

# **“Working Class” Means “White Working Class”**

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# Contents

Introduction to the 4th World . . . . .	3
Black Lives in the 4th World . . . . .	3
Indigenous Lives in the 4th World . . . . .	4
A Call For Understanding and Unity . . . . .	5

They call it the Big Easy,  
but it ain't easy any more,  
They call it the Big Easy  
but it ain't easy anymore.  
I'm feelin' lost and so forsaken,  
my soul can't bear much more.  
— from “Big Easy Blues”

## **Introduction to the 4th World**

First is first, we need to talk about 4th world, because without the understanding of this term, the whole point will be lost and skewed. “Fourth world” is an extension of the three world model, and can be defined as “Sub populations existing in a First World country, but with the living standards of those in a third world, or developing country.” While following the three world models classification of nation state status, fourth world is not spatially bound. The term itself even screams “unity,” as it was first coined by a Tanzanian diplomat on a trip to Canada Mbuto Milando, referring to the treatment and living conditions of the First Nations. Milando stated that “When native peoples come into their own, on the basis of their own cultures and traditions, that will be the fourth world.” Dr. M. P. Parameswaran, takes this ideal a little further in his book “The Fourth World” where he envisions a world based on decentralized democracy and an economic production that is detached from consumerism. (these ideas earned him a boot from the local Marxist society he was a member of for 33 years.) Of course this term was coined to describe conditions of Indigenous peoples of amerikka, but it can also easily describe that of the conditions that black amerikans live in today as well. For example, project housing, income inequality, lack of adequate resources be they educational or for furthering careers, rampant unemployment, hardline policing, and redlining that lead to the segregation of whole neighborhoods.

## **Black Lives in the 4th World**

Black people in the West have been rendered placeless through systemic violence that destroyed entire ethnicities and access to geopolitics and the politics of ethics. — for even the ghetto is moved from place to place with gentrification. Black people are directly tied to biopolitical oppressions, as evident through the disproportional percentage of the Black population making under a living wage. The Amerikan market, and therefore the interests of the capitalists who in turn heavily influence or are directly involved in the Amerikan politician ecosystem, determines the placement of the Black ghetto. The Black ghetto, ranging from brown bricks stacked church-high in the Bronx, to flats no taller than the town churches in Tuskegee surrounded by rubble called “sidewalks”, to the ghastly Victorian-style “homes” of Newburgh, New York is a cesspool of allostatic load that murders: emotional and physical illness, poverty, drug addiction, and violence stemming from the need to survive are consistently enforced even as nearby neighbourhoods of white people enjoy the spoils of chattel slavery and colonialism; resources Black people need are made scarce, usually permanently tied to a working class existence by their very

ontology and further enforced by antiblack pogroms led by non-Black murderers— politicians, their protection, the white betrayers of the “working class”, and of course, the bourgeoisie. We can walk north from Soundview to Co-op City in the Bronx and smell the difference, or take the ferry from Newburgh to Beacon and taste it. Regardless, Black immigrants and natives thrive in their own cultural superstructure: music, food, and the “cool” within these third world conditions is distinctive enough to render the ghetto a nation of its own. But being that the ghetto is placeless, like Black people, the Fourth World is the only nominal representation these societies can have; third-worldists often times hold disdain for these Fourth World societies, having never visited, believing everyone has running water and a home, completely ignoring the police state that arrests many urban Black people who dare to find themselves past the red line and in a green, grassy neighbourhood in Riverdale, or walking through the mansion-zoos in the corners of Newburgh. Neither does the Fourth World fit into the liberation theology of Marx’ development theory where centralised “dictatorship of the proletariat” is essential due to the inherent differences between communities in New Orleans ghettos and that of The Bronx. Because Black people are not monolithic, our liberation calls for a consensual confederate democracy, not a single state of unified ideals. The narrative is simple: Black people are oppressed because of things Black people can not change about themselves: abstractions based upon phenotypes. Black people are also often oppressed through economic disparity, evident in the allostatic load in Black lives. Whether Black people live in a First World country like Amerika, or a Third World country like Dominica, there are ghettos to avoid and drive past— for many, they are unable to be avoided because they live there. “There” is the Fourth World— juxtaposed against the bourgeoisie and nonblacks of the Amerikan first world, and the bourgeoisie and nonblacks of the Third World. To be more accurate: there are Fourth Worlds within these oppressed populations where the systemic hatred of ostracized identities acts as prototypical pogrom to the homogenizing nature of fascism. These words are made of people with disabilities, people who are not straight, people who do not conform to gender roles that enforce gender-specific oppressions, the very young, and the elderly. It must therefore be said that the Fourth World isn’t a single nationalized entity, but a compass that directs our liberation strategies toward permanently bettering the existence of the subaltern of subaltern populations. It is the science behind bottom-up liberation theory that centers those who need liberation most desperately and permanently, and thus, with the liberation of these groups, frees us all.

