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THE DEMAND FOR BLACK LABOR



Historical Notes on the Political Economy of Racism

Harold M. Baron



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The economic base of racism would have to be subjected to intensive analysis in order to get at the heart of the oppression of black people in modern America. If we employ the language of Nineteenth Century science, we can state that the economic deployment of black people has been conditioned by the operation of two sets of historical laws: the laws of capitalist development, and the laws of national liberation. These laws were operative in the slave era as well as at present. Today the characteristic forms of economic control and exploitation of black people take place within the institutional structure of a mature state capitalist system and within the demographic frame of the metropolitan centers. The economic activities of blacks are essentially those of wage (or salary) workers for the large corporate and bureaucratic structures that dominate a mature capitalist society. Thus today racial dynamics can be particularized as the working out of the laws of the maintenance of mature state capitalism and the laws of black liberation with the metropolitan enclaves (rather than a consolidated territorial area) as a base.

This essay places major emphasis on capitalist development. While attention will be paid to aspects of national liberation, it would be a very-different essay if that were the main point of concentration. Further, in order to make the inquiry manageable, it concentrates on

the key relationship of the demand for black labor.

A backward glance at certain factors in the evolution of racism will help establish the cogency of the major categories that we employ in the analysis of the present day. Historically, the great press for black labor as the work force for plantation slavery simultaneously supplied the momentum for the formation of institutional racism and set the framework for the creation of the black community in the United States. The strength of this demand for black slaves, in regard to both the vast numbers of persons involved and its duration over centuries, was based on the dialectics of the relationship between slavery in the New World and the development of capitalism in Europe: Each provided necessary conditions for the other's growth.

A large-scale accumulation of capital was a prerequisite for the emergence of capitalism as the dominant system in Europe. Otherwise capitalism was doomed to remain basically a mercantile operation in the interstices of a primarily-manorial economy. From the Sixteenth Century on, the strength of developing nation-states and their ability to extend their tentacles of power beyond the limits of Europe greatly accelerated the process that Marx called "the primitive accumulation of capital".

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment in the mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the hunting of black skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. This phase of the accumulation process was accomplished not only by domestic exploitation, but also by the looting of traditional stores of non-European peoples and the fostering of a new system of slavery to exploit their labor. (1)

In a sense European capitalism created, as one of the pre-conditions for its flourishing, a set of productive relations that was antithetical to the free-market, wage-labor system which characterized capitalist production in the metropolitan countries. English capitalism at home was nurturing itself on a proletariat created through the dispossession of the peasantry from the land, while at the same time accumulating much of the capital necessary to command the labor of this proletariat through the fixing of African deportees into a servile status in the colonies. "In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage-earners of Europe needed for its pedestal slavery pure and simple in the New World." (2)

Slaves from Africa, at first in the mines and then on the plantations of the New World, produced goods that enlarged the magnitude of the circulation of commodities in international trade — a process that was

essential to the mercantilist phase of capitalist history. (3) Although this slavery was not capitalist in the form of production itself, that it was not based on the purchase of alienated wage labor (4), the plantation system of the New World composed an integral part of the international market relations of the growing capitalist system. The demand for slaves was subject to mercantile calculations regarding production costs and market prices :

Long before the trans-Atlantic trade began, both the Spanish and the Portuguese were well aware that Africa could be made to yield up its human treasure. But in the early part of the Sixteenth Century the cost of transporting large numbers of slaves across the Atlantic was excessive in relation to the profits that could be extracted from their labor. This situation changed radically when, toward the middle of the century... sugar plantings were begun in Brazil...and by the end of the Sixteenth Century sugar had become the most valuable of the agricultural commodities in international trade. Importation of Negroes from Africa now became economically feasible. (5)

Once in the world market, a commodity lost all the markings of its origin. No distinction could be made as to whether it was produced by free or slave labor. It became just a good to be bought and sold.

Production from the slave plantations greatly increased the volume of commodities in circulation through trade, but the social relations of slavery and racism rendered the black producers so distinctly apart that it was possible to appropriate a greater proportion of their product as surplus than it was through any other established mechanism that defined lowly social status. Two sets of conditions combined to make the exploitation of the New World slaves particularly harsh. First, the production of plantation goods for the impersonal needs of the rapidly expanding international market removed many of the restraints and reciprocities that had inhered in patriarchal forms of slavery in which production was essentially for home use. Second, since West Africa was outside of Christendom or Mediterranean civilization, there were few existing European cultural or political limitations that applied to the treatment of black chattels.

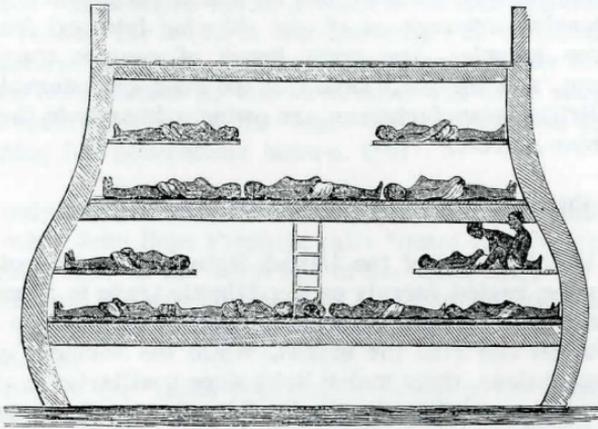
The economics of slavery could not have existed over an extended period as just a set of shrewd market-oriented operations. Elaboration of a whole culture of control — with political, social, and ideological formulations — was necessary to hold dominance over the black slaves and to keep the non-slave-holding whites in line. Given that the white Europeans were subjugating the black Africans, the culture of control became largely structured around a color-oriented racialism. "Slavery could survive only if the Negro were a man set apart; he simply had to be different if slavery were to exist at all." (6) The development of a

rationale regarding the degradation of all blacks and the formation of conforming institutional practices were necessary to maintain a social order based on enslavement of some blacks. Accordingly, this culture of racial control rapidly diffused throughout the whole of North Atlantic civilization and all the American colonies of its various nations. In the United States, racism — that is, subjugation based on blackness rather than on servitude alone — was more-sharply defined than in most other places in the Americas.

When the European powers extended their influence down the African coast, they did not have sufficient military and economic advantage to establish sovereignty over the lands. They could only set up trading outposts. However first on islands off the coast of Africa and then on the islands and coastal lowlands of the Americas, the Europeans were able to gain control of the land, often exterminating the indigenous population. In such distant territories black workers from Africa could be driven in the mines and plantations free from any constraints that could be imposed by the states, tribes, and traditions of Africa. Set apart by their servitude and their blackness, they were also removed from any rights that low-status groups within the metropolitan country might have had. Laboring on the American plantations came to embody the worst features of ancient slavery and the cash nexus.

Black chattel slavery, with the concomitant elaboration of institutional and ideological racism as its socio-political corollary, became a new type of societal formation. True, as David Brion Davis has pointed out, the institutions of New World slavery grew out of the forms of the late Middle Ages' Mediterranean slavery. (7) Regarding racism, Winthrop Jordan has shown that the pre-existing derogatory imagery of darkness, barbarism, and heathenism was adapted to formulate the psychology and doctrines of modern racism. (8) While the adaptation of these available institutional and ideological materials provided the original forms for New World slavery, as a whole the system was something distinctly novel. This novelty was chiefly conditioned by the developing capitalist relations that provided the seemingly-insatiable demand for plantation products. Accordingly, the demand for black labor under circumstances like these had to be different from any slavery that was indigenous to West Africa or had operated earlier in Europe.

Capitalism's stamp on New World slavery was sharply revealed via the slave trade that supplied the demand for black labor. Alongside the marketing of the output of slave labor, the trade in the bodies which produced these goods became a major form of merchant capitalistic enterprise in itself. Down into the Nineteenth Century the purchase of black slaves frequently was a constant cost of production. This held in extreme for parts of Brazil where it was considered more economical to work slaves to death within five to ten years and replace them with fresh purchases than to allow enough sustenance and opportunity for family living so that the slave force could be maintained by natural



Cross Section of a Slave Ship.

reproduction. (9) The latest and most-careful estimate of the total deportation of black slaves to the Americas is between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000. Up to 1810 about 7,500,000 Africans were imported — or about three times the number of Europeans immigrating in the same period. (10)

Slave trade and slave production brought wealth and power to the bourgeois merchants of Western Europe. As CLR James has summed up the situation for France: “Nearly all the industries which developed in France during the Eighteenth Century had their origin in goods or commodities destined for either the coast of Guinea or America. The capital from the slave trade fertilized them. Though the bourgeois traded in other things than slaves, upon the success or failure of the (slave) traffic everything else depends.” (11) In the case of England, Eric Williams, in Capitalism and Slavery, has detailed in terms of manufacturing, shipping, and capital accumulation how the economic development of the mother land was rooted in New World Slavery. (12) But it is more dramatic to let a contemporary Eighteenth Century economist speak for himself:

The most-approved judges of the commercial interest of these kingdoms have ever been of the opinion that our West Indian and African trades are the most nationally-beneficial of any carried on. It is also allowed on all hands that the trade to Africa is the branch which renders our American colonies and plantations so advantageous to Great Britain; that traffic only affording our planters a constant supply of Negro servants for

the culture of their lands in the produce of sugar, tobacco, rice, rum, cotton, pimento, and all plantation produce; so that the extensive employment of our shipping into and from our American colonies, the great brook of seamen consequent thereupon, and the daily bread of the most-considerable part of our British manufacturers, are owing primarily to the labor of Negroes (13)

Within the Boundaries of the United States

In the colonial period of the United States the commercial basis of all the colonies rested largely on the Atlantic trade in slave-produced commodities. The Southern colonies directly used a slave population to raise tobacco and rice for export. While the Northern colonies all had slave populations, their major links were auxiliaries to the Atlantic trade — growing provisions for the Caribbean plantations, developing a merchant marine to carry slaves to the islands and sugar to Europe. After Independence the slave production of cotton provided the base for the pre - Civil War economic take - off and industrial revolution:

It was cotton which was the most-important influence in the growth in the market size and the consequent expansion of the economy: . . . In this period of rapid growth, it was cotton that initiated the concomitant expansion in income, in the size of the domestic markets, and in the creation of social overhead investment (in the course of its role in marketing cotton) in the Northeast which were to facilitate the subsequent rapid growth of manufactures. In addition, cotton accounted for the accelerated pace of westward migration, as well as for the movement of people out of self-sufficiency into the market economy. (14)

In the territory of the United States, the elaboration of plantation slavery had some distinctive features that are worthy of attention for the light that they shed on the present. For one thing the slave system here tended to become a self-contained operation in which the demand for new slaves was met by natural increase, with the slave deficit areas of the Lower South importing black bondsmen from the Upper South. Self-containment was also defined in that there were few possibilities that a black man could achieve any other status than that of slave — involuntary servitude and blackness were almost congruent. Plantations operating under conditions of high prices for manufactured goods and easy access to their own land holdings for whites, had been forced to train black slaves as artisans and craftsmen. As one scholar concluded:

Indeed, it is hard to see how the Eighteenth Century plantation

could ever have survived if the Negro slave had not made his important contribution as an artisan in the building and other trades calling for skill in transforming raw materials into manufactured articles. The self-sufficiency of the Southern colonies necessitated by the Revolution was more successful than it could have been if the Negro slave artisan had not been developing for generations before. (15)

But skills only exceptionally led to freedom. Even the relatively-small number of what John Hope Franklin calls "quasi-free Negroes" tended to lose rights, both in the North and in the South, after the adoption of the Constitution. By way of contrast, in Latin America an extensive free black population existed alongside a large number of freshly imported slaves.

The position of the "quasi-free Negro" is one of the most-important keys to understanding later developments. Sheer economic conditions operated to prevent him from developing a secure social status. The flourishing of the cotton culture sustained a high demand for slaves at the same time that state and federal illegalization of the slave trade reduced the importation of Africans. Therefore limitations on both the numbers and prerogatives of non-slave blacks functioned to maintain the size of the slave labor force.

