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The Demand for Black Labor: Historical Notes on the Political Economy of Racism

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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

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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, signalized 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

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essential to the mercantilist phase of capitalist history. (3) Although this slavery was not capitalist in the form of production itself, that is 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

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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
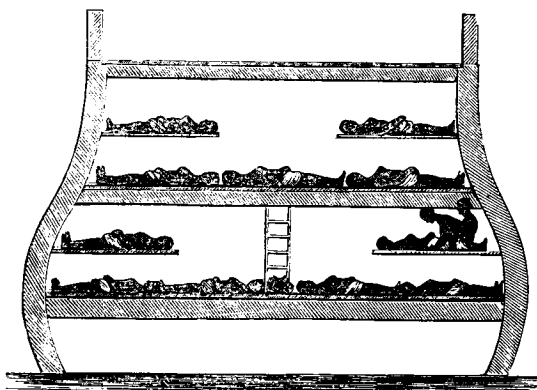
Cross Section of a Slave Ship.

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

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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

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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 geberations 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

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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 Du Bois 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

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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

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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 racialist 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.

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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.

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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

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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

PICKING COTTON

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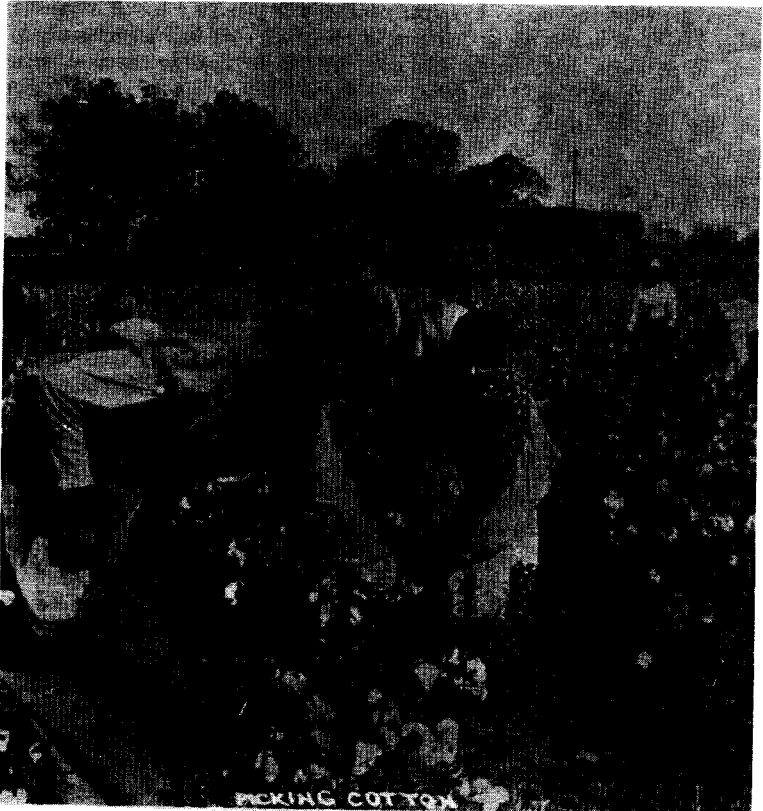
manufacturers of New England...knew full well the importance of bringing discipline to the Southern labor force. When theories of Negro equality resulted in race conflict, and conflict in higher prices of raw cotton, manufacturers were inclined to accept the point of view of the Southern planter rather 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

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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 yemanry 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 black 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....

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> 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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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)

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◼ 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.

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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

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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

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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

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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 economistic 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

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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 Postlethwayt: The Advantage of the African Trade (1772), quoted in Abram L. Harris: The Negro as Capitalist (Philadelphia, 1936), Pages 2-3.

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

15. Marcus Wilson Jernegan: <u>Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1763</u> (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", <u>Journal of Social History</u> (Fall 1969), Pages 30-54.

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

18. W. E. B. Du Bois: <u>The Philadelphia Negro</u> (1967 Edition, New York), Page 33. See also Herman Bloch: <u>The Circle of Discrimination</u> (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): <u>The Making of Black America</u> (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: <u>Patterns of Race</u>, 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 comtributed 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", <u>American Journal of Sociology</u> (September 1966), reprinted in Raymond Mack: <u>Race, Class, and Power</u> (Second Edition, New York, 1968), Pages 436-455.

22. CLR James: "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery", <u>Amistad I</u> (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: <u>Black Reconstruction in America</u>, 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. Du Bois : The Negro Artisan (Atlanta, 1902), Pages 115-120.

34. Du Bois : 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. Du Bois : 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 <u>United States of America Versus Bethlehem Steel Company and Associates</u>, 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", <u>Industrial and Labor Relations Review</u> (April 1968), Pages 375-390.

80. For a recent estimate see Lester Thurow: <u>The Economy of Poverty and Discrimination</u> (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): <u>Institutional Racism in America</u> (New York, 1969), Pages 134-176.

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

83. William Kornhauser: "The Negro Union Official: A Study of Sponsorship and Control", <u>American Journal of Sociology</u> (March 1952), Pages 443-452; Scott Greer: "Situational Pressures and Functional Role of the Ethnic Labor Leader", <u>Social Forces</u> (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", <u>Issues in Industrial Society</u> (1969), Pages 19-24 and 48.

THE POETRY OF YUSUF

Yusuf (Joseph C. Pannell) is a young black sailor arrested in March 1969 on a charge of attempted murder on a Chicago police officer. During the twenty months he spent in Cook County Jail before his family was able to raise his bail, he be-became very close to the Black Panthers imprisoned there.

Going out on bail did not mean freedom for Yusuf --it only meant that he was turned over to the Shore Patrol to be returned to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center for having been AWOL. At Great Lakes he was almost immediately put in the brig for refusing to stand at attention. He explained that he could only relate to the discipline of the Black Panther Party. Other inmates in the brig have found courage through his example: they have begun to assert their own rights, as well as supporting Yusuf in his struggle.

His poems are distributed by Camp News, 2214 N. Halsted, Chicago, Illinois, 60614.

Love child
society of tommorrow
as you were born
your momma died
so
you'll never know your momma
you'll never be able
to see
firsthand
the great
        long labor
she had to endure to have you . . .
but we saved
the afterbirth . . .
refer to it
often
                    6/30/70

Dignity

```
dignity
is when
within the wretched confines
of a
cook county jail
in 98 degree weather
a brother
can stand in the middle of the dayroom
wearing
black on black in black
Jockey
nylon underwear
and
still maintain
his
folded arm profile
and
still talk
extremely slick . . .
```

6/30/70

Written on the departure of Maurice
Jackson going to a Federal Penetentiary
somewhere in Michigan -- Sat. Morn.
about 6:00 a.m. 11-29.

                    (Terre Haute)

        The crossroads of time
        the intersections
        all marked
        ephemeral
        yet
        not half so
        as the people
        who meet
        and depart
        at those crossroads
        yet the
        span of the world
        is as vast
        as the span
        of your mind
        and the soul
        is at every intersection
        the soul of one
        is the soul of the mass
        and love and peace
        the common bond of the revolutionary
        become one man's onus
        as another departs from his presence
        yet
        we know about
        the crossroads and intersections
        all marked
        ephemeral

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The League of Revolutionary Black Workers and the Coming of Revolution

ERIC PERKINS

One finds it exceedingly difficult to introduce a new organization without seizing the opportunity to note that this is a black organization and, unlike all the others, offers a bright new strategy to the quiescent black movement. Black workers, with their important location in US industry and service, have demonstrated the need for a working-class movement within this advanced section of the American proletariat. Without recognizing the importance of black workers, any Leftist group or organization will be doomed to failure.

This introduction is designed to fill in some important gaps in our knowledge of the struggle. It is not a polemic, nor unfolding rhetoric proclaiming condemnations of America's futile attempt to deal with the race problem. Instead, the writer wishes the reader to know about this organization and its crucial importance in the development of a revolutionary movement in America. For far too long the plight of the black worker has been subjugated to the interests of the rulers and of their white working-class associates. What the League brings to the realm of analysis is surely nothing new (Need I remind our readers of Garveyism?), but is something which must be immediately realized — that the American labor movement is now a memory, and something must be done now about its inability to deal with the problems of black workers.

With the establishment of DRUM (the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) in the Dodge plant at Hamtramck, Michigan in 1968, the white rulers and their infected proletarians got a taste of "a real black

thang"! Wildcat strikes and electoral turmoil have characterized the automobile industry since. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers is indeed a timely response to the growing stagnation and alienation many of us now feel — black radicals and their frustrated so-called compatriots. Black labor has seldom been understood, and as Abram Harris remarked nearly half a decade ago : "An estimation of the role the Negro will play in the class struggle is futile if the economic foundation and its psychological superstructure from which issue antipathy or apathy are ignored." (1) The League perfectly understands this — that racism is the result of a two-fold process which involves economic inferiority and its internalization.

