

# GOING AGAINST THE TIDE

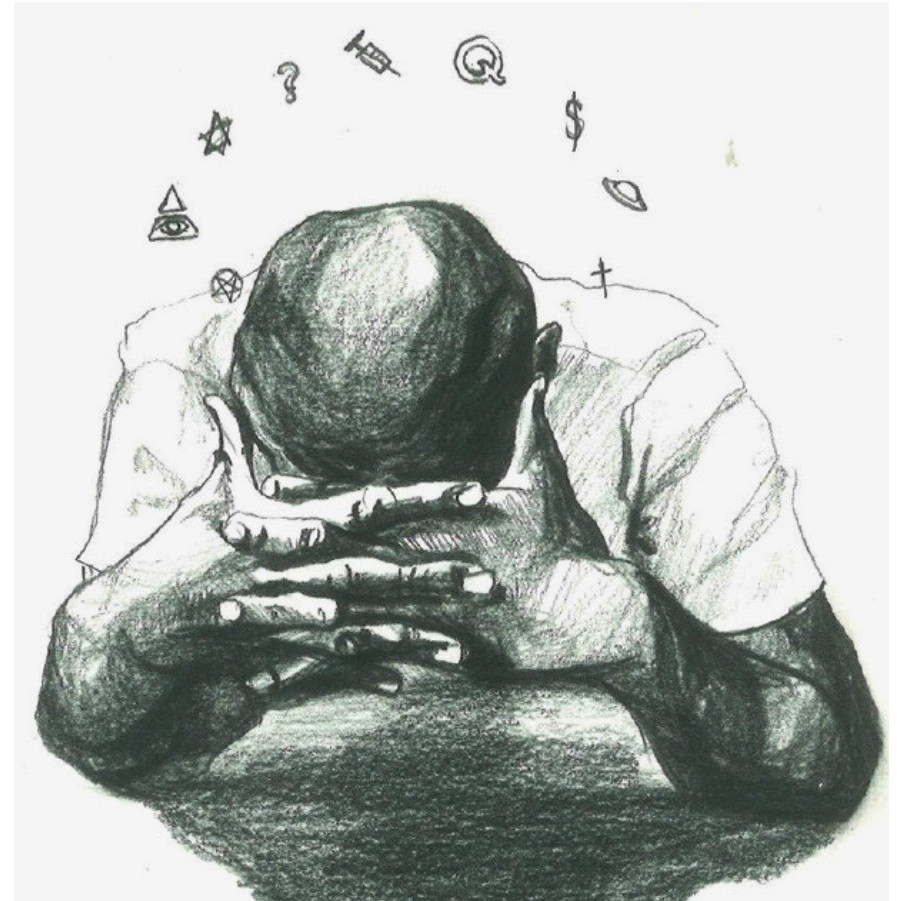
*A Journal Charting a Path for Communist Revolution in the US*



## Going Against the Tide's Pamphlet Series

Going Against the Tide's pamphlet series is for all those asking questions about the nature of the system we live under, looking for answers about how we can radically transform this society, but having to fight off all the bourgeois bullshit shoved down our throats by the politicians, the bourgeois media, most preachers, and “experts” with TikTok accounts. Pamphlets by Going Against the Tide show how the workings of capitalism-imperialism are behind all the social problems in our world, address the debates raging among the masses from a communist perspective, and point to revolutionary solutions. Their aim is to develop and deepen the class-consciousness of the proletarian masses who can rise above me-first ideology, the social war for survival they are thrown into with each other, and the brainwash of bourgeois ideology to become a revolutionary people.

Every title in Going Against the Tide's pamphlet series, including the one in your hands, is available for free at [goingagainstthetide.org](http://goingagainstthetide.org), with PDFs you can print and distribute.



## Conspiracy theories cloud the enemy class

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For centuries, conspiracy theories have held sway over the masses. These theories often set out to provide answers to difficult questions: Why does so much suffering and injustice exist in the world? Who or what is responsible for it? What explains the gross inequality between rich and poor? Those searching answers to these kinds of questions are correct to be looking, but in conspiracy theories they only find analyses that provide incorrect and often reactionary answers, which fixate on secret societies, cabals of the rich and powerful, and weird shit like devil worshipping. While the rich and powerful are ultimately to blame for society's ills, it has nothing to do with their Friday evening devil worshipping (real or imagined)—the real cause is the mass exploitation and oppression they oversee in *their social position as the ruling class*.