The completeness with which race and slavery became merged in the United States is revealed by a review of the status of blacks on the eve of the Civil War. About 89% of the national black population was slave, while in the Southern states the slave proportion was 94%. (16) The status of the small number of quasi-free Negroes was ascribed from that of the mass of their brothers in bondage. Nowhere did this group gain a secure economic position; only a few of them acquired enough property to be well off. In the countryside, by dint of hard work, a few acquired adequate farms. Most, however, survived on patches of poor soil or as rural laborers. Free blacks fared the best in Southern cities, many of them being employed as skilled artisans or tradesmen. The ability of free blacks to maintain a position in the skilled trades was dependent on the deployment of a larger number of slaves in these crafts and industrial jobs. Slave-owners provided a defense against a color bar as they protected their investment in urban slaves. However the rivalry from a growing urban white population between 1830 and 1860 forced blacks out of many of the better jobs, and in some cases out of the cities altogether. "As the black population dropped, white newcomers moved in and took over craft after craft. Occasionally to the accompaniment of violence and usually with official sanction, slave and free colored workers were shunted into the most menial and routine chores." (17)

Basic racial definitions of the slave system also gained recognition in the North, through the development of a special servile status for

blacks. During the colonial era, Northern colonies imported slaves as one means of coping with a chronic labor shortage. While most blacks were employed in menial work, many were trained in skilled trades. "So long as the pecuniary interests of a slave-holding class stood back of these artisans, the protests of white mechanics had little effect...." With emancipation in the North, matters changed. As DuBois further noted concerning Philadelphia, during the first third of the Nineteenth Century, the blacks, who had composed a major portion of all artisans, were excluded from most of the skilled trades. (18) Immigrants from Europe soon found out that, although greatly exploited themselves, they

\$100 REWARD.

Ran away from my farm, near Buena Vista P. O., Prince George's County, Maryland, on the first day of April, 1855, my servant MATHEW TURNER.

He is about five feet six or eight inches high; weighs from one hundred and sixty to one hundred and eighty pounds; he is very black, and has a remarkably thick upper lip and neck; looks as if his eyes are half closed; walks slow, and talks and laughs loud.

I will give One Hundred Dollars reward to whoever will secure him in jail, so that I get him again, no matter where taken.

MARCUS DU VAL.

BUENA VISTA P. O., MD.,
MAY 10, 1855

could still turn racism to their advantage. The badge of whiteness permitted even the lowly to use prejudice, violence, and local political influence to push blacks down into the lowest occupations. In 1850, 75% of the black workers in New York were employed in menial or unskilled positions. Within five years the situation had deteriorated to the point at which 87.5% were in these categories. (19) Northern states did not compete with slave states for black workers, even when labor shortages forced them to encourage the immigration of millions of Europeans. Through enforcement of fugitive slave laws and discouragement of free black immigration, through both legal and informal means, the North reinforced slavery's practical monopoly over blacks.

For the pre - Civil War period, then, we can conclude that there was no significant demand for black labor outside the slave system. The great demand for black workers came from the slave plantations. No effective counterweight to plantation slavery was presented by urban and industrial employment. As a matter of fact, in both North and South the position of the urban skilled black worker deteriorated during the generation prior to the Civil War. In the South the magnitude of cities and industries was limited by the political and cultural imperatives inherent in hegemony of the planter class. Whatever demand there was for black labor in Southern cities and industries was met essentially by adapting the forms of slavery to these conditions, not by creating an independent pressure for free blacks to work in these positions.

To a large extent the more-heightened form of racism in the United States grew out of the very fact that the USA was such a thoroughgoing bourgeois society, with more bourgeois equalitarianism than any other nation around. Aside from temporary indenture, which was important only through the Revolutionary era, there were no well-institutionalized formal or legal mechanisms for fixing of status among whites. Up to the Civil War the ideal of an equalitarian-yeoman society was a major socio-political factor in shaping political conditions. Therefore if the manumitted slave were not marked off by derogation of his blackness, there was no alternative but to admit him to the status of a free-born enfranchised citizen (depending on property qualifications prior to the 1830s. (20)

Under these circumstances the planter class made race as well as slavery a designation of condition. A large free black population that had full citizens' rights would have been a threat to their system. They therefore legislated limitations on the procedures for manumission and placed severe restrictions on the rights of free blacks. Low-status whites who did have citizens' rights were encouraged by the plantocracy to identify as whites and to emphasize racial distinctions so as to mark themselves off from both slave and free blacks precisely because this white group did have a legitimate place in the political process. Fear of competition from blacks, either directly or indirectly through the power of large planters, also gave the large class of non-slave-holding

whites a real stake in protecting racial distinctions. In Latin America, by contrast, the remnants of feudal traditions regarding the gradations of social ranks already provided well-established lowly positions into which free Negroes or half-castes could step without posing a threat to the functional hegemony of the slave-master class. Further, given the small number of Europeans and the great labor shortage, ex-slaves provided ancillary functions, such as clearing the frontier or raising food crops, that were necessary for the overall operation of the slave system. (21)

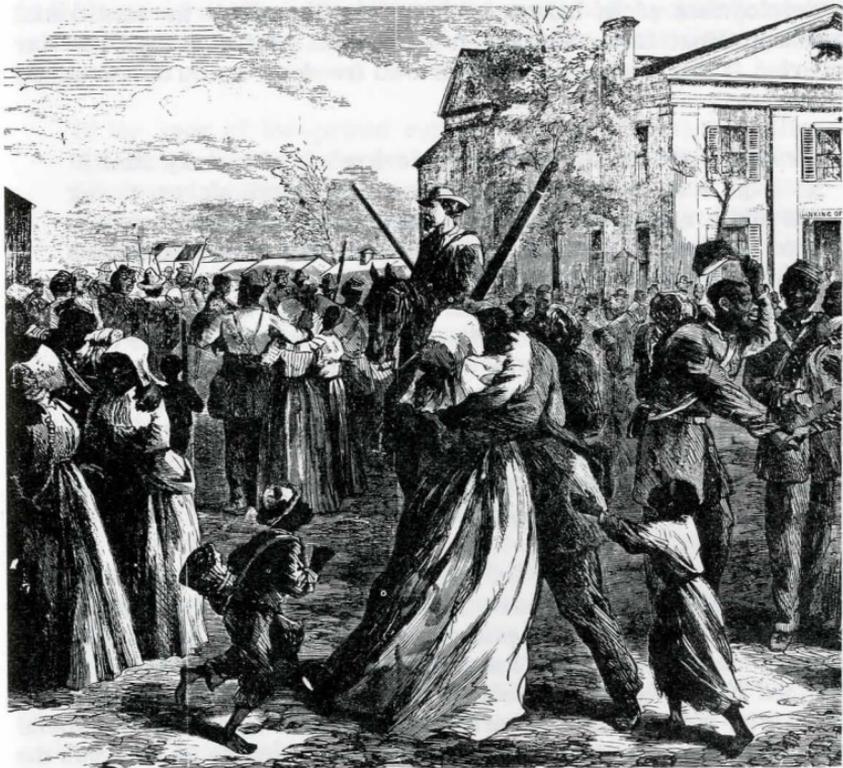
This absoluteness of racial designation, so intimately related to the character of bourgeois order in this nation, meant that racism became intertwined in the entire state system of rule. That is to say that not only were the procedures of slave control and racial derogation of the blacks embodied in the Constitution and other fundamental features of state action, but these mechanisms soon interpenetrated the general state operations for the control of certain classes of whites over other whites. Therefore, while racism was as American as apple pie, and was subscribed to in some form even by most white abolitionists, it also became a special weapon in the regional arsenal of the Southern plantocracy in their contention for a dominant position in determination of national policy. The planters' employment of racist appeals proved effective on a national basis, especially in the generation prior to the Civil War, only because an underlying acceptance of their assumptions existed in all regions. Domestically within the South, racism operated to cement the solidarity of all whites under the hegemony of the planter class — even though slavery provided the power base from which the plantocracy were able to subordinate the white yeomanry. This strategy met with success, for the intensification of racist propaganda during the ante-bellum period was accompanied by a slackening of attacks on the plantation system. In return for the security granted to the base of their power, the planters had to make some concessions to the poor whites regarding formal rights of citizenship such as extension of the franchise and legislative reapportionment; but alterations in form did not change the fundamental power relations. The racist culture of control merged into both the political apparatus and the social forms of hegemony by which white class rule was sustained. White rule was not identical with, but did mediate, the rule of the plantocracy over all of Southern society.

The Transition Era, First Phase: 1860 to World War I

So far we have been establishing a comprehension of some of the underlying contradictions that frame the control of black labor by examining their origins in the slave era. Before we turn to the present period there is another set of relationships that will provide further

conceptual illumination: the conditions that underlay the abolition of slavery. One set of factors lay in the world development of capitalism itself. The bourgeoisie's seizure of power in the French Revolution destabilized that nation's colonial regime and undermined the slave system by promulgating the doctrine of the rights of man as a universal dictum. In England, the expansion of its capitalist might into Asia gave rise to a powerful political interest counter to that of the West Indian planters; plus, the success of the industrial revolution created the material base for envisioning a liberal bourgeois order with thorough formal equality. In the United States, the demise of slavery occurred in the midst of a war that established the further course of capitalist development — whether it would proceed on a "Prussian model", with the planters playing the role of the Junkers, or the industrialists and little men on the make would independently establish their hegemony through an entrepreneurially-oriented state.

The other source of abolition lay in the role of the black people in the Americas. Denied the right to reconstruct their African societies,



Returning soldiers are discharged at Little Rock, Arkansas.

they strove to survive and reconstitute themselves as a people. Amidst the plantations and the black quarters of the cities, a new community was formed. (22) At crucial points these black communities transcended the need for survival and struck out for liberation. While sabotage, escapes, and uprisings were consistent themes of New World slavery, the key move was the successful revolt of the black Jacobins in Haiti under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture, which set an example for black and other oppressed people from that time on. By winning their freedom and defeating the most-powerful armies in the world, these revolutionarirs not only forced changes in the relative relations of the forces in Europe, but also undermined much essential confidence in the continuing viability of the slave system as a whole. It was little accident that both the British and the US abolition of the slave trade followed shortly on the heels of the Haitian revolution.

In the United States, where a large white population was always close at hand, there were few important slave revolts, and even those were invariably put down before they could become well established. Black self-determination took the form of day-to-day slave resistance, and the development of an independent political line within the abolitionist movement. Most important, the role of black people in the Civil War converted it into a struggle for their own freedom. As Du Bois cogently summarizes :

Freedom for the slave was a logical result of a crazy attempt to wage war in the midst of four million black slaves, trying the while sublimely to ignore the interests of those slaves in the outcome of the fighting. Yet these slaves had enormous power in their hands. Simply by stopping work, they could threaten the Confederacy with starvation. By walking into the Federal camps, they showed to doubting Northerners the easy possibility of using them as workers and as servants, as spies, as farmers, and finally as fighting soldiers. And not only using them thus, but by the same gesture depriving their enemies of their use in just these fields. It was the fugitive slave who made the slaveholders face the alternative of surrendering to the North or to the Negroes. (23)

The Civil War destroyed the Southern plantocracy as a major contender for the control of national power. For a decade during Reconstruction, the freedmen struggled to establish themselves as an independent yeomanry on the lands they had worked for generations. However both South and North agreed that blacks were to be subservient workers — held in that role now by the workings of “natural” economic and social laws rather than the laws of slavery. The Compromise of 1877 was the final political blow to black Reconstruction, remanding to the dominant white Southerners the regulation of the black labor force. (24)

Abolition of slavery did not mean substantive freedom to the black worker. He was basically confined to a racially-defined agrarian labor status in which he was more exploited than any class of whites, even the landless poor. White land-owners extracted an economic surplus from the labor of blacks through a variety of arrangements, including peonage, wage labor, sharecropping, and rent tenancy. Even the black owners of land were often dependent on white patronage for access to the small plots of inferior soil to which they usually held title. Profits predicated on low wages or onerous share arrangements were often augmented by long-term indebtedness at usurious rates of interest for advances of provisions and supplies. Many a sharecropper and laborer would not realize any appreciable money income for years on end.