What is the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and where did it come from? John Watson gives us the answer in an interview from the Fifth Estate:

> The League of Revolutionary Black Workers is a federation of several revolutionary movements which exist in Detroit. It was originally formed to provide a broader base for organization of black workers into revolutionary organizations than was previously provided for when we were organizing on a plant to plant basis. The beginning of the League goes back to the beginning of DRUM, which was its first organization. The Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement was formed at the Hamtramck assembly plant of the Chrysler Corporation in the fall of 1967. It developed out of the caucuses of black workers which had formed in the automobile plants to fight increases in productivity and racism in the plant.... With the development of DRUM and the successes we had in terms of organizing and mobilizing the workers at the Hamtramck plant many other black workers throughout the city began to come to us and ask for aid in organizing some sort of group in their plants. As a result, shortly after the formation of DRUM, the Eldon Axle Revolutionary Movement (ELRUM) was born at the Eldon gear and axle plant of the Chrysler Corporation. Also, the Ford Revolutionary Union Movement (FRUM) was formed at the Ford Rouge complex, and we now have two plants within that complex organized. (2)

Centered in the extremely-important auto industry, the League has had an extremely wide and successful impact. It is now expanding its organizing activities to other areas — hospital workers and printers are now being organized, as well as the United Parcel Workers black caucus, which is one of the League's affiliates. Why this sudden turn from community organizing and the organizing of "street brothers and sisters", the black lumpen proletariat? The remarks of John Watson sum up the League's attitude toward this crucial and strategic shift in

organizing policy:

> Our analysis tells us that the basic power of black people lies
> at the point of production, that the basic power we have is our
> power as workers. As workers, as black workers, we have
> historically been, and are now, essential elements in the
> American economic sense. Therefore, we have an overall
> analysis which sees the point of production as the major and
> primary sector of the society which has to be organized, and
> that the community should be organized in conjunction with
> that development. This is probably different from these kinds
> of analysis which say where it's at is to go out and organize
> the community and to organize the so-called "brother on the
> street". It's not that we're opposed to this type of organization
> but without a more-solid base such as that which the working
> class represents, this type of organization, that is, community
> based organization, is generally a pretty long, stretched-out,
> and futile development. (3)

Community-based organizations throughout Black America have been
failures. Stung by that fatal disease known as opportunism, many of
these organizations either have dissolved or have been the subject of
in-fighting for the pay-off. The ruling class has again demonstrated
how it can pick up on anything and subvert it for its own use. It has
again demonstrated that integration is a forced tool, and that no black
man has the power to join white society without the sanction of the
ruling class. (4) This shift is crucial.

For the last fifteen years the black movement has ridden the back
of its middle-class leadership, following the white lead while they got
the pay-off. The benefits (or bones) resulting from the "Civil Rights
Movement" were distributed to the black middle class. In the fields of
education, employment, and business, the black nouveau riche have
made a small mark. The expansion of the black middle class is the
unwritten policy of the white rulers. The black masses, predominantly
workers (5), have been totally left out of this progress, and expressed
their dissatisfaction by conducting their own "unorganized general
strike" in the summers of 1966 and 1967.

The concessions granted to the new black rulers are meager, but
they are real enough to raise, for the first time in a long while, the
question of class antagonism. The League is responding to developing
antagonisms of class in black America. Growing slowly is the black
petit bourgeoisie, which consists of two wings : an educated black elite
composed of technicians, managers, professionals, and others, and a
small "ghetto bourgeoisie" composed of the owners of small ghetto
shops and services. The ideology of this class is bourgeois nationalism
which can be roughly summed up in the memorable words of Booker T.

Washington in his speech before the Atlanta Exposition in 1895 : "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." (6)

Although this was said almost eighty years ago, it still characterizes the positions of most black nationalists. They see social revolution coming about in the disguise of white philanthropy and concern. To them the question of class struggle is an outmoded European idea which does not conform to their conception of black reality. The struggle lies in the institutional set-ups they can extract from the white paternalists, without ever stopping to think about the interest involved — that of the bourgeois nationalist or the white paternalist. Confusion and chaos have now replaced the moral glue which once held this class together, and there is no doubt that there is a huge gap in black leadership. (7)

With these facts to guide, the League has undertaken a very-difficult task — the organizing and leading of a national movement of black workers. Their local work clearly testifies to their national thrust. By organizing workers in strategic industries, the League plans to create the foundation for a black revolutionary party. Undoubtedly the perils of building a widespread national movement while laying the basis for a revolutionary party are difficult both to envision and to comprehend. But this is certainly one of their ultimate political tasks. The triumph of the downtrodden is inevitable.

The central theoretical concern of the League is the inevitable recognition of the black working class as the vanguard of the social revolution. As Ernie Mkalimoto suggests, the socialist revolutionary movement in the US must consider the black working class as leader.

> Thus owing to the national oppression (principally through institutionalized racism as the dominant form of production relations) of black people in the United States, the black proletariat is forced to take on the most dangerous, the most difficult — yet absolutely necessary — productive work in the plants, the most undesirable and strenuous jobs which exist inside the United States today. The demands which it poses — the elimination of economic exploitation (hence of capitalism) and of institutionalized racism (which thoroughly pervades the plant, not to mention North American society in general), and which allows capitalism to maintain itself, are more basic to the dismantling of US capitalist society than those of the white productive worker, who up to now has been able to defend his "white-skin privilege". That is why we say that any socialist revolution which is to be successful must take the class stand of the vanguard class of this revolution : the black proletariat.

Many white radicals and labor leaders will be unable to accept this position expressed by Mkalimoto (8). Why? Because the subtleties of

racism have invaded their hearts and minds and prevent them from understanding the obvious. But it is this fundamental question which must be recognized before one begins to overthrow capitalism. Many so-called revolutionaries and others will say: This is a threat to the unity of the working class! This violates Marxism's first principle of international solidarity and all the rest. But with a basic understanding of the history of the black race, they will see how their arguments fail.

The League's basic position is revolutionary nationalism. One cannot forget that there are conservative and Leftist elements among the black nationalist spectrum. The League represents a Left-wing position. For those who are unfamiliar with the developing ideological debate within small black circles, revolutionary nationalism is an important and very complicated position to hold. Ernie Mkalimoto outlines revolutionary nationalism as follows:

A fusion of the most progressive aspects of the contradiction: Bourgeois Reformism / Bourgeois Nationalism, Revolutionary Black Nationalism snatches the African - American from the puerile stage of Elizabethan drama, restores his sense of balance and direction in the universe, and sends crashing down to earth the clay idol of (Negro/American) emotional duality which has plagued the broad trend of black ideology from slavery to the present. From the activist wing of Bourgeois Reformism it takes the tactic of mass confrontation, struggles on all fronts, and integrates it into the existing order; from Bourgeois Nationalism comes the idea of the necessity for the development of national (revolutionary) culture and of both self-determination and self-reliance, as well as of the black world view which sees the struggle of African-Americans as inseparable from the struggles of all other peoples of color around the globe. The Revolutionary Nationalist views the concept of black nationhood not as any "sacred" unquestionable end in itself, but as a concrete guarantee to insure the dignity and full flowering of every individual of African descent. (9)

Revolutionary nationalism will indeed be difficult for the majority of whites to accept. It begins by taking into account the unusual degree of subjugation black people are forced to accept. It understands the unique feature of psychology and the internalization of economic phenomena. This indeed is timely. For one who does not admit the primacy of race compounded by class oppression refuses to recognize the most-central problem in American society.

The League dispenses with revolutionary rhetoric and commercial suicide, because that allows America to survive. The brother appearing on television and the revolutionary orator do not really contribute to capitalism's downfall; if anything they contribute to its maintenance.

By seizing on these images of blacks finally entering the mainstream, America controls the latent explosiveness present in most black men and black women. This is the current picture — black television, black business, black economic development, black executives — a swallowing of the "Negro revolution" by the imperialist giant.

America has created a grand illusion for most people, and black people are now subject to that illusion. The petit-bourgeois will not be able to succeed as long as it remains dependent on government and private help. The myth of the Negro capitalist is just that; but many of the brothers will not even acknowledge that. The myth of the "black capitalist and Negro market" must be dealt with. (10) There are few really-suggestive works on the problem of the class struggle in Black America. It is hoped that this issue will truly be a starting point for the emergence of a dialogue on this crucial question. The revolutionary nationalists have already begun.

The League is solidly committed to international struggle, but not without modifications. The international capital-versus-labor struggle is long ceased. It is now more the struggle of the rich nations versus the poor nations. It is no accident that the former are Europe and the US (with its Eastern satellite, Japan) and the latter are predominantly non - white countries. This is the major contradiction — of the West versus the non-West, and it is this contradiction which assumes the primary significance within the black workers' movement. This chief contradiction was aptly summed up in Du Bois's often-quoted dictum: The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line. Their international commitment rests on the success or failure of the development of the national movement. This is how internationalism is introduced — by fully realizing the international importance of one's movement. Cuba, China, and Vietnam all testify to that fact, and so will the League.

Undoubtedly the above will confuse many. Yet the common knowledge of black workers is that white labor has left them in the cold. What characterizes the race relations of the American working class is a long history of betrayal and neglect. The fact is simple : Organized labor and the labor movement were instrumental in crushing black labor. A few remembrances would be in order.