Conspiracy theories have the effect of distracting and misleading oppressed people, starting with obscuring the system and class of people responsible for their oppression. They fail to explain that the source of oppression lies in class-divided society, with a system of capitalism-imperialism that is built on a ruthless crusade for profits and control of markets. It's a system with a dominant class, the *bourgeoisie*, made up of the owners and leaders of the world's largest corporations, banks, investment firms, etc. This ruling class endlessly pursues ways to amass wealth and power, which often means plotting against the lower classes and snuffing out rebellions that arise (or engineering the situation to prevent rebellions from happening in the first place). But it's not this or that conspiracy, real or imagined, that fundamentally gives the bourgeoisie their power, but the everyday functioning of capitalism as a system of global exploitation.

With conspiracy theories we also see reactionary ideas fester, including directing blame for injustice at other

oppressed groups rather than the bourgeoisie. These theories often base their explanations for the state of the world on an unchangeable “human nature,” or the idea that there will always be people who have evil in them that cannot be rooted out. They provide oversimplified answers to complex social phenomena. Worse than that, they divert people who have a profound sense of the injustice of the world from developing a more sophisticated understanding of the system responsible for their oppression. At their core, conspiracy theorists are false prophets—people who talk about fighting oppression without ever having to be about it.

For those being misled by conspiracy theories, we need to patiently point out right from wrong. We need to provide more compelling and convincing answers for society's ills than the ones people are led to believe. Scientific and moral worldviews must replace reactionary or misguided ideas. While we should expect new conspiracy theories to enter the zeitgeist, and old ones to fester, if the masses are to seize power and build a new society, we have to eliminate the power of conspiracy theories to keep people from seeing the need for world revolution and fighting for it.

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underemployment, and decrepit housing conditions. Instead, Black Hebrew Israelites put forward a bastardized version of Garveyite politics of Black entrepreneurship and, worse than Marcus Garvey and his followers, only give a damn about themselves and their friends and none of the rest of the people of the world. The historical and ongoing oppression of Black people is a bitter reality, but the Black Hebrew Israelites offer a ridiculously distorted understanding of that reality and *no path of collective struggle to change that reality*.

### **Do these conspiracy theories help you or hold you back from fighting the system?**

There are dozens more conspiracy theories that could be covered, but what's important is to look at what they tend to say and the effects they have on the masses. We should first understand that our political views have a massive influence on our actions. If we see the state of the world as deeply unjust and in need of revolutionary change, and if we think this change is possible, then we'll be down to make sacrifices to fight for causes bigger than ourselves, and we'll choose to unite with other oppressed social groups and nationalities against the ruling class. To find common cause with the oppressed people of the world, and to see the necessity of revolution for fighting to overthrow imperialist empires, is to be an *internationalist*.

Rather than making people into internationalists, conspiracy theories train the masses to see oppression as inevitable, justified, out of our control, or originating from other

oppressed groups like immigrants, women, Arab people, Black people, queer and transgender people, and more. Right-wing and fascist political forces spread these ideas like wildfire to train the masses in backwards thinking and to stoke divisions among them. In a society defined by antagonistic divisions between rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed nations, these ideas find fertile soil—especially among the oppressed—as legitimate explanations for their social position.

Not all conspiracy theories are so nefarious. Some we hear about are pretty amusing, like every version of the idea that the government or billionaires like Bill Gates are trying to implant microchips in people to be able to control them. (The irony is they're already manipulating your thinking and desires by getting you voluntarily staring at screens for hours everyday—who needs microchip implants when they've got social media and mass advertising?) In many conspiracy theories, we can find a positive element to agree with, namely that there's a group of people hellbent on maintaining their dominant position, and they do everything they can to protect it, including starting wars, letting disease and hunger run rampant, and imposing brutal conditions on countless people. But the simple answer of “they're trying to chip us” doesn't do enough to accurately explain how the ruling class operates and what we need to do about it.

