ideology of white supremacy based on the natural inferiority of Blacks. It is also important to consider racism as a possible cause of slavery, and that racism possibly came before slavery in America. In Winthrop D. Jordan’s, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward The Negro, 1550­1812 there are examples of sixteenth century travel records that show a racist attitude towards Africans held by the British, on the basis of skin color and religion.

In  Americans, and in other diverse societies, the most hateful remnants of slavery persist in the U.S today in the form of systemic racism baked into nearly every aspect of their society and who they aree as a people. Indeed, for those tracing their heritage to countries outside of Western Europe, or for those with a non-Christian belief system, that undeniable truth often impacts every aspect of who you are as a person, in one form or another. The reality of this history has been on stark display in recent weeks. From the terrible killings of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, to the countless, untold acts of racism that take place every day across America, these are the issues that are defining the moment—just as our response will define who we are and will be in the 21st century and beyond. We as human beings must do our part and take responsibility in showing love and demanding for justice towards people of color and fight against the harmful system of racism.

So, what can individuals and organizations do to reduce systematic racism? Individuals should recognize their privileges and endeavor to understand the movement of anti- racism and the millions of people who are affected by it. Most people want to support racial equity, in theory, but they don’t know how, practically –especially because many solutions are long term. Systemic racism has been brewing in the United States since even before the country was founded, shaping the lives of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and other minorities for hundreds of years. The same is true in many other countries, too. As heartbreaking and frustrating as it may be, profound change may take just as long. However, that does not mean we cannot do anything about it. Diversifying workplaces and industries is a good step to take as organizations should discuss how they can be more inclusive. By giving out equal opportunity to people of colour just as much as they give it to the whites, increase in work productivity and employment rate will rise. True diverse leadership can be achieved if the organization is diverse. Black people account for only 3.2% of senior leadership roles at large corporations and hold just 0.8% of Fortune 500 positions; all are men. Similarly, Latinos hold fewer than 2% of Fortune 500 CEO positions; most are men. According to McKinsey’s Women in the Workplace Report, both men of color and women of color are less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts. If we want to see true racial equity, then we must promote people of color to leadership positions.

Another way is to continue the dialogue because racism does not magically disappear. Just because protests die down and the media stops reporting on racism doesn’t mean racism is resolved. This moment is important because, as a society, we’re talking about a topic that many have ignored or shut down in the past. Keep the dialogue going at the internal leadership level, at the internal management level and at the all-employees level. Dialogue means growth – and the more we talk to one another, the more we can break down our internal conscious and unconscious biases. Peaceful protest and government reform appeals are also encouraged to curb systemic racism in society.

But even after all this, one may be curious as to why curbing racism which is such a disease to society and human rights at large, is important. Racism is illegal, in many cases.

Racial prejudice and racism feed on each other. If racial prejudice is not reduced, it could lead to racism, and if racism is not addressed, it could lead to more prejudice. This is why strategies to address discrimination on the basis of race should be thorough and multifaceted so that both individual attitudes and institutionalized practices are affected. They impede or prevent the object of racism from achieving his or her full potential as a human being. They impede or prevent the object of racism from making his or her fullest contribution to society. And prevent the person or group engaging in racist actions from benefiting from the potential contributions of their victim, and, as a result, weaken the community.

In conclusion, with all the racist events going on in our modern world today, perhaps with the help of the voices of the people and the hand of the media the world could bring down the injustice of systemic prejudice and racial discrimination. And in order for equality to truly flourish, uncovering and uprooting the stems of racism from society bit by bit may bring hope for generations to come.