The plight of the black slave and his super-exploitation has been skillfully handled in Robert Starobin's Industrial Slavery in the Old South, and I suggest that the interested reader come by a copy of this book. Following Emancipation, the black slave with his newly-acquired freedman's status entered the labor market. He was powerfully met by his poor-white counterpart. The black wretch possessed innumerable skills, and, as one writer noted, the black artisan held "a practical monopoly of the trades" throughout the South. (11) This represents an important chapter in radical history that deserves our full attention. For much of the Nineteenth Century, the black artisan controlled much

of Southern labor. DuBois notes with his usual clarity the effects of this development:

> After Emancipation came suddenly, in the midst of war and social upheaval, the first real economic question was that of the self-protection of freed working men. There were three chief classes of them: the agricultural laborers in the country districts, the house - servants in town and country, and the artisans who were rapidly migrating to town. The Freedmen's Bureau undertook the temporary guardianship of the first class, the second class easily passed from half-free service to half-servile freedom. But the third class, the artisans, met peculiar conditions. They had always been used to working under the guardianship of a master, and even that guardianship of artisans in some cases was but nominal, yet it was of the greatest value for protection. This soon became clear as the Negro freed artisan set up business for himself: If there was a creditor to be sued, he could no longer be sued in the name of an influential white master; if there was a contract to be had, there was no responsible white patron to answer for the good performance of the work. Nevertheless, these differences were not strongly felt at first — the friendly patronage of the former master was often voluntarily given the freedman, and for some years following the war the Negro mechanic still held undisputed sway. (12)

This progress was not lasting. As Northern industry invaded the South, it brought with it the strength of organized labor. The triumph of this organized labor in the South did not match its more-egalitarian works up North. The black artisan was crushed without the usual oratorical hesitation about such things as rights and equality. The labor movement crushed this small class of black artisans, subordinating them to the greedy desires of white labor and to the advantage of the capitalist. This is indeed a sad chapter in the American labor movement's history and one that still needs to be written in full.

By driving the black laborer from the skilled trades, organized labor forced him to become a scab in strikebreaking activities. The resulting friction was ominous of Detroit and Newark in 1967. (13) The black laborer was forced to accept the dual-wage system, menial jobs, and continual confinement within industry. There was little or no chance for upgrading or betterment. He was denied apprenticeships and was forced into separate local unions while his brother stole his livelihood lock and stock. Capitalism brought with it white labor which drove black labor to extinction in the skilled trades. And as black labor was driven from its work, it was also forced to leave home and migrate to the shining North — the land of golden opportunity.

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The effects of black urbanization have yet to be understood. But one thing is sure. The coming of blacks to large industrial cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh had important aspects. With the great war of 1914 came the great demand for black labor. Black labor came in herds to wartime industry. This was a timely break for black people. With work came money and the satisfaction of basic needs. Although blacks came in on the bottom and remained there, they did manage to implant themselves in industry and lay the groundwork for the future entrance of more black workers.

The tensions which developed out of the great migrations to the North are a part of a large transition made by Afro-Americans during the Twentieth Century. The shift was mainly from a rural proletariat to an urban industrial work force. This shift was dramatic, racial, intense. Rebellions were found everywhere from Arkansas to Illinois. And the results are not without strategic importance. The industrial shift had paved the way for a wide black revolutionary movement. The Garvey movement was a movement of the black masses — the black industrial, service, and domestic workers, as well as "the brother on the street". Garvey was totally rejected by the black intelligentsia and middle class and depended wholly on the masses for support and sustenance. This was the most-threatening movement the American Republic had ever had to face. (14)

Garveyism was a response to the racial fuel boiling in black people. This rage was in part the result of organized labor's unwillingness to deal with "the Negro problem" and of Jim Crow in the "golden North". Moreover Garveyism elevated black consciousness into realizing itself as independent. Garvey grounded with black people and told them of the imminent dangers of life in America — cultural rape, psychological instability, moral destruction. Garvey shouted "Up You Mighty Race!" because he foresaw the oppression strengthening its hand over black people. He was crushed: hounded, attacked, abused, accused of fraud. The US Government was instrumental in "ridding America of Garvey" while putting out the flames of revolution in Black America.

During this period organized labor was no-less oppressive. Craft unionism and its rise spread the gospel of the black workers' downfall. The AFL's unwritten exclusion policy was commented on by two black writers in 1931:

> By refusing to accept apprentices from a class of workers that social tradition has stamped as inferior, or by withholding membership from reputable craftsmen of this class, the union accomplishes two things: It protects its "good" name, and it eliminates a whole class of future competitors. While race prejudice is a very-fundamental fact in the exclusion of the Negro, the desire to restrict competition so as to safeguard job monopoly and control wages is inextricably interwoven

with it. (15)

The AFL refused to investigate and prohibit discrimination in its own internationals because it "would" create prejudice instead of breaking it down. (16) The CIO also was guilty of racism, but managed to escape this guilt because of the war-time expansion during its emergence and growth. (17) Following World War II, the black movement turned from institutional gains to "civil rights". It took Malcolm X and a host of other well-known black leaders to point out what so many black people had largely forgotten — that they are still oppressed, and that the only acceptable solution would be black-created and black-led.

The League responds to this oppression with a new and vital vigor. Black workers "entered industry on the lowest rung of the industrial ladder" (18), and that is where they remain. Organized labor has not contributed much to black labor, and the few exceptions like the IWW and the UMW have not been enough to offset the systematic exclusion and assault of black labor. The League knows this. It recognizes this fact of betrayal as a fossil. What follows is that something must be done, and the League is doing it. Sense the tone of the following, and remind yourself of history.

We fully understand, after five centuries under this fiendish system and the heinous savages that it serves, namely the white racist owners and operators of the means of destruction. We further understand that there have been previous attempts by our people in this country to throw off this degrading yoke of oppression, which have ended in failure. Throughout our history, black workers, first as slaves and later as pseudo freedmen, have been in the vanguard of potentially-successful revolutionary struggles in all black movements as well as in integrated efforts. As examples of these we cite: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the beautiful Haitian Revolution; the slave revolts led by Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser; the Populist movement and the labor movement of the Thirties in the US. Common to all these movements were two things: their failure and the reason why they failed. These movements failed because they were betrayed from within, or, in the case of the integrated movements, by white leadership exploiting the racist nature of the white workers they led. We, of course, must avoid that pitfall and purge our ranks of any traitors and lackeys that may succeed in penetrating this organization. At this point we loudly proclaim that we have learned our lesson from history and we shall not fail. So it is that we who are the hope of black people and all oppressed people everywhere dedicate ourselves to the cause of black liberation to build the world anew realizing that only a struggle led by black workers

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can triumph over our powerful reactionary enemy. (19)

The League's purpose is two-fold: to dissolve the bonds of white racist control, and thus, in turn, to relieve oppressed people the world over. It is fitting that the League's motto embodies the challenge: DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN!

As the reader goes through this issue and the important documents and analyses of black workers, I suggest that he remember the incisive comments of Karl Marx:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (20)

Certainly there is no more-fitting way to begin our own self-criticism.

FOOTNOTES

1. Abram L. Harris Junior: "The Negro and Economic Radicalism" in The Modern Quarterly, 2, 3 (1924), Page 199.

2. To the Point of Production (Radical Education Project pamphlet, 1970), an interview with John Watson, Page 1.

3. Ibid., Page 3. The interested person might reflect on the import of this organizing shift. The League breaks with all black organization by emphasizing organizing at "the point of production". Community organizing represents a diversity of conflicting interests; for example the New York school conflict of 1968 centers on the antagonism of the black school board elite and conscious concerns of the black masses.

4. The ruling class had the power to integrate existing minorities. The existing minorities are powerless in decisions affecting such basic issues as housing, education, transportation, and employment. All the action by the integrationists takes place with the consent of the white ruling class. For a more-detailed discussion of this important ruling class tactic, the reader is urged to consult Robert L. Allen's important book Black Awakening in Capitalist America (Garden City, New York, 1969). The author was a Guardian correspondent during the birth of the Black Power age, and has some useful incisive analyses.

5. The myth of middle-class expansion has certainly taken its toll. More than 80% of Black America are engaged in some sort of service,

industrial, or domestic employment or in the everyday struggle for survival because they are unemployed or underemployed. The "brother on the street", when considered within this framework, becomes not a lumpen proletarian, but an unemployed worker. Although there is a black lumpen proletariat, it does not characterize the class reality of black people in America.

6. Booker T. Washington: "The Atlanta Exposition Address", quoted in Eric Perkins and John Higginson's "Black Students: Reformists or Revolutionaries?" in R. Aya and N. Miller: America: System and Revolution (New York, forthcoming). The reader should also consider the documents offered in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (editors): Black Nationalism in America (Indianapolis, 1970), relating to bourgeois nationalism and accommodation.

7. The Black Movement has been unable to regain much of the fuel it ignited during the lives of Martin Luther King Junior and Malcolm X. The leadership vacuum is widespread, resulting in a marked decline in struggle.