Conspiracy theories ultimately train people in an outlook that nothing can be done about massive human suffering and the system responsible for it because there's some puppetmaster controlling everything through an elaborate conspiracy that we're too dumb to see or too powerless to do anything about. This effectively de-mobilizes people and keeps us from seeing the need for a mass revolutionary movement to liberate humanity from exploitation and oppression. Pessimism and nihilism spread, preventing

people from coming together as an organized force to overthrow their oppressors through revolution.

## **COVID vaccines and the capitalist “healthcare” machine**

Let's start with vaccines. Nurses and doctors around the world have administered billions of COVID-19 vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. In the years before COVID, there were many billions more vaccine doses given for other diseases like polio, smallpox, measles, and mumps. Prior to the COVID pandemic, conspiracy theories calling into question the safety of vaccines were rampant in the US, but in 2020 they were supercharged.

As multinational pharmaceutical companies sprinted to develop COVID vaccines, and chased billions of dollars in profits in the process, concerns exploded around the potential for vaccine-related injuries. Vaccines quickly became one of the most divisive political issues in everyday life, along with wearing a mask, and everyone from Fox News to YouTubers with 50 subscribers seized on the content opportunity. People began ascribing illnesses and new health conditions to the COVID jab. Sudden deaths, especially of young people, had some speculating: “Did they get the vaccine?”

Rather than get caught up in trying to debunk this or that viewpoint on the safety of COVID vaccines, it's important to see the bigger political and economic trends at play. Globally, the pharmaceutical industry was able to exploit patent rights and international trade agreements to ship vaccine doses produced in oppressed countries to “more worthy” recipients in imperialist countries. Between India and the UK, the old colonial relationship made a comeback in 2021 as vaccine doses flowed from medical factories in

connection with God to be able to identify the “correct” interpretation of Bible passages as they do. So, basically, as long as you already believe Black people are the real Jews, you'll be able to see how Deuteronomy 28 says as much.

On the weirder end of Black Hebrew Israelite views, some hold that Black people are actually indigenous to North America and didn't actually come here through the transatlantic slave trade—something that should have their ancestors who fought to abolish slavery, and who lived and died as slaves, rolling and cursing in their graves. In public, crews of Black Hebrew Israelites will roll 10–15 deep (usually all men) into transit stations and posted up on street corners, acting no better than reactionary religious fanatics of other persuasions. At a pro-Palestine protest in Chicago in October 2023, Black Hebrew Israelites brawled with protesters, ironically siding politically with Zionist counter-protestors.

The problem with being “God's chosen people,” as Black Hebrew Israelites maintain, is that means other nationalities and ethnic groups are inferior, *including Africans and mixed-race Black people*. Black Hebrew Israelites not only spew anti-Semitic nonsense, but also say wildly backwards things about Asian, Indigenous, and Latino people, often stemming from a strange ascribing of the world's ethnicities to the biblical 12 tribes of Israel (sidenote: I once was talking to a Black Hebrew Israelite churchgoer who told me all Asian people have down syndrome). They maintain deeply patriarchal and anti-LGBTQ views, which puts them in a long line of religious fundamentalists trying to impose their whack ideas of heterosexual male superiority on others. Their political project, in essence, has nothing to do with liberating Black people from white supremacy and overthrowing a social order where millions of Black people live under mass incarceration, police brutality, permanent

twith, and how can we get beyond a society where you need this thing called money to eat and have a place to live. To answer those questions, we'll need to go beyond this or that conspiracy and analyze how things are produced, how they're sold, who makes the profit, and how people lived without money for tens of thousands of years.

## **Black people are the “real” Jews**

This one is fun. The Black Hebrew Israelites are a religious movement that claims Black people in the US are “God's chosen people” and the descendants of the biblical Israelites. They view actual Jewish people as “converted” and “satanic” imposters. Variations of their core belief have existed for decades in different forms, sometimes gaining traction among some segments of the population, and lately in part due to the decline in the Nation of Islam's membership and influence.

In 2022, Black Hebrew Israelites surged into the spotlight when NBA player Kyrie Irving posted a link to the film *Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America*, based on a book of the same name by Ronald Dalton. Beyond its blatant anti-Semitism and general idiocy, the film puts forward a Black nationalist outlook with messaging that has taken root among young Black men in particular. In interviews, Dalton says things to get his audiences enticed, like “We can't unite if we don't know who we are” and “We're still on the plantation.” He also repeats a common refrain of Black Hebrew Israelites: “It's all in the Bible.” The irony of this is that Dalton and others will stress that someone needs to be in the right frame of mind and have a proper spiritual

India into pharmacies in London and Manchester while the masses of India remained largely unvaccinated. Trade agreements ensured Americans received two or three vaccine doses before people in Peru, Malaysia, and Nigeria received one. Untold excess deaths from COVID occurred because of these disparities.