The methods of labor control over the black peasantry did not greatly raise net labor costs over those of the slavery era. In both eras the black masses received only enough to survive and reproduce. Pressure on profits came from falling commodity prices rather than from rising labor costs. "The keynote of the Black Belt is debt . . ." wrote W. E. B. DuBois at the turn of the century. "Not commercial credit, but debt in the sense of continued inability of the mass of the population to make income cover expenses." Of conditions in Dougherty County, Georgia he wrote :

In the year of low-priced cotton, 1898, of 300 tenant families 175 ended their year's work in debt to the extent of \$14,000; 50 cleared nothing; and the remaining 75 made a total profit of \$1600 . . . In more-prosperous years the situation is far better — but on the average the majority of tenants end the year even or in debt, which means they work for board and clothes. (25)

From the obverse side white planters in racist language gave their supporting testimony to this extra economic exploitation of the black peasants. One Alabama landlord declared: "White labor is totally unsuited to our methods, our manners, and our accommodations. No other laborers (than the Negro) of whom I have any knowledge would be so cheerful or so contented on four pounds of meat and a peck of meal a week, in a little log cabin 14 by 16 feet, with cracks in it large enough to afford free passage to a large-size cat." From Mississippi a planter spoke to the same theme: "Give me the nigger every time. The nigger will never 'strike' as long as you give him plenty to eat and half clothe him: He will live on less and do more hard work, when properly managed, than any other class or race of people." (26)

Black agriculturists were important to the economic development of the South and the nation. Raw cotton production tripled between 1870 and 1910. Consumption of cotton by domestic manufacturers increased six-fold from 800,000 bales in 1870 to 4,800,000 bales in 1910. Cotton continued to be the United States' leading export commodity in global

trade, still accounting for a quarter of the value of all merchandise exports on the eve of World War I — in spite of the fact that prices had decreased greatly through international competition as the European powers encouraged cotton production in the overseas areas in which they were augmenting their imperial power. Such rapid growth of cotton production (and that of other farm commodities) implied a great demand for black workers in the fields. Characteristically blacks were engaged on the cotton plantations, especially those with richer lands. The form of engagement was roughly divided between sharecropping, wage labor, and rental tenancy. Between 1890 and 1910 the number of black men in agriculture increased by over half a million, or 31%. During this entire period three out of five black men were employed in agriculture.

Maintaining the semi-servile status of the black labor force required the augmentation of color-caste distinctions. Southern slavery, after all, had been more than just an economic arrangement: it was a cultural system that provided a wide range of norms congruent with plantation discipline. Slave status had served as a line of demarcation throughout the society. Therefore emancipation not only changed the economic form of planter control, but also left gaps in the social superstructure that reinforced it. Under these conditions the strengthening of racialism per se in all cultural arrangements became an imperative for any hope of continuance of the planters' hegemony over Southern society. Since racism had pervaded all major facets of social and political control, much of the further elaboration of color-caste distinctions arose in the course of the Southern ruling class's struggles to keep the rest of the whites in line.

The road to the establishment of this new system of order in the South was by no means a smooth one. Abrogation of the slave system had made possible some new types of mobility among both blacks and whites, bringing about changes in the forms of inter-racial conflict and class conflict. Blacks were now able to move geographically, even in the face of continued legal and extra-legal restraints. The migration that took place was mainly a westerly one within the South. Inside the black community class mobility developed through the emergence of a small middle class. At the same time, there now opened up to poorer whites areas that had formerly been the preserve of slavery. During the pre-Civil War era no white would compete with a slave for his position on the plantation. Albeit when planters and slaveless small farmers did contend for land, as frequently occurred, the black slave was indirectly involved. With emancipation, racial rivalry for the soil became overt. Freedmen struggled to gain land, sometimes as owners but more frequently as indebted tenants. At the same time, many white smallholders, forced out from infertile and worn soil, sought many of the same lands. After the Civil War the white farmers increased in numbers at a greater rate than the blacks. By 1900, even as tenants, the whites were in the majority. Blacks moved from a non-competitive

status in slavery (or perhaps better "concealed competition between the bond and the free"), as Rupert Vance has pointed out, to a condition of overt inter-racial competition. "As slaves Negroes were objects of race prejudice; as a new competitive group struggling for status and a place on the land Negroes found themselves potential objects of mass pressure and group conflict." (27)

Transformations also took place within the Southern ruling class. Ownership of land tended to shift out of the hands of the old planter class into those of merchants, lawyers, and in some cases Northern interests, removing many of the impediments to land-owners' making their decisions more nakedly, on the basis of pure entrepreneurial calculations. This partial unfreezing of labor and capital resources provided some important pre-conditions for the industrialization of the South. Nevertheless, the ideal for black labor in the eyes of dominant white groups was that of a contented agrarian peasantry. Paternalistic members of the Southern elite spoke of satisfied workers controlled by fair but rigidly-enforced rules. "Let the Negro become identified with and attached to the soil upon which he lives, and he himself, the land-owner, and the country alike will be advanced by his labor." (28)

In the social and political realms the conflicts inherent in the black peasantry's subjugation became intertwined with the conflicts inherent in the subordination of any potential political power in the hands of the white smallholders and landless. As things turned out, blacks were to suffer both from the control of the propertied and from the competition of the poor. The political process provided a major means by which this was carried out. "It is one of the paradoxes of Southern history," writes C. Vann Woodward, "that political democracy for the white man and racial discrimination for the black were often products of the same dynamics." The imperatives of preserving class rule supplied the basis of the paradox: "It took a lot of ritual and Jim Crow to bolster the rule of white supremacy in the bosom of a white man working for a black man's wage." (29) Functionally the poorer whites were permitted to influence the formal political process only under conditions that would not undermine the essential power and economic control of the ruling class. The execution of this strategy was completed during the defeat of the Populist movement in the 1890s by excluding the black people from politics and by heightening the color-caste distinctions through an extension of Jim Crow laws and customs. Since the black people had already been defeated through Redemption 20 years before, the moves to disfranchise black people at the turn of the century had as "the real question... which whites would be supreme". Ruling circles channeled disfranchisement to their own ends "as they saw in it an opportunity to establish in power 'the intelligence and wealth of the South' which could of course 'govern in the interests of all classes'". (30) Many whites as well as blacks were denied the ballot, and the substantive differences expressed in the political process were delimited to a narrower range.

Inter-class conflicts among whites were much displaced by inter-racial conflicts, and the hegemony of larger property interests was secured.

The agrarian designation of the black masses was reinforced by the lack of competition for their labor from other sectors of the economy. The Southern demand for factory help, except for unskilled work, was essentially a demand for white labor. The textile industry, the primary industry of the New South, was marked off as a preserve of the white worker. The mythology that black workers were incapable of measuring up to the conditions in the textile mills was reinforced by the rationale that the domestic peace required that white poor have some kind of economic preserve, free from competition. (31)

Thus when the industrialization of the South began about 1880 and attained remarkable proportions by the outbreak of the (First) World War, it had comparatively little significance for the Negro agricultural workers.... The poor whites took the cotton mills as their own; and with the exception of sweeping, scrubbing, and the like in cotton factories, there was virtually no work for the Negroes in the plants. They were, therefore, compelled to labor on the farms, the only other work that was available. (32)

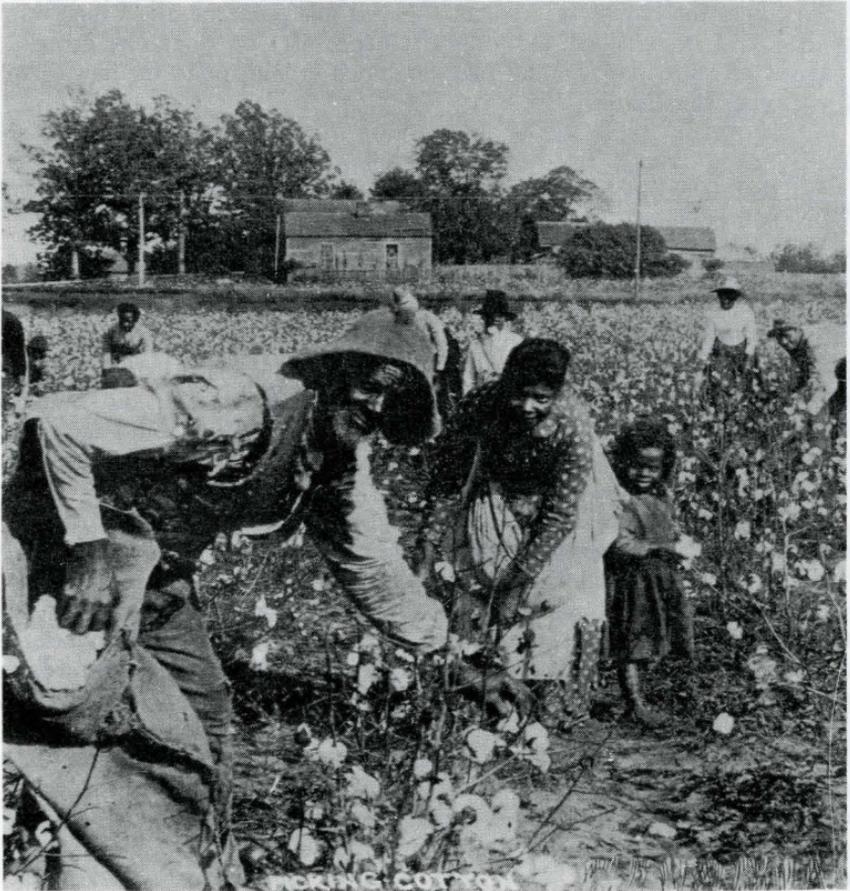
The rather-considerable increase in industrial employment of blacks between 1890 and 1910 was concentrated in railroading, lumbering, and coal mining — that is, in non-factory-type operations with these three industries often located in rural areas. Lumbering and allied industries could almost have been considered an extension of agriculture, as the workers shifted back and forth from one to the other.

Outside of agriculture the vast bulk of black workers were to be found either in domestic and personal service or in unskilled menial fields that were known in the South as "Negro jobs". In the cities the growth occupations were chiefly porters, draymen, laundresses, seamstresses. However non-propertied whites did begin to crowd into many skilled positions that had been the black man's preserve under slavery. Black mechanics and artisans, who had vastly outnumbered Southern whites as late as 1865, fought a losing battle for these jobs down to 1890, when they were able to stabilize a precarious minority position in some of the construction trades. (33)

Exclusion of black workers from industry was not based on rational calculation regarding the characteristics of the labor supply. Contrary to all the racist rationales about incapacity and lack of training, most industrial firms considered blacks good workers. When the employers were questioned specifically about the comparative quality of black and white workers in their plants, the majority held that they were equally satisfactory. The Chattanooga Tradesman in 1889 and 1891, on its own, and again in 1901 in co-operation with the Atlanta University Sociology

Department, made surveys of firms employing skilled and semi-skilled blacks. The Tradesman's editor concluded from the results that "the Negro, as a free laborer, as a medium skilled and common worker, is by no means a 'failure'...he is a remarkable success." In the 1901 survey over 60% of the employers held that their black workers were as good as or better than their white workers. (34)

Northern ruling classes were quick to accept those conditions in the South that stabilized the national political system and provided the raw commodities for their mills and markets. Therefore they supported the establishment of a subservient black peasantry, the regional rule of the Southern propertied interests, and the racial oppression that made both of these things possible. The dominant Northern interests shared the ideal of the smooth kind of racial subjugation projected by the paternalistic Southern elite, but they went along with what proved necessary. "Cotton brokers of New York and Philadelphia, and cotton



manufacturers of New England...knew full well the importance of bringing discipline to the Southern labor force. When theories of Negro equality resulted in race conflict, and conflict in higher prices of raw cotton, manufacturers were inclined to accept the point of view of the Southern planter rather than that of the New England zealot." (35) Northern businessmen who supported black education in the South had in mind a system that would encourage the students to stay in rural areas and would train them for hard work and menial positions. (36)

Thus, through a process that Harvard's Paul Buck approvingly called The Road to Reunion and Howard's Rayford Logan scathingly labeled The Betrayal of the Negro, national political, business, and intellectual elites came to define race as a Southern question for which they would not assume any leadership. By 1900 Southern sympathizer and Northern anti-slavery man alike agreed on the rightfulness of the subjugation of the black man. It was accepted as a necessary condition for order in the American state. And order was most essential to the extraordinary expansion of the industrial system. Beyond that point the black man was ignored and considered a "nothing", especially on Northern ground. Reasons of state and racism had combined to legitimize the new form of agrarian thralldom.