8. Ernie Mkalimoto: Revolutionary Nationalism and Class Struggle (Black Star Publishing pamphlet, 1970). This pamphlet will soon be available in revised form. It is an extremely-important statement on black ideology, and should be possessed by all persons who consider themselves revolutionary. For more information write to Black Star Publishing, 8824 Fenkell, Detroit, Michigan 48238.

9. Ibid. This is the most-important definition and refinement of the revolutionary-nationalist position to date.

10. Some fruitful analysis has already begun. Although the economics of racism is a sorely-neglected area, some people are beginning to realize its centrality. See the essay by Harold Baron in this issue and his forthcoming The Web of Urban Racism, and also the fresh analysis brought by economist William K. Tabb, The Political Economy of the Ghetto (New York, 1970).

11. Charles Kelsey: "The Evolution of Negro Labor", The Annals . . . 31 (1903), Page 57. This article is useful despite its Darwinist bias. The reader should also know of the two important studies conducted by W. E. B. DuBois: The Negro Artisan and The Negro American Artisan, published in 1902 and 1912 respectively.

12. W. E. B. DuBois and associates: The Negro Artisan (Atlanta University Press, 1902), Page 23.

13. The great race riots in East Saint Louis in 1917 and Chicago in 1919 underscored many other riots and rebellions. The causes of these events were the same as those of the great rebellions of July 1967 in Newark and Detroit — economic oppression coupled with the failure to mert rising expectations.

14. The work of a young Jamican brother, Robert Hill, indicates that the Government felt itself threatened by the widespread success of the Garvey movement among the urban poor and unemployed. An essay of

his on Garvey in America is soon due in an anthology on Garveyism edited by John H. Clarke. Any radical who refuses to acknowledge the stimulus of Garveyism will be forever learning about the Black Power movement.

15. Sterling D. Spero and Abraham L. Harris: The Black Worker (New York, Columbia University Press, 1931), Page 56.

16. Statement of John P. Frey, molders chief, as quoted in Marc Karson and Ronald Radosh: "The AFL and the Negro Worker, 1894 to 1949", in Julius Jacobson (editor): The Negro and the American Labor Movement (New York, 1968), Page 170.

17. Sumner Rosen: "The CIO Era, 1935-1955", in Jacobson, op. cit., Page 207. Also see Herbert R. Northrup: "Organized Labor and Negro Workers", Journal of Political Economy, Number 206 (June 1943), and Organized Labor and the Negro (New York, 1944).

18. Lorenzo J. Greene and Carter G. Woodson: The Negro Wage Earner (Washington DC, 1930), Page 322.

19. Constitution of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, 1968.

20. Karl Marx: The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon (New York, 1966), Page 15.

At the Point of Production

INTRODUCTION

One of the most-significant developments in the maturation of the current nationalist movement in Black America is the organization of black workers along industrial lines. Forming in factories and plants where they are actively engaged in producing the wealth on which the high standards of living of White America have been based, the black workers hold the key to the future direction and success of the struggle for liberation of Black America. Contrary to the impression created by the vociferous outpouring of manifestoes, declarations, constitutions, et cetera by black students, intellectuals, and artists, black workers will be the vanguard of the black liberation movement. Some feel that black ghetto youth constitute a vanguard, and black ghetto youth are truly courageous warriors; but it is black workers who have the social and economic power and the discipline to not only carry on protracted struggle against the present system, but also create a new one in which black people can live in freedom and dignity.

The documents that follow portray the history and development of one group of black workers : the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, a national organization based in Detroit. Since it was an "intellectual" who selected these particular documents, the reader might expect a lengthy introduction explaining what the League of Revolutionary Black Workers "really means". However the League's analysis, history, and current position are clearly stated in these documents; the audience that the League is addressing understands them; and the burden is on self-proclaimed "radicals" — black and white — to accept the League on its own terms.

John H. Bracey Junior

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DRUM — Vanguard of the Black Revolution

(from an article by Luke Tripp which appeared in The South End,
the student newspaper at Wayne State University, January 23, 1969)

DRUM is an organization of oppressed and exploited black workers.
It realizes that black workers are the victims of inhumane slavery at
the behest of white racist plant managers. It also realizes that black
workers compose over 60% of the entire work force at the Hamtramck
assembly plant, and therefore hold exclusive power. We members of
DRUM had no other alternative but to form an organization and present
a platform.

The Union has consistently and systematically failed us time and
time again. We have attempted to address our grievances to the UAW's
procedure, but all to no avail. The UAW bureaucracy is just as guilty,
and its hands are just as bloody, as the white racist management of the
Chrysler Corporation. We black workers feel that if skilled trades can
negotiate directly with the Company and hold a separate contract, then
black workers have even more justification for moving independently
of the UAW. While DRUM would appreciate the help of management and
the UAW in abolishing the problem of racism that exists, we will put
an end to it with or without your help.

Metropolitan Detroit, automobile capital of the world, is the scene of
rumblings on the labor front of the black liberation struggle. The many
oppressive conditions existing in the auto factories have been steadily
increasing since the racist corporations were obliged to open the door
to black labor as a result of the labor shortage during World War II.
True to the American tradition the racist factory owners relegated the
black workers to the heavy and dirty low-paying jobs. Tasks performed
by two white workers were assigned to one black worker.

For the past 20 years there has been virtually no vertical movement
of black workers in the plants. Not until recently, under the pressure
of the civil-rights movement, did the auto firms hire a token number
of black men for white-collar positions. And even then most of those
positions were static and non-supervisory.

Union Racist Too

Although the labor union (UAW) claims to be the champion of justice
and equality, it did little to check the rampant racism practiced in the
factories. As a matter of fact, the union itself was guilty of racism.
A casual glance at the officers in the union bureaucracy shows where
their equality is at.

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Thus black workers had to confront both the union and the company. This intolerable situation at Dodge Main led to the development of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM).

On May 2, 1968 a walkout occurred at the Hamtramck assembly plant which stemmed from a gradual speed-up of the production line. The workers set up picket lines around the gates. The company then sent out photographers to take pictures of the pickets. The pictures were used as evidence against some of the pickets and were instrumental in the discharge and disciplining of certain workers who took part in the walkout and picketing. Both black and white pickets were involved. The disciplinary action taken against them and the overall administration of punishment was overwhelmingly applied to black workers.

Black workers were held responsible for the walkout, which was in fact caused by the negative company policy toward working conditions. This was the specific incident that gave rise to the inception of DRUM.

Black workers who were either dismissed or penalized then moved to organize the workers at Dodge Main by using a newsletter (DRUM) as an organizing tool. The contents of the Newsletter dealt with very specific cases of both racism and tomism on the job, and stressed the necessity of united action on the part of black workers to abolish the racial aspects of the exploitation and degradation going on at the plant.

The reaction of the workers to the first issue of <u>DRUM</u> was general acceptance. They were somewhat astounded to see the truth in print. Most considered it a move in the right direction.

Naturally the reaction of management was hostile. They were so blinded by their racist stereotype image of the black man that it was hard for them to believe that <u>DRUM</u> was written by black workers. Management couldn't conceive of blacks' initiating and carrying out an intelligent program.

In the second issue of <u>DRUM</u> several toms at the plant were blown. The brothers really dug it. <u>DRUM</u> had gotten over in a big way. From then on the brothers looked for <u>DRUM</u> every week. Amazingly, not one <u>DRUM</u> could be found thrown away or lying around.

After the third week the brothers began to ask about joining DRUM. Members of DRUM working in the plant proselytized and recruited brothers on the job. The strength and influence of DRUM grew vastly.

Around the sixth week the more-militant workers wanted to go for some concrete action against Chrysler and the UAW. At this point the editors of DRUM decided to test their strength. They called for a week boycott of two bars outside the gate that were patronized by a large number of brothers. The bars didn't hire blacks, and practiced racism in other subtle ways. DRUM received about 95% co-operation. This was achieved without the use of pickets or picket signs.

As a further test of strength DRUM called for an extension of the boycott. Again DRUM received solid support, so they decided to get down.

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DRUM knew that most workers would be temporarily laid off during the coming week because of the changeover, the production of the "69" models. There was also a bill-out date at which time a certain number of units had to be produced. So DRUM planned to shut down the plant right before the bill-out time and set back the schedule of the change period. Their purpose was to demonstrate their strength and to show Chrysler that DRUM was not bull-jiving or playing.

DRUM started with the first phase of their program They listed 15 demands which dealt with the following conditions at the Hamtramck assembly plant, where about 60% of the work force is black.

(from DRUM, Volume 1, Number 2)

(1) 95% of all foremen in the plants are white.
(2) 99% of all general foremen are white.
(3) 100% of all plant superintendents are white.
(4) 90% of all skilled tradesmen are white.
(5) 90% of all apprentices are white.
(6) Systematically all the easy jobs in the plants are held by whites.
(7) Whenever whites are put on harder jobs they are given helpers.
(8) Black workers who miss a day's work need two doctors' excuses.
(9) Seniority is a racist concept, since black workers systematically were denied employment for years at this plant.