People are right to call into question the trustworthiness of a US government that has sanctioned medical experiments against oppressed people, particularly Black people and Puerto Ricans. The government's handling of the COVID pandemic exposed the disposability of elderly people and other vulnerable populations, who the bourgeoisie decided to use as cannon fodder to keep the economy churning amid near-collapse. Death rates were highest among Black people, who endure higher proportions of comorbidities like heart disease, diabetes, and asthma compared to white people.

At their most outlandish, vaccine conspiracists claimed the global ruling elite manufactured the virus outbreak to create a mass population culling. But the truth is simpler: the healthcare system kills people every day, and profit-driven hospitals, drug manufacturers, and callous government officials were never going to give a shit about people dying from a global pandemic.

## **Dead presidents die again**

In recent years, people we've met began saying something peculiar: “They're getting rid of the money system.” In this case, “they” refers to the government, in particular the Federal Reserve, and multinational banks and financial institutions like BlackRock. Conversations like these tend to veer in a number of directions, but a common thread is the notion that the US government and private companies are

plotting to completely replace hard currency (cash) with digital currencies tied to digital ID's for everyone. So where does this come from?

Whitney Webb, a libertarian author and podcaster, has been on the podcast interview circuit for several years spewing theories about the financial industry's plots to control people's lives through, among other things, central bank digital currencies (CBDC's). The idea is that federal governments will implement CBDC's as a universal digital currency to replace cash, with all kinds of new surveillance opportunities attached, including controlling people's purchases to limit their carbon footprint (i.e., no more eating meat). She describes a rapidly-approaching spiral into a “techno-feudal” dystopia that's just around the corner. She predicts the next financial meltdown, which the global elite are actively engineering, will clear the ground for central banks to make their big play. There's dozens of internet personalities like Webb pumping these ideas into the mainstream.

There's many elements of “money system” theories that are important. Capitalism is a system with cyclical crises and boom-bust periods baked into its DNA—an intrinsic feature that Karl Marx theorized back in the day. The rise of monopolies and trusts in the 19th century that plundered new markets around the world exacerbated this feature up through the present. In 2008, the time bomb exploded once again, leaving millions jobless and facing home foreclosures while bank executives cashed in on billions in bailout funds from the Obama administration. What's different now from the late 1800s is the enormous influence that banks play to control the flow of trillions of dollars around the world, what we would call “finance capital” as shorthand.

Finance capital has an unquenchable thirst for profits and finding new ways to make money off the masses and the earth's resources. With the rise of massive tech companies, consumer information has become critical, in particular data about purchasing habits and how to influence people to buy more shit and spend more time staring at screens. The reality of CBDC's is that they present finance capital a new opportunity to generate, surveil, and exploit personal information. They also present governments an opportunity to more closely monitor financial transactions, something cash makes difficult. With the onslaught of AI technology and years of heightening mass surveillance, people are correct to feel indignation at the impossibility of avoiding Big Brother. CBDC's are a real threat that will add to the already existing mass surveillance technologies in the hands of the ruling class. According to the World Economic Forum, over 100 countries are exploring CBDC's. Australia began testing one out in 2022.

But the problem with analyses like Whitney Webb's is they fail to see the need to overthrow the capitalist ruling class, instead promoting escapist fantasies like putting all our money in cryptocurrencies. Even worse, this is a VERY lucrative gift for those peddling it. Clickbait headlines drive ad sales, podcast subscriptions, and book deals. Redacted, a YouTube channel that has had Webb on as a guest, has two million subscribers and sells ads for end-of-the-world survival kits. Shows like these call on their audience to subscribe, listen to them yap for hours, get angry, and do squat about it. They don't actually give a shit about stopping finance capital and the actual dystopia being created. They only care about the money they rake in.

Maybe instead of freaking out about CBDC's, we need to ask deeper questions, like why is there this thing called money whether in paper currency or digital versions—to begin