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Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the Racial Logic of Vulnerability*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015. 328 pp. \$34.95 (paperback).

This study argues that racial logic defines domestic American and world politics, culture and society, in a pattern of power defined by WEB Du Bois as the global colour line. It is a searing indictment of a system of white power that enslaved, dehumanised, killed and maimed untold millions of people, especially of colour, under the banner of a civilising mission but actually to reinforce power hierarchies that relied upon white racial solidarity and consciousness. It implicates not only the white imperial global political economy but also its late nineteenth-century development, the philanthropic foundation, based on the spoils of capitalist industrialisation after the American civil war. In particular, the Carnegie Corporation's philosophy and roles in reinforcing the racial order – in the US and Southern Africa – are explored. Rather than the cuddly organisation Carnegie claims to be – (or to have become in its recent centenary celebrations) – Willoughby-Herard's book suggests that violence lay at its core and its origins in the bloody strikes in Carnegie steel plants in the 1890s, and the use of black strike-breakers against a white labour force.

The poor white, the reference point of the study, who was deemed to constitute a “waste of a white skin” – provides the hook on which the racial logic argument of the book hangs. The poor white represents a social phenomenon that challenges the very idea and patterns of white power and progress, a potential equivalence with black resistance, and a possible cross-racial ally. Transforming the vulnerable poor white into a citizen in the white republic was the object of many social and cultural projects by a variety of forces but it is the Carnegie Corporation's role that is explored in depth. Carnegie was peculiarly suited to such a role due to its close experiences of Britain's African colonies where it collaborated with the Colonial Office to construct education systems producing suitably docile blacks, lessons further honed by US philanthropists in the American deep south and of which the Tuskegee experiment was a fundamental aspect. Blacks did not require a classical education to work in the fields, streets and shops – training in practical tasks sufficed to maintain their bondage in the deeper recesses of the Jim Crow system.

Carnegie (and other philanthropies) represent American adaptations to the age of industrialisation, mass immigration and urbanisation – the precursors of state intervention and social reform, the shapers of the racial contours of power. As such, they are hardly independent of the American state but specialise, as Willoughby-Herard argues, in “influence harvesting” (pp.13-16) – going where the state cannot or blazing a trail prior to systematic state bureaucratisation and investment. Hence, far from being on the margins of American and global social and political development, American philanthropies – armed with scientific theorems and methods, and extolling the virtues of the social scientific expert – are the vanguard of racial logics and progress.

Willoughby-Herard has researched in archival records in the US and South Africa to craft a significant and pioneering study in the significance of global knowledge, race and power, especially in the field of political science. Sociology and anthropology recognised race, racism and racial logics of power long ago but academic disciplines, and their leading scholars, closest to the centres of power rarely, if ever, venture into such dangerous territory – of uncompromising investigation and critique of a system that their principal theories hardly

acknowledge. But thanks to Willoughby-Herard, John Hobson's *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*,<sup>1</sup> Robert Vitalis's *White World Order, Black Power Politics*,<sup>2</sup> and the virtually unread *The Silent War. Imperialism and the Changing Perception of Race* by Frank Furedi,<sup>3</sup> the foundations of western power and thought are being interrogated as never before. That it is happening in the wake of the violence of the war on terror, illegal aggression and the deaths of countless numbers in Iraq, and remote-control drone strikes – aerial warfare on black and brown bodies in the so-called periphery – and the re-emergence of the non-white world in the form of China and India and Brazil, among others, signals a shift of potentially seismic proportions. This may be a little optimistic, a false dawn, because compartmentalisation, containment and co-optation of resistance remain powerful forces – witness the Barack Obama phenomenon – yet it is a shift nevertheless with state power to give it ballast. The “century of humiliation” which Chinese culture commemorates represents the psychological after-effects of colonial rule and violence which, some western officials fear, may result in resistance and hostility, and even revenge, as power shifts from the west to the ‘rest’. It would seem that we are in a “moment”, a crisis, which opens eyes and sires critique and reflection. Professor Willoughby-Herard has provided the perfect opportunity for this.

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Furedi, *The Silent War. Imperial and the Changing Perception of Race*. London: Pluto Press, 1998.