On Thursday of the ninth week, DRUM got down! They held a rally in a parking lot across from the plant. A number of groups from the black community were represented at the rally, including a conga group that provided the sounds.

Several leaders in DRUM ran down their thing. They rapped on the wretched conditions in the plant. The response to the raps was nothing less than inspiring. After the raps about 300 of those attending the rally formed a picket line and marched two blocks to UAW Local 3. DRUM had carefully planned the picketing to coincide with the union executive board meeting. When the workers arrived at the local one union flunky tried to prevent the workers from entering the room where the board was meeting. He ran a thing about signing in, closed meeting, et cetera. But the workers didn't stop to address that jive. They bogarted their way into the "bourgy" air-conditioned room.

The sight of a room full of greasy, hard-looking workers shook up the "button-down" executive board. The contrast was striking. Here you had the workers in their "humping" blue coveralls, and their union "representatives" laid to the bone in their mohair suits.

The panic-stricken executive board promptly canceled their meeting and suggested that a general meeting be held in the auditorium. At the general meeting the DRUM leaders laid down a heavy thing. They ran down how the union worked hand-in-glove with the fat corporation, the

union's failure to address the workers' grievances, et cetera. Coming behind the irrefutable facts laid down by DRUM, Ed Liska, president of UAW Local 3, tried to defend the union using a weak pro-capitalist line. He ran a foul thing on how Chrysler provides a job for the workers and the powerful position of the company.

Charles Brooks, vice president of Local 3 and an Uncle Tom of long standing, tried to back up his boss by playing out of a "brother" bag.

Seeing that the meeting was futile, DRUM served notice that they were going to fight the UAW and close up the plant. They then upped and split.

Friday, the next day, at five o'clock in the morning, DRUM and its supporting groups turned black workers away at the gate. No attempt was made to interfere with white workers.

The first few workers to arrive were met by a handful of pickets without signs. The workers were not hip to the shut-down date. After the pickets ran it to them, one worker replied: "Shutting down this motherfucker, whatever the reason, is cool as far as I'm concerned."

An hour later practically all the black workers on the six o'clock shift were milling around the gate listening to the drums and spying the few Toms who went into the plant.

Most of the white workers reported to work after they saw that it was safe for them to go through the gate. Those who stayed out did so for various reasons. Some believed in honoring picket lines, and a few were sympathetic. Still others didn't want to work that day anyway.

Before noon six DRUM members went to the local and met with Ed Liska, the president; a few other bigots; and a smattering of Toms.

In this meeting DRUM again voiced its grievances and stated that racism must be erased both at Chrysler and in the UAW. DRUM let it be known that they were doing the UAW a favor by coming to the local with their grievances.

Liska said he would take the grievances and demands to the local plant manager and international union board. DRUM stated that they came to negotiate from a position of strength and power. They pointed out that there were over 3,000 angry black workers standing outside the gate because they were resolutely opposed to the racist policy of Chrysler and the oppressive conditions in the plant. Production almost stood still that day. Thus the value of their labor was clearly shown.

Before the DRUM members hatted up they ran a thing to Liska that if he didn't get positive results from the meeting with the international board or Chrysler, the only honorable thing left for him and his jive time staff to do would be to respectfully step down. DRUM then split.

The DRUM members then returned to the area at which the black workers were massed. They reported what went down in the meeting with the UAW officials. The demands were read amid roaring applause.

About this time Polish pigs in blue were massing opposite the black workers. After putting on tear-gas masks and tightening their grips on

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their clubs, the pigs stood at the ready. A Tom detective then came up and ordered the workers to disperse.

DRUM then began to skillfully organize the workers. Car pools were set up to take at least 250 black workers to Chrysler's headquarters in the city of Highland Park, about five miles away.

When the black workers and supporting community groups, including many dressed in African attire, fell on the scene in front of Chrysler headquarters, all paper-shuffling within the building ceased. The loud thump of the drums and the vibration created by brothers and sisters brought every Honky in the building to the windows. The expression on their faces was the same as the expression on the faces of the cavalry in Custer's last stand.

The sisters in their bubas and the brothers dashikied to the bone went for their thing.

Headquarters paranoia came down, and they called for the protection of their property by the Highland Park pigs, who soon showed at the scene armed to the teeth. When they pulled out their gas-warfare gear the brothers were ready. They had come prepared with their surplus army gas masks. During the confrontation a group of representatives of DRUM went into the building and demanded to see the policy makers. The policy makers refused to meet, so DRUM said later. They went back to the demonstration and ran down what had happened. Afterward the demonstration broke up and the pigs fell away. So far DRUM had pursued all their immediate objectives by peaceful means. But DRUM takes the any-means-necessary position in regard to goals.

The militant demonstration jolted both the company and the union. Chrysler's newly-created community-relations department promptly got on the case. The union also reacted. DRUM was cordially invited to attend the Sunday session of the Detroit black caucus of the UAW, which is supposed to be a citywide caucus of black representatives of every UAW local in town.

The leaders of DRUM went to the meeting expecting to find a group of militant black men. Instead they found the caucus to be made up of four old wrinkled-up kneegrows and two young brothers. DRUM's 12 hard black workers dominated the meeting.

One old Uncle Remus from Local 7 rapped about irrelevant things. He talked about what he did "way back then". Another fossil continued the nonsense with a rap on Nineteenth Century unionism and a spot of reminiscence on a first kneegrow theme. The only positive thing to be achieved was an agreement by all to support DRUM in its fight against racism at Chrysler.

On Monday, the following day, DRUM once again demonstrated at the plant. Chrysler officials on top of the factories were using telescopes, binoculars, and cameras to try to discern who was participating in the demonstration. A few Chrysler flunkies had the audacity to try serving injunctions against the demonstration.

When they tried to hand the John Doe injunctions to individuals, the demonstrators slapped them from their hands, tore them up, and threw the pieces over the fence around the plant.

The pigs in blue showed up and began to break up the perfectly-legal demonstration. The plant was partially shut down that day. And it can be added that they would have been backed up with guns instead of with picket signs.

In the weeks following the demonstration, DRUM has received wide support from the various church groups and other organizations in the black community. They have also won the respect of practically all the black workers not only at Dodge Main, but also at other local plants.

In their efforts to slander and discredit DRUM the UAW has branded DRUM a racist, illegitimate, hate-mongering communist organization. The UAW — with its long practice of racism from its very inception which is reflected by the fact that blacks pay about a fourth of the dues in the UAW, but there are only 72 black International Representatives out of a total of almost 1100.

The UAW can call DRUM illegitimate, when its own "legitimacy" is granted by the company and supported by the courts rather than by the super-exploited black workers.

The UAW calls DRUM a hate organization when it is crystal clear to all that it is the black workers who are the victims of hate.

Playing on the brainwashed psyche of the masses, the UAW is going for its red-baiting thing by branding DRUM a communist organization. If DRUM were truly a communist organization, they would have listed 15 ultimatums instead of 15 reformist demands.

The brothers at the plants are hip to the jive the UAW is trying to run. They can try to use these tactics to stop DRUM if they want to. But such counter-revolutionary activity will only heighten the workers' revolutionary focus and sharpen the contradiction between the UAW and the rank and file. The UAW has messed over the workers for too long. By continually doing so, the only thing they will get in the end is a good ass-kicking.

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THE BUTCHER SHOP: HAMTRAMCK HOSPITAL

(from DRUM Newsletter Number 21)

The Hamtramck so-called hospital is no better than your butcher shop. The butcher shop will kill an animal quick, but the pig doctors would prolong black people's pain forever if they could. The hospital at Hamtramck resembles a German concentraion-camp hospital. These pig so-called doctors are no more than stooges for the Honky general

foremen like "Wild Bill" Jimmy Briggs, Dick Gutis, and Joe Sharen. These off-beat, cast-off pig quacks are coming very close to adding maiming and murder to their crimes against black people.

There are plenty of complaints coming into DRUM, like that of our black brother in Department 9160 who had Hong Kong flu. His foreman refused to let him go to First Aid for over an hour, claiming he was short of help. By the time the nurse took his temperature and sent him to see the doctor, the doctor had already been called by our "black brother" general foreman and told to send him back to work. When the brother got back he told the foreman he just couldn't make it and had to see his doctor. Our brother left work and went straight to his doctor's office, where he fell out on the floor. The doctor told him that he had the new flu and was close to having pneumonia.

Another black brother went to First Aid one day to have his swollen ankle checked out. On this day there was only one nurse in the place. She told one of the black sisters who was suffering from pains in her leg and stomach that it was a factory first-aid station and she could quit coming there every time she got a pain. When the nurse got to the black brother she couldn't figure out why his ankle had swollen up — even though he told her that he was a truck driver and the long hours of standing on the gas pedal had aggravated this cut on his foot. The nurse called for the butcher, whereupon the fat pig stuck his head out the door, glanced at the ankle, and said: "Put some medication on it and send him back to work."

Last week a black sister fell down the stairs, and her stupid Honky foreman didn't want her to go to First Aid. The Hamtramck First Aid sent her to Ford Hospital for an X-ray. When she got back she had a slightly - fractured wrist and a bruised leg and hip. The nut at the so-called hospital sent her back to work and put on her slip, doing left-hand work on a sit-down job.