In the North itself during this period there was minimal work for blacks, even though the Northern economy was labor-starved to the extent that it promoted and absorbed a European immigration of over 15,000,000 persons. Blacks were not only shut off from the new jobs, but lost many of the jobs they had traditionally held. The Irish largely displaced them in street paving, the Slavs displaced them in brickyards, and all groups moved in on the once-black stronghold of dining-room waiting. Study the chapters on economic life in Leon Litwack's North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 and Leslie Fishel's unfortunately unpublished dissertation "The North and the Negro, 1865-1900: A Study in Race Discrimination". (37) They both read as if they are describing the same situation. If there is a difference, it is that Fishel describes a greater decline in status.

The reasons for this displacement of black workers in the North are complex. Northern capital engaged Southern workers, both black and white, by exporting capital to the South rather than by encouraging any great migration, thus enabling itself to exploit the low wage structure of the economically-backward South while avoiding any disturbance in its precarious political or economic balance. Sometimes racism would operate directly, as when the National Cash Register Company (Dayton, Ohio) laid off 300 black janitors because the management wanted to have white farm boys start at the bottom and work their way up. (38) In addition, job competition often led white workers to see blacks, rather than employers, as the enemy. At least 50 strikes, North and South, in which white workers protested the employment of blacks have been recorded for the years 1881 to 1900. (39) There was a minor

counter-theme of class solidarity which existed to a certain extent in the Knights of Labor and was reaffirmed by the Industrial Workers of the World, but as the job-conscious American Federation of Labor gained dominance over the union movement, racial exclusion became the operative practice, with the only major exception occurring among the United Mine Workers. (40) (It was actually more common in the South than in the North for black workers to hold a position so strong in particular industries that unions had to take them into account; in these instances they were generally organized in separate locals.) Episodes in which blacks were used as strikebreakers contributed to the unions' hostility toward blacks, but it should be added that racism seriously distorted the perceptions of white workers. Whites were used as scabs more frequently and in larger numbers, but the saliency of racial categories was able to make the minority role of blacks stand out more sharply, so that in many white workers' minds the terms "scab" and "Negro" were synonymous. (41)

The course of national development of black people was set within the framework of their concentration in the Southern countryside. During Reconstruction a truly-heroic effort was made by the black masses to establish a self-sufficient yeomanry on the land. Smashing of this movement set back the progression of independent black militancy more than a generation. New forms of embryonic nationalism emerged or re-emerged. Exodus groups tried with a certain success to establish themselves on the land in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Indiana. Pan-Africanism appeared once again with interest in colonization. But the major expression took place in a muted form through the role of Booker T. Washington, who, as August Meier has shown so well (42), had his base in the black people's desire for racial solidarity, their struggle for land and for the preservation of crafts, and the aspirations of a rising bourgeoisie in the cities which derived its livelihood from the black masses. Washington's social and political accommodations allowed the movement to exist and even gain support from Northern and Southern ruling circles. At the same time Washington's withdrawal from socio-political struggle reflected the weak post-Reconstruction position of black people in the agrarian South. Militant forms of black national liberation would not re-emerge until a black proletariat had developed in the urban centers.

The Transition Era, Second Phase: World War I to World War II

The new equilibrium of racial regulation that had stabilized around tenancy agriculture as the dominant force of black exploitation received its first major disturbance from the impact of World War I. A certain irony inheres in the condition that imperialism's cataclysm should begin the break-up of agrarian thralldom within the United States. The

War's effect on black people took place through the mediation of the market-place, rather than through any shake-up of political relations. Hostilities in Europe placed limitations on American industry's usual labor supply by shutting off the flow of immigration at the very time the demand for labor was increasing sharply due to a war boom and military mobilization. Competition with the Southern plantation system for black labor became one of the major means of resolving this crisis of labor demand.

The black labor reserve in the countryside that had existed essentially as a potential source of the industrial proletariat now became a very active source. Whereas in the past this industrial reserve had not been tapped in any important way except by rural-based operations such as lumbering, with the advent of the War the industrial system as a whole began drawing on it. This new demand for black workers was to set in motion three key developments: first, the dispersion of black people out of the South into Northern urban centers; second, the formation of a distinct black proletariat in the urban centers at the very heart of the corporate-capitalist process of production; third, the break-up of tenancy agriculture in the South. World War II was to repeat the process in a magnified form and to place the stamp of irreversibility upon it.

Migration out of the countryside started in 1915 and swept up to a human tide by 1917. The major movement was to Northern cities, so that between 1910 and 1920 the black population increased in Chicago from 44,000 to 109,000; in New York from 92,000 to 152,000; in Detroit from 6,000 to 41,000; and in Philadelphia from 84,000 to 134,000. That decade there was a net increase of 322,000 in the number of Southern born blacks living in the North, exceeding the aggregate increase of the preceding 40 years. A secondary movement took place to Southern cities, especially those with shipbuilding and heavy industry.

Labor demand in such industries as steel, meat-packing, and autos was the key stimulant to black migration. The total number of wage-earners in manufacturing went from 7,000,000 in 1914 to around 9,000,000 in 1919 — an increase twice that of any preceding five-year period. A survey of the experience of the major employers of black labor in Chicago reported that "Inability to obtain competent white workers was the reason given in practically every instance for the large number of Negroes employed since 1914." (43) A contemporary US Government report stated:

All of these employment managers and the higher executives of Northern industry are sadly worried by their labor problem. They feel that things are going from bad to worse; that even wage increases can avail little; they hope for national labor conscription for the period of the War as the only adequate solution to their problem, and are eager for Federal aid....

The majority of executives interviewed were favorable to the experiment with Negro employment in the North, and were sympathetic to suggestions concerning selection, training, housing, and recreation for the newcomer. (44)

The profit-maximization imperatives of Northern capitalist firms for the first time outweighed the socio-political reasons for leaving the Southern planters' control over black labor undisturbed and without any serious competition.

Labor agents sent South by railroad and steel companies initiated the migration by telling of high wages and offering transportation subsidy. In some cases whole trainloads of workers were shipped North. Though American firms had employed labor recruiters for work among the European peasantries for decades, this was the first time they went forth in any strength to bring black peasants to the city. Many Southern localities tried to protect their labor stocks by legislating proscriptions on labor agents and charging them prohibitive license fees, but on the whole recruiters played only a secondary role. (45) A more important impetus to migration came from the Northern-based black press, most notably the Chicago Defender, and above all from the letters and the reports of blacks who had already moved north. Successful employment served as its own advertisement, and better wages outside the South proved very attractive. During the summer of 1917 male wage-earners in the North were making \$2.00 to \$2.50 a day while the money wages on Mississippi farms ranged from 75¢ to \$1.25. (46) Early migrations to Northern cities had been from the Upper South. Now blacks came in from all over, with the Deep South having the heaviest representation. In many cotton areas boll-weevil invasions destroyed the crop, acting as a push off the land at the same time Northern industry was providing a pull.

There was a temporary slackening of the demand for black labor when post-war demobilization caused heavy unemployment. In Chicago, where as many as 10,000 black laborers were out of work, the local Association of Commerce wired to Southern chambers of commerce: "Are you in need of Negro labor? Large surplus here, both returned soldiers and civilian Negroes ready to go to work." (47) In Detroit in 1921, black unemployment rates were five times as great as those of native white workers, and twice as great as those of the foreign-born. (48) But a strong economic recovery at the very time that restrictive immigration laws went into effect brought a second great migration out of the South in the years 1922 to 1924. The magnitude of this second movement has been estimated at slightly under a half-million persons, and may have been greater than that of the wartime movement. (49) The employers who already had a black sector in their work force were able to tap this supply with much less trouble and cost than had been incurred a few years before. As William Graves, personal assistant

to Julius Rosenwald, told the Chicago Union League Club: "The Negro permanency in industry was no longer debatable." (50)

The tremendous social dislocations created by the mobilization and the wartime economic boom heightened inter-racial tensions and laid the groundwork for over 20 race riots that occurred on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. Careful studies of the two major race riots in Northern industrial centers (East Saint Louis in 1917 and Chicago in 1919) reveal the tremendous friction that had developed between white and black workers. (51) These hostilities were not simply an outgrowth of race prejudice, for in both cases employers had fostered competition for jobs, especially by employing blacks as strikebreakers. Conflict between working-class whites and working-class blacks was analogous in a way to the previously-discussed racial competition among tenants and smallholders for land in the South. When the conflict erupted into mass violence, the dominant whites sat back and resolved the crises in a manner that assured their continued control over both groups.

The first feature of the program that Northern industry developed in relation to the inter-racial conflicts that the riots evidenced was that the permanency of black workers in the North was conclusively established. Management accepted its interest in guaranteeing minimal survival conditions of housing, education, et cetera to perpetuate this labor force. Even during slack times business had to maintain a certain continuity of employment, especially in those jobs that functionally became "Negro jobs". Economically, even in a recession, long-run costs are reduced if something of a permanent work force is retained, for when good times return the recruitment and training of an entirely new labor force can require a great monetary outlay. (52) Thus, as the 1920s wore on, while there was a virtual cessation of articles regarding the employment of blacks in business-oriented and welfare publications, the fact that blacks would be employed was now accepted. The shifting of racial stereotypes to fit the new situation was indicated by a business spokesman who reported that the black man "has lost his slovenliness, lazy habits, gambling, and liquor-drinking propensities". He noted that plant superintendents in heavy industry had come to consider black workers especially tractable. "They found Negroes on the whole far more adjustable than the foreign-born. They used a common language, were loyal in times of stress, and were more co-operative in matters such as stock purchases, buying insurance, et cetera." (53)

At the same time, it has to be understood that black workers were employed on management's own terms. Sometimes these terms would involve the deliberate use of blacks to divide the work force. As a case in point, International Harvester integrated the hiring of blacks into its open-shop policies. Part of its strategy was to keep any nationality group from becoming too numerous in any one plant lest they become cohesive in labor conflicts. The decision on hiring was left up to the individual plant superintendents, some keeping their shops lily-white,

others hiring large numbers of black workers. Harvester's management was caught up in a contradiction between its need for black workers, especially in the disagreeable twine mill and foundry, and its desire to keep them below 20% at any one plant. (54)

A somewhat-different approach was taken by Ford Motor Company. In the 1921 depression Henry Ford decided to maintain the black work force at the gigantic River Rouge plant in the same proportion as blacks in the total population of the Detroit area. The great majority of blacks at the River Rouge plant were employed in hot, heavy jobs in the rolling mills and foundry, but it was company policy to place a few in every major production unit and even allow a certain amount of upgrading to skilled positions. At the other Ford plants, as at the other major auto companies, black workers were confined to hard unskilled jobs. But the job concessions at Rouge became a mechanism by which Ford was able to gain considerable influence over Detroit's black community. Hiring was channeled through some preferred black ministers who agreed with Henry Ford on politics and industrial relations. Company black personnel officials were active in Republican politics and in anti-union campaigns. Ford had learned early a racial tactic that is widely employed today — that of trading concessions, relaxing economic subordination in order to increase political subordination. (55)

In industry generally the black worker was almost always deployed in job categories that effectively became designated as "Negro jobs". This classification, openly avowed in the South, was often claimed in the North to be merely the way things worked out through application of uniform standards. The superintendent of a Kentucky plough factory expressed the Southern view:

Negroes do work white men won't do, such as common labor; heavy, hot, and dirty work; pouring crucibles; work in the grinding room; and so on. Negroes are employed because they are cheaper The Negro does a different grade of work and makes about 10¢ an hour less. (56)

There was not a lot of contrast in the words of coke works foremen at a Pennsylvania steel mill: "They are well fitted for this hot work, and we keep them because we appreciate this ability in them." "The door machines and the jam cutting are the most undesirable; it is hard to get white men to do this kind of work." (57) The placement of workers in separate job categories along racial lines was so marked in Detroit that in response to a survey many employers stated that they could not make a comparison between the wages of whites and blacks because they were not working on the same jobs. (58) In the North there was some blurring of racial distinctions, but they remained strong enough to set the black labor force off quite clearly. While the pay for the same job in the same plant was usually equivalent, when blacks came

to predominate in a specific job classification, the rate on it would tend to lag. White and black workers were often hired in at the same low job classification; however for the whites advancement was often possible, while the blacks soon bumped into a job ceiling. In terms of day-to-day work, white labor was given a systematic advantage over black labor and a stake in the racist practices.