## **Indigenous Lives in the 4th World**

The life of an indigenous person in the amerikas is rather similiar to that of his black cousins, while holding different but also the same oppressions. The country’s 310 Indian reservations have violent crime rates that are more than two and a half times higher than the national average, according to data compiled by the Justice Department, while at the same time unemployment rates have skyrocketed to be around 50 percent of the reservation populations. These “open air prisons” may offer isolation from the rest of the world, but the hells inside them tell us a story of cyclical poverty and utter hopelessness. We see this manifest in the amount of suicides now happening in these communities, where it has now reached an even higher point at 27%, that means 1 in 4 indigenous males between the age of 15 to 24 will commit suicide. These problems haven’t just manifested themselves over the last ten years at the fault of “community planning”

or “bad personal investments,” this is completely intentional and by the design of our colonial conquerors, to prevent the revitalization of the indigenous world. But how can we be expected to recover from this when our women and daughters are murdered or kidnapped, and our sons are either locked in prison or murdered on the streets? Why is it that even the minimal programs and benefits we do have, are so decrepit and obsolete that many can't even gain access to them? This is the essence of the 4th world, living in the systems and places designated and designed to oppress, to keep us down and to keep us out. From the trail of tears to the marches of round valley, we have been whipped shot and starved so that our relocation would go smoother. Even after slavery was officially outlawed, we saw indigenous peoples from all over being subject to those the same conditions time and time again, at the whim of private enterprise as well as colonial government as evident with the Pomo peoples forced servitude at the hands of cattle ranchers. We see this same gate-keeping towards investment etc that we see in the black communities, where when we move in, whites move out, or when we ask for loans we are almost always denied. Native peoples aren't a monolith and our languages and cultures have fared much better than our bodies, leading to a strong sense of tradition in said communities that has led to shunning of advancement. But why not, when advancement has always been at the cost of our ways of our bodies and of our minds. Yes you can say we are “working class” but look at these major differences between the white working class and that of the brown. Not only do we make significantly less and are employed less, but our businesses are subject to intense scrutiny and oversight. In some instances legal marijuana grows on reservations have been raided by feds multiple times in a single year while just outside the reservation white grows remain untouched and profitable. Yet the eradication and enslavement of native peoples has directly lead to their inclusion in the 4th world with their black cousins, as they were denied (and still are) the ability to set up any basic structures for their future generations, thus not allowing the cycles of poverty to be broken.

## **A Call For Understanding and Unity**

The only logical conclusion of these statistics, is that working class doesn't mean the same thing for black and brown bodies as it does white ones. The evidence shows us that even with the same jobs, we are more likely to bring home less, and on the way home, there is a good chance we will be killed just for existing. Because of the intentional segregation by the government, our cultural, spiritual, and economic lives have diverged dramatically in comparison with that of the white amerikan. The 4th world is where we live every day, the 4th world is unique and separate from the “working class” and therefore we cannot simply be deemed “working class.” This may come to be a thorn in the ideas of “no war but class war” but in reality it needs to be a sign of needed solidarity. Accomplices need to use their privilege to help us remove ourselves from these cycles, as well as understand and center our messages. The black and indigenous peoples of the amerikkas should unite as well, as 4th world peoples, and challenge the notion of “working class v bourgeoisie,” as the exclusive white and colonial concept that it is. Reality shows us the truth, reality shows us it's not “rich vs poor” it's “black and indigenous poor vs white poor vs white rich,” and unfortunately if the understanding doesn't come, if the minds don't change, there is a good chance “working class” will always and forever, be white.

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