Then there was the black brother in 1950 whose back was strained so badly he couldn't walk. They would not let him go home. He was off work for two or three months. And there was the sister in cut-and-sew who had sugar diabetes and accidentally took an overdose of medicine. She was sent back to work. And there are enough others to fill a book.

We black workers can no longer bear the brunt of the outrageous medical practices carried out by the white racist doctors, nurses, and corporate policy - makers at the medical centers here at Hamtramck assembly plant and Huber foundry. Let's prepare to move en masse against this medical policy. We would be better off treating each other than being toyed with by these white racists.

DOWN WITH RACIST MEDICAL PRACTICES!

DOWN WITH RACIST DOCTORS!

DOWN WITH RACIST NURSES!

JOIN DRUM!

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Lap Dogs on the rise.

We must move forward. DRUM has been in existence for about six months now at the Hamtramck assembly plant. Our overall objective as outlined previously is to destroy racism at the Hamtramck plant and in UAW Local 3. Our method for carrying out our program is to expose the truth and to forge black unity. With a body of united black workers we shall be able to wipe out every vestige of racism wherever it may exist.

The foremost obstacles standing in our way at this time are the notorious Uncle Toms in our midst. It must be understood that in our history most of the revolutionary struggles of black people failed just because of the traitors from within. Therefore the Uncle Toms present are an ever-present danger to DRUM, to black workers, and to the black community at large, and even to themselves, because they are obviously unaware of the seriousness with which we have launched our just struggles.

Since DRUM has been in existence, we black workers have suffered many abuses. We have been fired on trumped-up charges, we have been attacked in the parking lot behind the bars by the fascist Polish pigs of the Hamtramck Police Department. We have been locked in the Union Hall and have been beaten and maced in the eyes by those same pigs. Our brothers have been run down by those same pigs on motorcycles. We have been generally harassed by the white-controlled racist UAW officials. We have been intimidated by white racist plant-protection guards. We have had an election stolen from us, and we have had other forces making undercover moves in our name.

Black Brothers and Sisters, we have remained patient and disciplined in the face of those abuses and sufferings. We have relied on you to decide our course of action, understanding that our suffering helps you to understand the vicious corrupt elements we are struggling against. We must now prepare to obtain "new guards for our future security".

We must prepare now and become psychologically set to deal with Uncle Toms in whatever manner the masses of black people decide. Uncle Toms are traitors; they will sell us out for 30 pieces of silver and help keep us divided. They give subsequent aid to our enemies by speaking out in the Honkies' behalf.

As DRUM attempts to flush out all of the Uncle Toms, its task gets more and more difficult. For by exposing Uncle Toms we have forced

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some of them to go underground and at the same time we have forced the Honkies to pay top dollar to have some of our own so-called black brothers denounce DRUM.

Because of the above facts, Uncle Toms have become so diverse that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to keep track of them. We have Uncle Toms tomming in the black community and snitching at the plant. We have Toms snitching at the so-called Solidarity House.

We have Toms snitching at the Hamtramck assemblyplant, the Huber foundry, and Local 3. We have Toms snitching on the department level inside the plant. We have out-of-sight Toms who stand up out front as saviors for white racism. We have off-the-wall Toms who stand up and support some off-the-wall ("it takes time") philosophy designed merely to stifle the black struggle. And we have sneaky Toms — and these are in many ways the most-dangerous Toms. They go around with natural hair speaking about black unity, and thereby gain access to information they could not normally get.

It is obvious that with out-of-sight community so-called Solidarity House Uncle Toms, and sneaky department-level Toms, it is so hard to keep track of the many varieties of Toms that DRUM has devised a new method — a Tom chart. We suggest that all our black brothers make a sample copy of this sample Tom chart, so that when one of the Toms' names pops up, you will know just what kind of bag he is playing out of. You may also find it necessary to add names to it, and when any of these Toms come up missing you will know what happened to them and why.

Join DRUM!

GETTING OUR HISTORY STRAIGHT

(from DRUM Newsletter Number 23)

To enlighten the black worker of his true history, DRUM carried this article in the 23rd issue of its newsletter:

HIS STORY

History of his story.

"The day the slave ship landed in America our history ended and his story began." Like everything else, the white racist power structure has lied about the true history of the black worker. "Negro" history leads us to believe that some of us were field Negroes: the ones who did the hardest work (picking cotton, et cetera), wore the raggediest

clothes, and ate the worst food; and the rest of us were house Negroes: the ones who received the lightest jobs (cleaning the master's house, et cetera), wore the best clothes, and ate the best food. This is far from the truth.

"Negro" slaves were employed in foundries as foremen, founders, and blacksmiths. They were used to mine coal and ore. They worked on the waterfront as longshoremen. With the exception of conductors, they worked on the railroads in every capacity including that of locomotive engineer, and they piloted the steamboats that plied on Southern waters. They were even used to some extent as hands in the textile mills, and formed a large portion of the workers in the tobacco factories. These facts can be found in The Black Worker, by Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris. And this is not all. In the same book it is reported: "A number of blacks worked in the skilled crafts such as carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and the other mechanical trades."

Why would the Honky permit slaves (black workers) to obtain jobs that sometimes his fellow Honky couldn't get? The answer is really very simple. As spelled out in The Black Worker: "The masters found it both easier and cheaper to have their slaves trained in carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and the other mechanical trades than to have to depend on outside free white labor." The Honky even got farther out than that: Many masters regarded their skilled slaves as a profitable source of income, and instead of keeping them on the plantation to serve the mechanical needs of the establishment, sent them to practice their trades in the cities.

History is best qualified to reward all research. All black workers should be able to see in 1968 that his story is REPEATING itself — in the racist UAW. It is a fact that black people didn't just pick cotton during "slavery", and that black people did work on so-called good jobs then. But we must keep in mind WHY. The only reason the Honky ever permitted blacks to do these jobs was that IT WAS EASIER FOR HIM (THE HONKY) TO DO SO! It was not because he loved black people. If you doubt what the writer says, check this out: During slavery the Honky insisted on employing his slaves in whatever manner he found profitable. If blacks were not needed on the plantation, they were rented out to dig ditches. If they were too weak to stand the strain of working in the fields, they were sent to the cotton mills "to attend to the looms and the spindles". In racist America, black workers have "progressed" only when it was profitable for the Honky or when world pressure was put on America in time of war. Black people can work when the Honky is at war, but as soon as the war is over we're right back out in the street. Brothers and Sisters, things are not getting better, things are getting worse; black workers unite with DRUM or perish.

THE CARROT AND THE STICK: DECEMBER 11, 1968

(from DRUM Newsletter Number 24)

Last week while Chrysler Corporation executives were in Atlanta smiling and shaking hands with the Reverend Ralph Abernathy and all expressing their satisfaction with a "milestone agreement" on a plan to "pour $1,000,000 into colored-owned banks in three US cities (Atlanta, Los Angeles, Detroit)", another Chrysler executive, Gwain Gillespie — the general manager of Dodge Truck operations, also was smiling and shaking hands — with Detroit Police Commissioner Johannes Spreen, and expressing his satisfaction with another "milestone agreement" — namely the gift of two Dodge Executive Suite Vans to the Detroit Police Department.

We of DRUM feel that the Chrysler Corporation's supposed plan to "pour $1,000,000" into those three black communities is indeed a new milestone — in bullshit and nonsense — since the combined population of those three communities is, roughly, two million black people. This means that even if the $1,000,000 were to be divided equally among the black people of the three communities, each person would get just 50¢. If they should ever really want to do some good, perhaps some of the mini-brained executive pigs of Chrysler Corporation will devote some of their not-too-valuable time to correcting racist practices in their plants in Detroit and elsewhere, instead of using it to devise bullshit pacification programs that are nothing but rank insults to the black community.

We would also like to comment on that other "milestone" — the gift of two vans to the Detroit Police Department. We agree that this too is indeed a milestone — in honesty. It clearly reveals the contempt of Chrysler Corporation in particular and big business in general for the black community. The vans were given to the Police Department to aid them in recruiting because, according to Gwain Gillespie: "Recruiting good police officers is important to us at Dodge too, because police work is in our best interest."

We know goddam well that police work is in your "best interest" — since you have used the police repeatedly to harass and intimidate the black workers in general and DRUM members in particular in recent walkouts and demonstrations; to write unjustified parking tickets; and last but not least to physically attack DRUM members and other black workers on the street and inside the Union Hall with mace and even ax handles during the election of union trustees.

Further, we can only hope that these so-called "good" policemen won't be recruited from the same pig-pen that produced "defenders of law and order" like those who attacked the black students at McMichael Junior High School when they staged a walkout, or those who savagely beat black youths at a dance in the Veterans' Memorial Building, or the

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homicidal psychopaths that murdered in the infamous Algiers Motel.