Northern management's public equal-opportunity posture to preserve their black work force was expressed with clarity at a 1920 conference of officials from five Chicago firms, employing over 6,000 workers, and an official of the Chicago Urban League :

All of these labor managers expressed the opinion that there would be no reduction in the force of Negro employees. They cited the shortage of men for heavy labor, due to the lack of immigration from abroad, and all said that their companies were eager to employ more Negroes. Equal pay for the same work to whites and to Negroes was given as general practice. General satisfaction with Negro labor was expressed, and the ability of their Negro workers is equal, they said, to that of white workers of corresponding education. All mentioned the advantage, as compared with various immigrant groups, of a common language, enabling all foremen and officers to speak directly with the men. No discrimination in use of restaurants, sanitary facilities, et cetera was reported. All testified that Negroes were given the same opportunities as white workers for advancement to higher positions. The fact that a smaller percentage of Negroes are to be found in the higher positions is due, they said, to the fact that a smaller proportion are as well educated. (59)

The amazing thing about this meeting is that if the references to the immigrants are deleted it has the sound of similar sessions that are held today — half a century later. (60)

In the South, where four-fifths of the nation's black population still lived at the end of the 1920s, the situation of black labor was to all appearances essentially unchanged. The number of black men engaged in Southern industry grew during this decade only 45% as fast as the number of whites. Black workers were concentrated in stagnant or declining plants, such as sawmills, coal mines, and cigar and tobacco factories. The increased hiring of blacks in such places was chiefly a reflection of the fact that the jobs had no future and the employers were not able to attract white workers. Black employment in textiles was severely limited, as in South Carolina, where state law forbade blacks to work in the same room, use the same stairway, or even share the same factory window as white textile workers. (61) Industry in the South, as far as black workers were concerned, still offered little



competition to the dominance of agrarian tenancy.

Beneath the surface, however, significant changes were taking place in the rural South. While as late as the mid-1930s Charles S. Johnson could write of a cotton county in Alabama that "The plantation technique on the side of administration was most effective in respect to discipline and policing, and this technique has survived more or less despite the formal abolition of slavery." (62), this state of affairs was then being undermined. Cotton cultivation was moving westward, leaving many blacks in the Southeast without a market crop. Out in the new cotton lands in Texas and Oklahoma whites provided a much larger proportion of the tenants and sharecroppers. By 1930 a slight decrease was seen in the number of black farm operators and laborers. Later, the great depression of the 1930s accelerated this trend as the primary market for agricultural commodities collapsed and the acreage in cotton was halved. Black tenants were pushed off land in far greater proportions than whites. New Deal agricultural programs were very important in displacing sharecroppers and tenants, since they subsidized reductions in acreage. In the early government-support programs landlords tended to monopolize subsidy payments, diverting much of them out of tenants' pockets. When the regulations were changed in the tenants' favor, the

landowner had an incentive to convert the tenants to wage laborers or dismiss them altogether so as to get the whole subsidy. (63) The great depression marked the first drastic decline in the demand for black peasants since their status had been established after the Civil War.

In 1940 there were 650,000 fewer black farm operators and laborers than there had been a decade earlier — representing a one-third drop in the total. The push out of the countryside helped maintain a small net rate of migration to the North. More significantly, however, during the depression decade a high rate of black movement to the city kept on while the rate of white urbanization slackened greatly.

Although the great majority of black people remained in the rural South, we have dealt primarily with the character of the demand for black workers in the course of their becoming established directly in the urban industrial economy. This initial process was to form the matrix into which the ever-increasing numbers of black workers were to be fitted. (64) As the size of the black population in big cities grew, "Negro jobs" became roughly institutionalized into an identifiable black sub-labor market within the larger metropolitan labor market. The culture of control that was embodied in the regulative systems which managed the black ghettos, moreover, provided an effective, although less-rigid, variation of the Jim Crow segregation that continued with hardly any change in the South. Although the economic base of black tenancy was collapsing, its reciprocal superstructure of political and social controls remained the most-powerful force shaping the place of blacks in society. The propertied and other groups that had a vested interest in the special exploitation of the black peasantry were still strong enough to maintain their hegemony over matters concerning race. At the same time, the variation of Jim Crow that existed in the North was more than simply a carry-over from the agrarian South. These ghetto controls served the class function for industrial society of politically and socially setting off that section of the proletariat that was consigned to the least-desirable employment. This racial walling off not only was accomplished by direct ruling-class actions, but also was mediated through an escalating reciprocal process in which the hostility and competition of the white working class was stimulated by the growth of the black proletariat and in return operated as an agent in shaping the new racial controls.

The prolonged depression of the 1930s that threw millions out of work severely tested the position of blacks in the industrial economy. Two somewhat contradictory results stood out for this period. First, whites were accorded racial preference as a greatly disproportionate share of unemployment was placed on black workers. Second, despite erosion due to the unemployment differential, the black sub-sectors of the urban labor markets remained intact.

In the first years of the slump, black unemployment rates ran about two-thirds greater than white unemployment rates. As the depression

wore on, the relative position of the black labor force declined so that by the end of the decade it had proportionately twice as many on relief or unemployed in the Mid-Atlantic States, and two and a half times as many in the North Central States. In the Northern cities only half the black men had regular full-time employment. In the larger cities, for every four black men in full-time regular employment there was one engaged in government-sponsored emergency relief. The differential in the South was not as great, for much of the unemployment there was disguised by marginal occupations on the farms.

The rationing out of unemployment operated in such a way as to reinforce the demarcation of "Negro jobs". Blacks were dismissed in higher proportions from the better positions. In Chicago they were displaced from professional and managerial occupations at a rate five times that of whites. The displacement rate from clerical, skilled, and semi-skilled jobs was three times larger, while from unskilled and service jobs it was down to twice that of whites. As a result the total percentage of skilled and white-collar workers in the black labor force declined to half its former proportion, and the servant and personal service sector expanded again. Nationally, blacks lost a third of the jobs they had held in industry, declining from 7.3% to 5.1% of the total manufacturing employment. In the South the continuous unemployment even made white workers bid for those jobs in the tobacco industry that for generations had been recognized as "Negro jobs". An example from Northern industry: International Harvester no longer had a dire need for black workers, and the company let them slip off from 28% to 19% in the twine mill, and 18% to 10% at the McCormick Works. (65)

The limited openings available to black job-seekers were in precisely those fields that were defined as "Negro jobs". Therefore, in the urban areas, young white workers with less than a seventh-grade education had a higher rate of unemployment than blacks. With grade-school and high-school diplomas, however, the whites' chances for jobs increased markedly while blacks' chances actually declined. In general increased age and experience did not improve the black worker's position in the labor market.

On the eve of World War II, when defense production really began to stimulate the economy, the number of jobs increased rapidly. At first, however, it was almost as if the black unemployed had to stand aside while the whites went to work. In April 1940, 22% of the blacks (about 1,250,000 persons) were unemployed, as were 17.7% of the white labor force. By October, employment had increased by 2,000,000 jobs, and white unemployment had declined to 13%, while black unemployment remained at the same level. Firms with tremendous labor shortages still abided by their racial definitions of jobs and refused to take on available black workers. In September 1941 a US Government survey found that of almost 300,000 job openings, over half were restricted to whites. In Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, 80% of the openings were thus

restricted. (66)

Military mobilization of much of the existing labor force and an almost 20% growth in non-farm employment from 32,000,000 in 1940 to 40,000,000 in 1942 were the pre-conditions necessary to enlarge the demand for black labor. While the President's creation of the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) under pressure from black organizations helped open up some doors, it was the logic of the labor market that shook the racial status quo. By 1942, management-oriented publications were dealing with the question of employing black workers — a topic they had not considered since the mid-1920s.

The American Management Association told its members: "As some shortages develop for which there is no adequate supply of labor from the usual sources, management is forced to look elsewhere. It is then that the Negro looms large as a reservoir of motive power — a source which management has hitherto given only a few furtive, experimental pokes with a long pole." Once more surveys were conducted which showed that most employers consider black workers as efficient as whites. Management reiterated statements about non-discrimination when production conditions forced them to change their racial hiring practices. Fortune magazine consoled its executive readers that their personal racism need not be violated: "Theoretically, management should have fewer objections to hiring colored labor than any other part of the industrial team. The employer seldom has social contact with his workers anyway, and his primary concern is production efficiency and satisfactory investment return." (67)

Nationally, the demand for black labor was tremendous. In the spring of 1942 it composed 2.5% to 3% of the war-production work force, and by the fall of 1944 this proportion had risen to 8.3%. These million and a half black war workers were concentrated in the areas of the most stringent labor shortage. Fourteen industrial centers accounted for almost half of these war workers, and of these centers only one was located in the South and only two were border cities. In areas of acute labor shortage, the absence of any white reserve of labor gave blacks much greater access to war work than in labor surplus areas. Black migration was a necessary condition for this employment, and the movement of the families out of the Southern countryside and small towns was accelerated.

The vast demand for labor in general, that had to turn itself into a demand for black labor, could only be accomplished by way of a great expansion of the black sectors of metropolitan labor markets. Training programs for upgrading to skilled and semi-skilled jobs were opened up, at first in the North and later in the South. By 1943-1944, 35% of pre-employment trainees in shipbuilding courses and 29% in aircraft were blacks. World War I had established a space for black laborers as unskilled workers in heavy industry. During World War II this space was enlarged to include a number of semi-skilled and single-skilled

jobs in many industries. (68)

World War II marked the most-dramatic improvement in economic status of black people that has ever taken place in the urban industrial economy. The income of black workers increased twice as fast as that of whites. Occupationally, blacks bettered their positions in all of the preferred occupations. The biggest improvement was brought about by the migration from South to North (a net migration of 1,600,000 blacks between 1940 and 1950). However within both sections the relative proportion of blacks within skilled and semi-skilled occupations grew. In clerical and lower-level professional work, labor shortages in the government bureaucracies created a necessity for a tremendous black upgrading into posts hitherto lily-white.

During the era between the two World Wars the national aspirations of blacks worked themselves out on the base of their new material conditions — that is, those of their becoming an urban people whose masses were proletarians. Conflicting tendencies beset this movement at every stage. The dominant white society usually followed the strategy of denying the very existence of its peoplehood. The black community was considered a pathological form rather than something valid in itself. Whenever the black community did thrust itself forward, the tactics of management shifted to a balance of naked repression with co-optive channeling. Within the community there was a constant contention as to which of the class forces would dominate — the black bourgeoisie, that sector of the black working class operating under the dominance of white trade-union organizations, or a nationally-based black working class.