DRUM maintains that both so-called milestones are nothing more than perfect examples of the Honky's "carrot and stick" policy whereby he offers a carrot ($1,000,000) to the oppressed black community with one hand, while the other hand threatens the community with a stick (the police force). The Chrysler version of the "carrot and stick" idea is doomed to fail as all other versions have failed, most notably the attempt to use it in Vietnam. The black community is not for sale and will not be intimidated by pig policemen, "good" or otherwise.

WHY?

Within the space of two weeks two of our fellow black workers, young brother Gary Thompson and sister Mamie Williams, were murdered by the Chrysler Corporation. Attendance by Eldon employees at both of the funeral services was sparse, but perhaps that is understandable in view of the present economic situation. However it should be noted and noted well that not a single Local 961 union official attended Mamie Williams's funeral, and only two — Al Holly and James Cavers — came to Gary Thompson's funeral. Our Uncle Tom President and Supersonic Nigger Executive Board consisting of James Franklin, Leon Johnson, Dan Toomer, Big Davis, Charlie McNeeley, J. C. Thomas, and their ilk, along with the mass of so-called "black" stewards and committeemen, did not see fit to even send a telegram or wreath to the families of the deceased union members, much less attend the last rites.

We of ELRUM can make these statements because we were present at both of the funerals and are presently doing everything in our power to aid the families concerned. We say this not out of self-glorification, but out of a true and sincere feeling of concern for all of our brothers and sisters. The present union administration, from top to bottom, has demonstrated time and again its lack of concern with the problems of black workers at Eldon. Its lackadaisical attitude regarding the deadly conditions in the plant, which have just recently taken two lives, shows that Elroy and Company are in partnership with management.

The time to break up this union-management partnership is now! The time to obtain BLACK representation is now! The time to stop all racist harassment, intimidation, degradation, and murder is right now!

Three Members of ELRUM Discharged

Three members of ELRUM (Eldon Revolutionary Union Movement)

were recently discharged for their part in the safety work stoppage which took place at Eldon on May 27 and 28. The work stoppage was a direct response to the murder of Gary Thompson, the young black forklift driver who was crushed to death on Tuesday morning, May 26. Prior to this tragic occurrence the Eldon Safety Committee, a loose coalition composed by ELRUM, Eldon Wildcat, and several discharged union officials, had been putting out leaflets and papers exposing the hazardous conditions at Eldon. The Safety Committee responded to Thompson's murder with a safety work stoppage, a refusal to work until the plant is cleaned up and the deadly conditions are corrected. This action is covered under the National Labor Relations Act, giving workers the right to refuse to work under hazardous safety conditions regardless of union contracts and agreements.

Armed with this act the Safety Committee showed up at the gates on Wednesday morning with picket signs saying "Death Rides a Jitney", "No Safety, No Production", "Refuse To Work Until The Plant Is Safe", and "You Will Be Next". ELRUM had lawyers at each gate to deal with the police and any injunctions that might be issued, and the picketing began. The response from the day shift was fair, and nearly all of the afternoon shift stayed off work. However dissension within the ranks of the Safety Committee, particularly among Uncle Tom union officials, spelled failure for the safety work struggle. Management's response to the deaths of black workers and to the safety work stoppage was to call out the Detroit Police Department and request special patrols of their Tactical Mobile Unit. James Edwards, one of the discharged members of ELRUM, was arrested on bogus assault and battery charges. (Later the charges were dropped.) UAW Local 961 made no response at all to the work stoppage, their interest being the corporation's interest, as they have demonstrated time and again.

On Friday, May 29, Chrysler discharged Alonzo Chandler, Robert McKee, and James Edwards, all members of ELRUM, for an alleged violation of the "no strike" clause in the agreement between Chrysler and the UAW. This action was clearly another premeditated act on the part of Chrysler and the UAW designed to rid the plant forever of any voice that cries for justice for black workers. The racists of Chrysler Corporation even went so far as to send out letters to all of Eldon's employees expressing phony sympathy and concern over the recent murder of Gary Thompson and denouncing the people who participated in the work stoppage.

This week Harry T. Englebrecht, lackey plant manager of the Eldon gear and axle plant, sent out letters to all of the Eldon employees in regard to the recent safety work stoppage. Below is the Englebrecht letter and ELRUM's reply to it.

To: Eldon Avenue Axle Employees:

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The events that occurred at our plant last week have been of deep concern to me, as I am sure they have been to you. Most disturbing, ,of course, was the tragic accident which resulted in the death of Gary Thompson, one of our jitney drivers. Rest assured that our continuing °efforts to make our plant a safe place to work in will be intensified. This, along with your observance of good safety practices, will prevent future accidents.

I am also extremely concerned because of the disruptions that have taken place at our gates at shift-change times, resulting in the loss to plant employees and their families of many thousands of dollars in wages. I am convinced that the vast majority of Eldon people want to come to work and perform their jobs conscientiously. Regrettably, however, there is a small group of people who seem not to care about their own welfare or the welfare of others. It appears that their aim is to disrupt our operations by any means possible.

Last Wednesday, May 27, our gates were obstructed by a number of people, many of whom were not our employees. These persons had no legitimate interest in or responsibility for what goes on in our plant. Most had nothing to lose by their irresponsible demonstrations. The fact that hundreds of our employees were deprived of their wages apparently did not concern them.

You should be aware that we have taken and will continue to take all legal steps needed to insure your safety and keep our plants operating. To this end, it was necessary to discharge those employees who were responsible for, or elected to participate in, disruptions at our gates.

Although deeply disturbed by the events of last week I am encouraged by the large numbers of loyal employees who came to work despite the outside protesters and disruptors at our gates. These employees are to be commended for their patience during this time of stress. Their continued responsible conduct will serve to preserve our security and ability to earn a living.

Very Truly Yours,

Harry T. Englebrecht
Plant Manager
Eldon Avenue Axle Plant

An Open Letter to Funky, Flunky
Honky Harry T. Englebrecht and
White Racist Chrysler Corporation

Dear Harry:

You and the white racist corporation you work for have demonstrated

beyond all doubt that you're nothing but a gang of one more axle, one more car, and suck the life blood of one more worker. You say that you are "concerned" about the "events" at "our" plant last week, that you are "disturbed" by the tragic "accident" which took the life of Gary Thompson.

Yes, you, Harry T. Englebrecht, stand before the black workers of Eldon with the fresh blood of Rose Logan, Mamie Williams, and now Gary Thompson dripping from your fangs and claws, and say that you are "concerned and disturbed"!

What is the nature of your "concern", Harry? Are you "concerned" about the family of Rose Logan, now motherless because of one of your brakeless high-lows? Are you "concerned" about the family of Mamie Williams, Harry? The same Mamie Williams whom you made leave a hospital bed and a doctor's care so she could return to the death pit of Eldon Avenue?

Are you "concerned", Harry, about the pregnant wife whose husband you killed, or about the 19-month-old son whose father you murdered? Gary Thompson was only 22 years old, Harry; he survived 18 months in Vietnam, yet he could not survive a mere five months in your plant. But of course your "concern" will remove this huge burden of sorrow that rests on the families of those whose loved ones you murdered.

We suppose too, Harry, that you are "concerned and disturbed" about the outrageous and deadly conditions which exist in the Eldon Avenue gear and axle plant. We imagine it "disturbs" you to see high-lows with lopsided tires; broken horns, lights, and hydraulic lines; missing safety rails; and faulty or completely - non - existent brakes and emergency brakes. We suppose too that while you sit in your air-conditioned office sipping Cutty Sark and Chivas Regal, the dangerous oil-covered floors and the cluttered aisleways weigh like millstones on your humanitarian mind. Yes, Harry, when you sit in your cozy leather chair in your plush office and watch black workers coming into the plant bandaged in casts and splints, wrapped up like mummies, VICTIMS of your oil-belching, rusty, and unsafe machinery, we know your "concern" brings tears — crocodile tears — to your eyes.

You say the observance of good safety practices will prevent future accidents — as if a flimsy pair of safety glasses can stop five tons of cold hard steel. You say that efforts to make the plant safe are being intensified — but we know that the only thing being intensified is the already-outrageous production. You say that you are "concerned" about the employees' loss of wages — as if their wages were more valuable than their lives.

Yes, Harry, we of ELRUM clearly understand the nature of your "concern" and the reasons you are "disturbed". We understand that the lives and limbs of black workers are meaningless to profit-hungry pirates like yourself. We understand why you and all the other racist criminals of Chrysler would spend thousands of dollars to send out

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hypocritical and deceitful letters, yet spend not one penny to correct the hazardous conditions which maim and kill black workers every day.

You praise the patience of the "overwhelming" majority of workers in these times of stress, but even you cannot see that patience rapidly turning to outrage and anger. Your discharge of Robert McKee, Alonzo Chandler, and James Edwards, along with other members of the Eldon Safety Committee, will not stop ELRUM from organizing that anger and outrage. The day when you could snuff out black lives with impunity is gone. No longer will we play the victims to your deadly plans of profit.

Yes, Harry, you say that you are "concerned and disturbed". Well, Harry, you will soon be in a panic — you will soon be pulling the hair out of your already-graying head, and the ulcers you now have will soon spread throughout your whole body. You see, Harry, we are concerned and disturbed, too; and we are making revolution; and we will win!