The greatest organized expression of black nationalism occurred in the Garvey Back-to-Africa Movement after 1920. As Harry Haywood has so-trenchantly characterized this broad mass development, it was conditioned by the convergence of two class developments :

On the one hand it was the trend of the recent migrants from the peasant South The membership of these organizations by and large was composed of the new, as yet non-integrated Negro proletarians; recent migrants from the cotton fields, who had not yet shaken the dust of the plantation from their heels and remained largely peasants in outlook. Embittered and disillusioned by post-war terror and unemployment, they saw in the Garvey scheme of a Negro nation in Africa a way out to the realization of their deep-grounded yearnings for land and freedom On the other hand, Garveyism reflected the ideology of the Negro petty bourgeoisie, their abortive attempt at hegemony in the Negro movement. It was the trend of the small property-holder: the shopkeepers, pushed to the wall, ruined or threatened with ruin by the ravages of the crisis; the frustrated and unemployed Negro professionals — doctors

and lawyers with impoverished clientele, storefront preachers, poverty-stricken students—in sum those elements of the middle class closest to the Negro laboring people and hence affected most keenly by deterioration of their conditions. (69)

When the migration of black peasants to the Northern cities dropped off in the mid-1920s, the Garvey movement began to lose out, and the US Government was able to move in with prosecutions to break it up.

The more-successful entrepreneurial types, such as the bankers, insurance executives, and newspaper publishers, were able now to seize the lead in the cities. They generated an optimism about the future of black capitalism that has never been recaptured. This group, which provided services chiefly to a black clientele, lost out when the depression brought wholesale bankruptcy, and this experience smashed illusions about the future of black business. (70)

Proletarian leadership now re-emerged on a firmer foundation of having assimilated its new conditions of existence. From the masses themselves there was a surge of battles in the cities for emergency relief and against housing evictions. This intervention of the working class and unemployed inserted a new vigor into the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns that bourgeois leadership had initiated to win jobs from white firms operating in the ghetto. In 1935 a riot broke out in Harlem, and for the first time blacks moved from a defensive posture in such a situation and employed violence on a retaliatory basis against the white store-owners. As concessions were gained, part of the energy was channeled into the New Deal relief bureaucracy and Democratic Party politics, where patronage and paternalism took the edge off much independent thrust. Nevertheless, important struggles for jobs, government-supported housing, and more territory for living space helped consolidate an institutional infrastructure for the black community and gave an urban definition to its national consciousness, or race pride, as it was called in those days.

The trade-union organizing drives of the CIO which actively sought out black workers in heavy and mass-production industry provided a new focus. From 1937 to World War II the CIO conducted the most massive working-class campaign that has ever taken place in America. Its dynamism was so great that it reset the direction of the political activity of the working class, the black community, and the Left. Even the bourgeois-led organizations, like the NAACP, came to accept the decisive leadership role of the CIO. While black workers played an integral part in this organizing campaign, with over 200,000 members in the CIO ranks by 1940, the black working class did not develop an independent program or organization that dealt with the national oppression of their people. (71)

Only after the outbreak of World War II, when blacks were still being excluded from much of the rapidly-expanding economy, did a black

Hope For UNION FARM WAGES

on Against Negroes And Foreign Born Workers



Meeting of Farmworkers' Union in 1936.

movement set out independently from the New Deal-labor coalition and take the initiative in defining a race position on the national level. In January 1941 A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an all-black AFL union, issued a call for a massive march on Washington to demand of the Government a greater share in the defense effort. The March on Washington Movement expressed the mood of the black community and received an upswelling of support sufficient to force President Roosevelt to establish a Fair Employment Practice Committee in return for the calling off of the projected march. Although this movement was not able to establish a firmly-organized working-class base or sustain itself for long, it foreshadowed a new stage of development for a self-conscious black working class with the appeal that "An oppressed people must accept the responsibility and take the initiative to free themselves." (72)



Current Conditions of Demand — An Outline

(A full examination of the present-day political economic conditions regarding the demand for black labor requires a whole separate essay. We are limited here to indicating some of the most-essential features.)

The changes that took place in the economic deployment of black labor in World War II were clearly an acceleration of developments that had been under way since World War I. In a process of transition, at a certain point the quantity of change becomes so great that the whole set of relationships assume an entirely-different character. Such a nodal point took place during World War II, and there resulted a transformation in the characteristic relations of institutional racism from agrarian thralldom to a metropolitan ghetto system.

Within a generation, few of the concrete economic or demographic forms of the old base remained. In 1940, over three-fourths of all blacks lived in the South, close to two-thirds lived in rural areas there, and just under half were still engaged in agriculture. By 1969, almost as many blacks lived outside the South as still resided in that region, and only 4% of the black laborers remained in agriculture, as they had left the farms at a much more rapid rate than whites. Today, only about a fifth of the total black population live in the rural areas and small towns of the South.

The United States, during the Twentieth Century, has become a distinctively urban nation — or, more accurately, a metropolitan nation with its population centered in the large cities and their surrounding configurations. The first three decades of this century witnessed the rapid urbanization of whites; the next three decades saw an even more rapid urbanization of blacks. In 1940 the proportion of the country's black population living in urban areas (49%) was the same as that proportion of whites had been in 1910. Within 20 years, almost three fourths of all blacks were urban dwellers, a higher proportion than the corresponding one for whites. More specifically, the black population has been relocated into the central cities of the metropolitan areas — in 1940, 34% of all blacks resided in central cities; in 1969, 55%. The larger cities were the points of greatest growth. In 1950 black people constituted one out of every eight persons in the central cities of the metropolitan areas of every size classification, and one out of every twenty in the suburbs. By 1969, black people constituted one out of every four in the central city populations of the large metropolitan areas (1,000,000 plus), and about one out of six in the medium-size metropolitan areas (250,000 to 1,000,000), while in the smaller-size metropolitan areas (below 250,000) and the suburbs the proportions remained constant. Today black communities form major cities in themselves, two with populations over 1,000,000, four between 500,000

and 1,000,000, and eight between 200,000 and 500,000. (73) Newark and Washington DC already have black majorities, and several other major cities will most likely join their ranks in the next 10 years.

The displacement of blacks from Southern agriculture was only partially due to the pull of labor demand in wartime. Technological innovation, being a necessary condition of production, acted as an independent force to drive the tenants out of the cotton fields. The push off the land occurred in two phases. Initially, right after the war, the introduction of tractors and herbicides displaced the cotton hands from full-time to seasonal work at summer weeding and harvest. The now part-time workers moved from the farms to hamlets and small towns. During the 1950s mechanization of the harvest eliminated most of the black peasantry from agricultural employment and forced them to move to the larger cities for economic survival. (74)

Elimination of the Southern black peasantry was decisive in changing the forms of racism throughout the entire region, for it meant the disappearance of the economic foundation on which the elaborate superstructure of legal Jim Crow and segregation had originally been erected. Not only did this exploited agrarian group almost vanish, but the power of the large landholders who expropriated the surplus it had produced diminished in relation to the growing urban and industrial interests. While the civil-rights movement and the heroic efforts associated with it were necessary to break the official legality of segregation, it should be recognized that in a sense this particular form of racism was already obsolete, as its base in an exploitative system of production had drastically changed. The nature of the concessions made both by the ruling class nationally and by the newer power groups of the South can be understood only in terms of this fuller view of history. (75)

For the United States as a whole, the most-important domestic development was the further elaboration and deepening of monopoly state capitalism. As the political economy has matured, technological and management innovation have become capital-saving as well as labor-saving. Capital accumulation declines as a proportion of the gross national product, and a mature capitalist economy enters into a post-accumulation phase of development. Under these conditions the disposal of the economic surplus becomes almost as great a problem as the accumulation of it. Corporations promote consumerism through increased sales effort, planned obsolescence, and advertising. The State meets the problem by increasing its own expenditures, especially in non-consumable military items, by providing monetary support to consumption through subsidies to the well-off, and by spending a certain amount on welfare for the working class and the poor. Markedly-lower incomes would add to the surplus disposal problems and would create economic stagnation as well as risking the most-disruptive forms of class struggle.

Working-class incomes have two basic minimum levels, or floors. One is that which can be considered the level of the good trade-union contract which has to be met even by non-union firms that bid in this section of the labor market. State intervention is usually indirect in the setting of these incomes, but has grown noticeably in the last few years. The other income floor is set by direct government action via minimum-wage and welfare legislation. In the Northern industrial states where trade unions are stronger, both these income floors tend to be higher than in rural and Southern states.

Although in the mature capitalist society both economic and political imperatives exist for a certain limiting of the exploitation of the working class as a whole, each corporation still has to operate on the basis of maximizing its profits. The fostering of a section of the working class that will have to work at the jobs that are paid at rates between those of the two income floors works to meet the needs of profit maximization. Other jobs that fall into this category are those that might pay at the collective bargaining contract level but are subject to considerable seasonal and cyclical unemployment, and those from which a high rate of production is squeezed under hard or hazardous conditions. In all the developed Western capitalist states, there exists a group of workers to fill the jobs that the more politically established sectors of the working class shun. These marginal workers generally are set apart in some way so that they lack the social or the political means of defending their interests. In Western Europe usually they are non-citizens coming from either Southern Europe or Northern Africa. In England they are colored peoples coming from various parts of the Empire. (76) In the urban centers of the United States race serves to mark black and brown workers for filling in the undesirable slots.

Further, in the distribution of government transfer payments each class and status group strives to maximize its receipts. Therefore the powerless tend to receive a smaller proportion of these funds, and those that are delivered to them come in a manner which stigmatizes and bolsters political controls.

Specifically, in the metropolitan centers in America, there is a racial dual labor-market structure. (77) Side by side with the primary metropolitan job market in which firms recruit white workers and white workers seek employment, there exists a smaller secondary market in which firms recruit black workers and black workers seek jobs. In the largest metropolitan areas this secondary black market ranges from one-tenth to one-quarter of the size of the white market. For both the white and black sectors there are distinct demand and supply forces determining earnings and occupational distribution, as well as separate institutions and procedures for recruitment, hiring, training, and promotion of workers.

The distinctiveness of these two labor forces is manifested by many dimensions — by industry, by firm, by departments within firms, by

occupation, and by geographical area. Within all industries, including government service, there are occupational ceilings for blacks. In a labor market like that of the Chicago metropolitan area, there are a number of small and medium-size firms in which the majority of the workers are black. However about two-thirds of the small firms and one-fifth of the medium ones hire no blacks at all. In larger firms a dual structure in the internal labor market marks off the position of the black worker along the same lines that exist in the metropolitan labor market.

A review of black employment in Chicago in 1966 finds that blacks tend to work in industries with lower wages, higher turnover, and higher unemployment. Further, they are also over-represented in the industries which exhibit sluggish growth and obviously less chance for advancement. Black men provide a third of the blue-collar workers in such industries as textiles, retail stores, primary metals, and local transportation, while in utilities, advertising, and communication they constitute less than 6%. Black women are even more concentrated in furnishing over half the blue-collar women workers in five industries — personal services, education, retail stores, hotels, and railroads.

In terms of internal labor market segregation, one of the Chicago firms best known as a fair-practice employer has a major installation located in the black community in which blacks constitute 20% of the blue-collar workers and less than 5% of the craftsmen and white-collar workers. A General Motors plant with 7500 workers is reported to have 40% black semi-skilled operatives, but only between 1% and 2% black craftsmen. A foundry firm will have one black clerk out of nearly 100 white-collar workers, while 80% of its blue-collar operators will be black.

The most-detailed information we have on racial dualism for an internal labor market is for the Lackawanna plant of Bethlehem Steel Company near Buffalo. (78) The Lackawanna plant is a major employer of black workers in the Buffalo labor market. In 1968 it employed 2600 out of a total black labor force of about 30,000 for the area. Within the plant blacks constituted about 14% of the work force, which runs in the neighborhood of 19,000. The majority of black employees were assigned to only five of the plant's departments, while only 15% of the whites were in the same units. Within the individual units, blacks were given either the hardest or the lowest-paying jobs. In the plant's Coke Oven Department blacks held 252 out of 343 of the labor jobs, while whites held 118 out of 119 craft jobs. Blacks predominated in the battery and coal-handling units, where the top job paid \$3.12 an hour. Whites made up the bulk of the work force in the better-paying by-products and heating units, which had hourly pay rates ranging up to \$3.42 and \$3.65.

Basic Steel is a high-labor-turnover industry. From April 1, 1966 to December 31, 1967 the Lackawanna plant hired about 7,000 workers. Black job-seekers obviously identified the firm as being active in this

labor market. Although 30% to 50% of the job applicants were black, the initial screening ended up with only 20% blacks among those newly hired. Prospects were screened by a general-aptitude test the passing score for which was not validated by any measure of performance. As the labor market tightened, the passing score lowered. About an eighth of those hired were hired without taking the test, and 96% of this category were whites. The Supervisor of Employment also gave clear preference to residents of Angola, a nearly all-white suburb. Once on the payroll, a majority of the newly-hired blacks were assigned to one of the five departments in which most of the black workers already were placed. Only 20% of newly-hired whites were assigned to these departments, all of which were among the hotter and dirtier locations in the plant.

The dual labor market operates to create an urban-based industrial labor reserve that provides a ready supply of workers in a period of labor shortage and can be politically isolated in times of relatively high unemployment. In a tight labor market the undesirable jobs that whites leave are filled out of this labor reserve so that in time more job categories are added to the black sector of the labor market. If the various forms of disguised unemployment and sub-employment are all taken into account, black unemployment rates can run as high as three or four times those of whites in specific labor markets in recession periods. The welfare and police costs of maintaining this labor reserve are high, but they are borne by the State as a whole and therefore do not enter into the profit calculations of individual firms.

This special exploitation of the black labor force also leads to direct economic gains for the various employers. Methodologically it is very difficult to measure exactly the extra surplus extracted due to wage discrimination, although in Chicago it has been estimated that unskilled black workers earn about 17% less on similar jobs than unskilled white workers of comparable quality. (79) While in a historical sense the entire differential of wage income between blacks and whites can be attributed to discrimination, the employer realizes only that which takes place in the present in terms of either lesser wage payments or greater work output. Estimates of this realized special exploitation range on the order of 10% to 20% of the total black wage and salary income. (80)

The subordinate status of the black labor market does not exist in isolation, but rather is a major part of a whole complex of institutional controls that constitute the web of urban racism. (81) This distinctive modern form of racism conforms to the 300-year-old traditions of the culture of control for the oppression of black people, but now most of the controls are located within the major metropolitan institutional networks — such as the labor market, the housing market, the political system. As the black population grew in the urban centers a distinctive new formation developed in each of these institutional areas. A black

ghetto and housing market, a black labor market, a black school system, a black political system, and a black welfare system came into being—not as parts of a self-determining community, but as institutions to be controlled, manipulated, and exploited. When the black population did not serve the needs of dominant institutions by providing a wartime labor reserve, they were isolated so that they could be regulated and incapacitated.

This model of urban racism has had three major components with regard to institutional structures: (1) Within the major institutional networks that operate in the city there have developed definable black sub-sectors which operated on a subordinated basis, subject to the advantage, control, and priorities of the dominant system. (2) A pattern of mutual reinforcement takes place between the barriers that define the various black sub-sectors. (3) The controls over the lives of black men are so pervasive that they form a system analogous to colonial forms of rule.

The history of the demand for black labor in the post-war period showed the continued importance of wartime labor scarcities. The new job categories gained during World War II essentially were transferred into the black sectors of the labor market. Some war industries, like shipbuilding, of course, dropped off considerably. In reconversion and the brief 1948-1949 recession blacks lost out disproportionately on the better jobs. However the Korean War again created an intense labor shortage, making black workers once more in demand, at least until the fighting stopped. The period of slow economic growth from 1955 to the early 1960s saw a deterioration in the relative position of blacks as they experienced very-high rates of unemployment and their incomes grew at a slower rate than those of whites. The civil-rights protests had generated little in the way of new demand. Only the coincidence of the rebellions of Watts, Newark, and Detroit with the escalation of the Vietnam War brought about a sharp growth in demand for black labor.

All the available evidence indicates that there has been no structural change of any significance in the deployment of black workers, most especially in private industry. Certain absolute standards of exclusion in professional, management, and sales occupations have now been removed, but the total growth in these areas has been slight except where a black clientele is serviced, as in the education and health fields. The one significant new demand in the North has been that for women clerical workers. This arises from a shortage of this particular kind of labor in the central business districts, which, being surrounded by the black community, are increasingly geographically removed from white supplies of these workers. About 90% of Chicago's black female white-collar workers work either in their own communities or in the central business districts, and are not employed in the rapidly growing outlying offices. In the South the whole pattern of racial regulation in the major cities is shifting over to a Northern model, so that the basic

situation of black workers in Atlanta or Memphis is approaching that of the North about a decade ago.

Until the uprisings in the mid-60s, management of racial affairs was carried out either by the unvarnished maintenance of the status quo (except when black workers were needed) or by an elaborate ritual of fair practices and equal employment opportunity. The latter strategy operated as a sort of sophisticated social Darwinism to make the rules of competition for the survival of the fittest more equitable. Actually it blurred institutional realities, channeling energies and perceptions into individualized findings of fact. The black protest movement finally forced a switch to a policy of affirmative action that is supported by legal encouragement. In either case no basic structures have actually been transformed. As a review of studies on the current racial status in several industries finds: "Over the long haul, however, it is apparent that the laws of supply and demand have exercised a greater influence on the quantitative employment patterns of blacks than have the laws of the land." (82)

In the Cold War era the trade-union movement lost its innovative dynamism and became narrowly wage-oriented. Overwhelmingly, the net racial effect of the collective-bargaining agreements was to accept the given conditions in a plant. Only a very few unions, usually from the CIO, conducted any fights for the upgrading of black workers. More usual was the practice of neglecting shop grievances. Within union life itself the black officials who arose as representatives of their race were converted into justifiers of the union administration to the black workers. (83) On the legislative and judicial fronts — that is, away from their day-to-day base of operations — national unions supported the programs of civil-rights organizations and the fair-employment symbolism. In fact by the early 1960s the racial strategies of national trade unions and those of the most-sophisticated corporate leadership had converged.

The actions of the black community itself were destined to become the decisive political initiator, not only in its own liberation struggles but on the domestic scene in general. From World War II through the Korean War the urban black communities were engaged in digesting the improvements brought about by the end of the depression and by the wartime job gains. Both bourgeois and trade-union leadership followed the forms of the New Deal - labor coalition, but the original substance of mass struggle was no longer present.

The destabilization of the whole agrarian society in the South created the conditions for new initiatives. The Montgomery bus boycott was to re-introduce mass political action into the Cold War era. The boldness of the civil-rights movement, plus the success of national liberation movements in the Third World, galvanized the black communities in the major cities. At first the forms of the Southern struggle were to predominate in pro-integration civil-rights actions. Then youth and

workers were swept into the movement and re-defined its direction toward black self-determination. The mass spontaneity in the ghetto rebellions revealed the tremendous potential of this orientation.

The ghetto systems and the dual labor markets had organized a mass black proletariat, and had concentrated it in certain key industries and plants. In the decade after World War II the most-important strategic concentration of black workers was in the Chicago packing houses, where they became the majority group. United Packinghouse Workers District I was bold in battles over conditions in the plants and supplied the basic leadership for militant protest on the South Side. Even though the UPW was the most advanced of all big national unions on the race question, a coalition of black officials and shop stewards had to wage a struggle against the leadership for substantive black control. This incipient nationalist faction was defeated in the union, and the big meat packers moved out of the city; but before it disappeared the movement indicated the potential of black-oriented working-class leadership. The Packinghouse Workers' concrete struggles contrasted sharply with the strategy of A. Philip Randolph, who set up the form of an all-black Negro American Labor Council and then subordinated its mass support to maneuvers at the top level of the AFL-CIO. (84)

After the ghetto uprisings workers were to re-assert themselves at the point of production. Black caucuses and Concerned Workers' Committees sprang up across the country in plants and installations with large numbers of blacks. (85) By this time the auto industry had created the largest concentration of black workers in the nation on its back-breaking production lines in Detroit. Driven by the peculiarities of the black labor market, the "big three" auto companies had developed the preconditions for the organization of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The insertion onto this scene of a cadre that was both black-conscious and class-conscious, with a program of revolutionary struggle, forged an instrument for the militant working-class leadership of the Black Liberation Movement. The League also provides an exemplary model for proletarians among other oppressed groups, and might even be able to stimulate sections of the white working class to emerge from their narrow economic orientation.

The ruling class is caught in its own contradictions. It needs black workers, yet the conditions of satisfying this need compel it to bring together the potential forces for the most-effective opposition to its policies, and even for a threat to its very existence. Amelioration of once-absolute exclusionary barriers does not eliminate the black work force that the whole web of urban racism defines. Even if the capitalists were willing to forego their economic and status gains from racial oppression, they could not do so without shaking up all of the intricate concessions and consensual arrangements through which the State now exercises legitimate authority. Since the ghetto institutions are deeply

intertwined with the major urban systems, the American Government does not even have the option of decolonializing by ceding nominal sovereignty that the British and French empires have both exercised. The racist structures cannot be abolished without an earthquake in the heartland. Indeed, for that sophisticated gentleman, the American capitalist, the demand for black labor has become a veritable devil in the flesh.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Marx: Capital (Kerr Edition), Volume 1, Page 823.
2. *Ibid.*, Page 833.
3. "As is well known, commodity production preceded (capitalist) commodity production, and constitutes one of the conditions (but not the sole condition) of the rise of the latter." V. I. Lenin: Development of Capitalism in Russia (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), Page 606.
4. Eugene D. Genovese: The Political Economy of Slavery (New York, 1967) contends that the plantation slave system was the base of a social order in the American South that essentially was pre-capitalist and quasi-aristocrat.
5. Marvin Harris: Patterns of Race in the Americas (New York, 1964), Page 13.
6. Winthrop Jordan: White Over Black (Chapel Hill, 1968), Page 184.
7. The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, 1966), Pages 41-46.
8. White Over Black, Pages 3-43.
9. Carl N. Degler: "Slavery in the United States and Brazil: An Essay in Comparative History", American Historical Review (April 1970), Pages 1019-1021; Davis: The Problem of Slavery, Pages 232-233.
10. Philip Curtin: The Atlantic Slave Trade (Madison, 1969), Page 269; A. M. Carr Saunders, World Population (Oxford, 1936), Page 47.
11. The Black Jacobins (Second Edition, New York, 1963), Page 48. See also Gaston Martin: Nantes au XVIII Siecle: L'Ere des Negriers (Paris, 1931), Pages 422-433.
12. Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1944), Pages 50-84.
13. Malachi Postlethway: The Advantage of the African Trade (1772), quoted in Abram L. Harris: The Negro as Capitalist (Philadelphia, 1936), Pages 2-3.

14. Douglas North: The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1961), Pages 68-69.

15. Marcus Wilson Jernegan: Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1763 (Chicago, 1931), Page 23.

16. By this time free blacks constituted between 40% and 60% of the black population in Brazil and 35% in Cuba: Herbert S. Klein: "The Colored Freedmen in Brazil", Journal of Social History (Fall 1969), Pages 30-54.

17. Richard Wade: Slavery in the Cities (New York, 1964), Page 275.

18. W. E. B. Du Bois: The Philadelphia Negro (1967 Edition, New York), Page 33. See also Herman Bloch: The Circle of Discrimination (New York, 1969), Pages 21-26.

19. Robert Ernst: "The Economic Status of New York Negroes, 1850-1863", reprinted in August Meier and Elliot Rudwick (editors): The Making of Black America (New York, 1969), Volume 1, Pages 250-261.

20. This statement is not meant to imply that there were not some important class distinctions or inequalities in income or wealth, but it does claim that the social and political means of defining status along these lines were not as clear-cut as they were in Europe or in Latin America.

21. Harris: Patterns of Race, Chapter 7. A modern analogy to the Latin American status situation is evidenced in the US Army's ability to be one of the very first major American institutions to desegregate. "Placement of white adult males in a subordinate position within a rigidly-stratified system, that is, appears to produce behavior not all that different from the so-called personality traits commonly held to be an outcome of cultural or psychological patterns unique to Negro life. Indeed, it might be argued that relatively little adjustment on the part of the command structure was required when the infusion of the Negroes into the enlisted ranks occurred as the military establishment was desegregated. It is suggested, in other words, that one factor that contributed to the generally-smooth racial integration of the military might be the standard treatment — like 'Negroes' in a sense — that was accorded to all lower-ranking enlisted personnel." Charles C. Moskos Junior: "Racial Integration in the Armed Forces", American Journal of Sociology (September 1966), reprinted in Raymond Mack: Race, Class, and Power (Second Edition, New York, 1968), Pages 436-455.

22. CLR James: "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery", Amistad I (New York, 1970), Pages 133-134. The possibility of a bourgeois mode of development of the black community in the US was cut off, although valiant efforts were made in this direction by black professional men, entrepreneurs, and craftsmen. Nineteenth Century Pan-Africanism and black nationalism most likely had significant roots in this phenomenon.

23. W. E. B. Du Bois: Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880

(1962 Edition, Cleveland), Page 121.

24. "The Compromise of 1877 did not restore the old order in the South, nor did it restore the South to parity with other sections. It did assure the dominant whites political autonomy and non-intervention in matters of race policy, and promised them a share in the blessings of the new economic order. In return the South became... a satellite of the dominant region.... Under the regime of the Redeemers the South became a bulwark instead of a menace to the new order." C. Vann Woodward: Reunion and Reaction (Second Edition, New York, 1956), Pages 266-267.

25. The Souls of Black Folk, Chapter 8.

26. Quoted in Woodward: Origins of the New South, Page 208.

27. Rupert Vance: "Racial Competition for Land", in Edgar T. Thompson (editor): Race Relations and the Race Problem (Durham, 1939), Pages 100-104.

28. J. B. Killebrew: Southern States Farm Magazine (1898), Pages 490-491, cited in Nolen (previously cited), Page 170. For a concrete explication of this approach, see Alfred Holt Stone: Studies in the American Race Problem (New York, 1909), Chapter 4.

29. Woodward: Origins of the New South, Page 211.

30. *Ibid.*, Pages 328-330.

31. Charles H. Wesley: Negro Labor in the United States, 1850-1925 (New York, 1927), Pages 238-239; Claude H. Nolen: The Negro's Image in the South (Lexington, Kentucky, 1968), Page 190.

32. Lorenzo J. Greene and Carter G. Woodson: The Negro Wage Earner (Washington, 1930), Pages 49-50.

33. Wesley: Negro Labor, Page 142; W. E. B. DuBois: The Negro Artisan (Atlanta, 1902), Pages 115-120.

34. DuBois: The Negro Artisan, Pages 180-185. However, when the Manufacturer's Record of Baltimore conducted its own survey in 1893, the majority of manufacturers held that blacks were unfitted for most employment, but admitted that with training they could be used — an opinion they also held of the "primitive white man". One big difference in this latter survey was the inclusion of the cotton mills, a line that had already been declared a "white man's industry". Cited in Wesley: Negro Labor, Pages 244-248.

35. Paul H. Buck: The Road to Reunion (Boston, 1937), Pages 154-155.

36. Carter G. Woodson: "Story of the Fund", Chapter 2, typescript, Julius Rosenwald Papers, University of Chicago Library; Louis Harland: Separate and Unequal (Chapel Hill, 1958), Page 77.

37. Department of History, Harvard University, 1953.

38. Frank U. Quillan: The Color Line in Ohio (Ann Arbor, 1913), Page 138.

39. W. E. B. DuBois: The Negro Artisan, Pages 173-175.

40. Spero and Harris: The Black Worker is still essential on this.

Also see: Bernard Mandel: "Samuel Gompers and the Negro Workers, 1886-1914", Journal of Negro History (January 1955), Pages 34-60; Herbert G. Gutman: "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America", in Julius Jacobson (editor): The Negro and the American Labor Movement (New York, 1968), Pages 49-127; and the entire issue of Labor History (Summer 1969).

41. William M. Tuttle Junior: "Labor Conflict and Racial Violence: The Black Worker in Chicago, 1894-1919", Labor History (Summer 1969), Pages 406-432; Spero and Harris: The Black Worker, Pages 131-134. For a national survey on strikebreaking see Fishel: The North and the Negro, Pages 454-471.

42. August Meier: Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (Ann Arbor, 1963).

43. Chicago Commission on Race Relations: The Negro in Chicago (Chicago, 1922), Pages 362-363.

44. US Labor Department: Negro Migration in 1916-17 (Washington, 1919), Page 124.

45. *Ibid.*, Pages 22-23, 27-33, 118-122; Spear: Black Chicago, Pages 33-38.

46. Wesley: Negro Labor, Pages 293-294; US Labor Department: Negro Migration, Pages 125-126.

47. William M. Tuttle Junior: Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919 (New York, 1970), Pages 130-132.

48. Herman Feldman: Racial Factors in American Industry (New York and London, 1931), Pages 42-43.

49. Louise V. Kennedy: The Negro Peasant Moves Cityward (New York, 1930), Pages 35-36.

50. William C. Graves: "Memorandum of Address Made June 17th Before the Inter-racial Committee of the Union League Club", Julius Rosenwald Papers, University of Chicago Library.

51. Elliot M. Rudwick: Race Riot at East Saint Louis, July 2, 1917 (Carbondale, 1964); Tuttle: Race Riot.

52. Spero and Harris: The Black Worker, Pages 167-168.

53. Graves: "Memorandum of Speech Made June 17th".

54. Robert Ozanne: A Century of Labor-Management Relations at McCormick and International Harvester (Madison, 1967), Pages 183-187.

55. Bailer: "The Negro Automobile Worker", Pages 416-419; Herbert Northrup: Organized Labor and the Negro (New York, 1944), Pages 189-195.

56. Spero and Harris: The Black Worker, Page 169.

57. Cayton and Mitchell: The Black Worker, Page 31.

58. Kennedy: The Negro Peasant Moves Cityward, Page 98; Feldman: Racial Factors in American Industry, Pages 57-58.

59. "Conference on the Negro in Industry Held by the Committee on Industry, Chicago Commission on Race Relations, April 23, 1920", typescript, Julius Rosenwald Papers, University of Chicago Library.

60. This writer gave such a reading to several hundred management officials at a session sponsored by the Graduate School of Management of the University of Chicago in 1969. It was an ironic success.

61. Erwin D. Hoffman: "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930-1939", Journal of Negro History (October 1959), Page 347.

62. Charles S. Johnson: The Shadow of the Plantation (Chicago, 1934), Page 210. For a good review of the situation of blacks in the rural South during this period, see E. Franklin Frazier: The Negro in the United States (New York, 1949), Chapter 10.

63. Gunnar Myrdal: An American Dilemma (1964 Edition, New York, two volumes), Volume 1, Pages 256-269.

64. One indication that the current pattern was established by 1930 is given by Herman Feldman's Racial Factors in American Industry, published the following year. Feldman was able to prescribe and to concretely illustrate a set of industrial-relations practices that sound amazingly similar to what today are called equal-opportunity programs. The major difference is that in 1930 the firms did not have to take into account the political strength of the black community.

65. Drake and Cayton: Black Metropolis, Volume 1, Pages 215-217 and 226-227; Richard Sterner: The Negro's Share (New York, 1934), Pages 39-46 and 219-291, providing a useful compilation of material used in this and the following paragraph; Ozanne: A Century of Labor Management Relations, Page 187; Charles S. Johnson: "The Conflict of Caste and Class in an American Industry", American Journal of Sociology (July 1936), Pages 55-65.

66. "The Negro's War", Fortune (June 1942), Pages 76-80.

67. Ibid.; American Management Association: The Negro Worker (Research Report Number 1, 1942), Pages 3-4 and 27-28; Nicholas S. Falcone: The Negro Integrated (New York, 1945).

68. Robert Weaver: Negro Labor, A National Problem (New York, 1946), Pages 78-93.

69. Harry Haywood: Negro Liberation (New York, 1948), Pages 198-199.

70. A few years after the collapse of 1929 Abram Harris surveyed this flourishing of black capitalism and concluded: The limits of a separate economy are precariously narrow within the confines of the present industrial system. How the independent black economy is to develop and function in the face of persistent industrial integration, business combinations, the centralization of capital control, and the concentration of wealth none of the advocates of the plan can explain As long as capitalism remains, however, it is reasonably certain that the main arteries of commerce, industry, credit, and finance will be controlled by white capitalists. Under the circumstances, the great mass of black and white men will continue to be dependent on these capitalists for their livelihood, and the small white capitalist in turn

will continue to be subordinate to these larger financial and industrial interests. Thus it is obvious that the independent black economy — whether it develops on the basis of private profit or on the basis of co-operation — cannot be the means of achieving the Negro's economic salvation. (The Negro as Capitalist, Page x)

71. Cayton and Mitchell: Black Workers and the New Unions; Drake and Cayton: Black Metropolis, Volume 1, Pages 312-341; James Olsen: "Organized Black Leadership and Industrial Unionism: The Racial Response, 1939-1945", Labor History (Summer 1969), Pages 475-486.

72. The standard work on the MOW movement is Herbert Garfinkel: When Negroes March (Glencoe, 1959). The MOW movement actually presaged two forms of future tactics. In its appeal to the masses for a black-defined program of struggle it summarized all of the decade's action for jobs on a local level and impelled them forward on a national basis. On the other hand, in that the movement failed to develop an organized working-class constituency, it foretold tactics of maneuver without mass struggle — of legislative lobbying, judicial procedures, and jockeying within the Democratic Party — which were to be pursued by the bourgeois and trade-union organizations until demonstrations and civil disobedience finally arose from below out of the civil-rights movement.

73. These estimates are as of 1969. Data from the 1970 census were not available at the time of writing.

74. Richard H. Day: "The Economics of Technological Change and the Demise of the Sharecropper", American Economic Review (June 1967), Pages 427-449; Seymour Melman: "An Industrial Revolution in the Cotton South", Economic History Review, Second Series (1949), Pages 59-72.

75. Analysis of the relation of economic and class shifts in the South to the civil-rights movement and the nature of its limited victories from 1954 to 1965 has been seriously neglected. Anyone undertaking such a study should keep in mind V. I. Lenin's fundamental law of revolution: "It is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes, it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the same way." (Left Wing Communism)

76. David J. Smyth and Peter D. Lowe: "The Vestibule to the Occupational Ladder and Unemployment: Some Econometric Evidence on United Kingdom Structural Unemployment", Industrial and Labor Relations Review (July 1970), Pages 561-565.

77. This and following paragraphs on the dual labor market are basically a summary of Harold M. Baron and Bennett Hymer: "The Negro Worker in the Chicago Labor Market", in Julius Jacobson (editor): The Negro and the American Labor Movement (New York, 1968), Pages 232-285.

78. The following facts come from the United States of America Versus Bethlehem Steel Company and Associates, US District Court, Western District of New York, Civ - 1967 - 436, Stipulation of Facts, July 1, 1968 and Second Stipulation of Facts, September 20, 1968.

79. D. Taylor: "Discrimination and Occupational Wage Differences in the Market for Unskilled Labor", Industrial and Labor Relations Review (April 1968), Pages 375-390.

80. For a recent estimate see Lester Thurow: The Economy of Poverty and Discrimination (Washington, 1969). He finds the gains due to wage discrimination were \$4,600,000,000 in 1960. Advantages to white workers due to higher employment rates were \$6,500,000,000.

81. For an extended treatment of the institutionalization of racism in the metropolis see Harold Baron: "The Web of Urban Racism", in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (editors): Institutional Racism in America (New York, 1969), Pages 134-176.

82. Vernon M. Briggs Junior: "The Negro in American Industry: A Review of Seven Studies", Journal of Human Resources (Summer 1970), Pages 371-381.

83. William Kornhauser: "The Negro Union Official: A Study of Sponsorship and Control", American Journal of Sociology (March 1952), Pages 443-452; Scott Greer: "Situational Pressures and Functional Role of the Ethnic Labor Leader", Social Forces (October 1953), Pages 41-45.

84. The writer has the records of the Chicago chapter of the NALC in his possession.

85. For a description of some of these organizations see Herbert Hill: "Black Protest and Struggle for Union Democracy", Issues in Industrial Society (1969), Pages 19-24 and 48.

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