Uhuru na Umoja   Freedom and Unity

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Studies of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and its many activities are few. Worthy of mention are: "Our Thing Is DRUM", in Leviathan, Volume 2 (June 1970), an interview with League members with an excellent introduction by Jim Jacobs of the Detroit Organizing Committee, and Robert Dudnick: Black Workers in Revolt (New York, Guardian Pamphlet, 1969). Two attempts to place the League within the broader contexts of black history and black liberation struggles are John H. Bracey, August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick (editors): Black Nationalism in America (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) and John H. Bracey: "Black Nationalism Since Garvey", in M. Kilson, D. Fox, and N. Higgins (editors): Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, forthcoming).

The outstanding sources are the publications of the League itself. Inner-City Voice is the monthly newspaper; DRUM, FRUM, ELRUM, et cetera are the shop newsletters; Black Student Voice, in its various editions, deals with the problems of education and black students. The League also puts out a steady flow of leaflets in response to local and national issues, and as an information service to their communities. Black Star Publishing Company, the League's printing apparatus, has already produced Ernie Mkalimoto's Revolutionary Nationalism and the Class Struggle, and other books and pamphlets will be forthcoming. If at all possible one should see "Finally Got the News", the League's documentary film. This is one of the most-outstanding films on the black liberation struggle ever produced. Foregoing "revolutionary" theatrics and rhetoric, the film conveys the reality of revolutionary struggle around issues and toward goals. In this film, people, and not personalities, are the "stars".

"I am convinced that the decade of the seventies will be one of serious repression for us, black people in the United States. Although we are black and will suffer the most from repression we must not fail to understand that the racist United States government is going to try to kill all forms of dissent." from . . . .

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From Repression
To Revolution

KENNETH V. COCKREL

The ensuing speech was made by Kenneth V. Cockrel at a repression conference held at Saint Joseph's Church, January 30, 1970, under the planning and sponsorship of Newsreel in Detroit. The speakers were Robert Williams, former President of the Republic of New Africa; Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party; and Attorney Kenneth V. Cockrel, Central Staff member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Following is the text of Cockrel's talk:

A Need for Criticism

First of all, I think it is the obligation of persons who are part of political structures that they regard as serious political structures to engage in criticism in the spirit of fraternity and constructive concern for accomplishment of revolutionary objectives. So it is in that spirit that I would like to make some observations about the conduct of this meeting. That is to say that whoever set up the meeting (and I'm not sure that I can identify the persons who set up the meeting: Newsreel and perhaps some other individuals) — it seems to me ought to be the object of some criticism here, in terms of not making the maximum efficient utilization of the time, and the presence of the people here.

Now I don't want to compound that by going into an extenuated rap on the instances of attempts at incarceration that met with no success on the part of the Man in relation to members of organizations that I am associated with. What I do want to say is that I don't understand what

this program is all about. And I don't see what we can accomplish within the context of these protracted raps. And I think that there has been a breach of responsibility on the part of the people who had set up this meeting, and I think they ought to be criticized for that, and they ought to accept that criticism in the spirit in which it was intended. But if they don't, it's of no consequence either.

On a Revolutionary Need to Avoid Arrest

Now the position that the League of Revolutionary Black Workers takes in relation to the question of repression, since this is styled as a repression conference, is that there is but one means whereby a repression can be ended — and that is that the source of the repression (namely the oppressor) be destroyed.

We don't say that idly — we don't say that in the familiar sense of the nominal black militant who points his finger and roundly denounces honkeys, threatens to decimate the entire white population of the globe, and stands astride of what remains and proclaims the intrinsic beauty of blackness without relating to a concrete political program that will end oppression for all people in this world. We say in all seriousness that there is but one solution, and that is the destruction of the present state mechanism. The dismantling of the present state mechanism and the process whereby that dismantling will be brought about is that those who are seriously concerned about bringing about revolutionary change will move to seize state power, and what we suggest is the program of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

We say that for a very-simple reason: We express and we feel total solidarity with all organizations which relate in a revolutionary way to conditions in this country. We are concerned about the extent to which they appear to be singled out to have repression visited upon them, and to the extent that it is possible we do all we can to support members of other organizations who find themselves subjected in a specific way to efforts at repression. For example we relate to and defend members of the Welfare Rights Organization, and indeed we've represented and related to members of the Black Panther Party here and elsewhere. But we feel that the principal responsibility of persons who are concerned about doing political work is that they first of all have an obligation to conduct themselves in such a way as to avoid incarceration, because the primary responsibility of revolutionaries is to be about the business of doing revolutionary work. And that means that your first responsibility is to do everything in your power to avoid becoming a defense organization.

Now there's a very-interesting phenomenon that is operating here at this meeting. One of the things I was alluding to when I was engaged in my criticisms. See, the first phenomenon is that the MC or master of ceremonies (he who has the responsibility for this program) exhibits

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a kind of standard and fairly - predictable sycophantic white response.
That is, there are bloods speaking: I am reluctant to exercise any kind
of control over the meeting because they are bloods. What is it? Is it
that the cat's into a sycophantic thing? Is the cat just afraid that he's
a blood? Or is it the position that any utterance that is ever made by
any blood at any time is profoundly revolutionary in content and should
not be in any way stifled, stymied, ordered, directed, or organized?
We regard that as being a wholesale abdication of the responsibility to
use one's time efficiently and use the time of other people efficiently.
That's one observation we would want to make in connection with what
we pick up on.

On Revolution in Detroit

The other thing that we pick up on at a meeting like this is that we
got — you know: All the people here are basically local people, living
in the metropolitan area, living in the city of Detroit. They're here to
relate to what is called a repression conference, and the discussion —
with the exception of the discussion with Chairman Rob, who presently
resides here and who is the object of an effort at extradition — relates
to the political prisoners strung out all over the country. No discussion
whatsoever with regard to what's going down in Detroit, what's going
down in the metropolitan area, and how you relate to that. What does
that say?

There are people here, for example, who are so unaware of what's
going down in terms of serious effort at making revolutionary change
in this city that when they seek external objects of admiration relating
to what they perceive as revolutionary, they are forced to canvass the
country and relate to, let us say, New Haven, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort
Jackson, Fort Dix, the Milwaukeee Fourteen, or whatever. We could
go on: Texas Southern Five, Fort Jackson Eight, and so on. What they
don't realize is that there are wholesale murders going down right here
in the city of Detroit, wholesale murders indeed going down wherever
you find yourself in this country. And that there are persons being
killed who are not Panthers, that there are political organizations
being subjected to attacks which are not Black Panther organizations.

We're not suggesting for a second that we have the remotest interest
in having these things recognized just so that persons can say: "Well,
there's been a fairly - impressive list of shall - we - say Black Panther
casualties." It then becomes the responsibility of other speakers to
attempt to match it or perhaps top it. We're not relating to that. What
we're relating to is the responsibility of politically - serious people to
recognize what's going down where they find themselves, because that's
where they've got an obligation to do work. The reality is that you ain't
in New Haven, that you can't do a damn thing for Bobby Seale, and you
can't do a damn thing for the Panther 21. You can't do a damn thing

for Fred Hampton and Mark Clark or for David Hilliard. But you can do something where you find yourself. That is, you can be going about the business of doing serious revolutionary work.

What do I mean by this? We say that the League of Revolutionary Black Workers is a serious organization with a serious program that has been consistently working over the years, and we point proudly — not to the number of persons we have in jail, not to the number we have under indictment, but to the fact that we've functioned as a serious revolutionary organization for years, and we have not one man in jail. We point proudly to that fact. And we don't say that lightly, and we don't say that because we haven't been subjected to efforts to place us in jail. The last year, for example, has been replete with instances in which efforts have been made to put members of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers' Central Staff and member organizations in jail, and we will briefly canvass them for the information of those who are present.

Member of Central Staff, General Gordon Baker Junior. You see, I think it is the responsibility of persons engaged in political work to select from their comrades their heroes, and while I have a profound respect for other men in other organizations who are brothers who are relating to the liberation struggle, my principal respect and my undying love and affection and my primary responsibility and obligation goes to my comrades in struggle. Persons with whom I am associated, those are my heroes, and those are the persons whose posters I have on my wall, my brothers.

And when we talk about my brothers, we understand that people in Detroit have been subjected to many efforts at incarceration and what is styled repression. But the significantly-different factor when you begin to look at bloods who are operating in Detroit in all the different organizations, incidentally, is the fact that the Man does not have them anywhere in his jail. Be he RNA, be he Panther, be he League, be he whatever. None of them...none of them...none of them...are in jail. And that says something! What does that say? It says, Number One, that we've got a highly-sophisticated black community in the city of Detroit, and that we relate in such a way as to make it impossible for the Man to frame us on jive chickenshit charges.

What do I mean by this? I mean a number of things. For example, there has been discussion; there has been discussion of people being charged with various kinds of conspiracies. But there is one thing that must be understood when you talk about people being charged with conspiracies. A conspiracy under law is defined as an agreement by two or more persons to perpetrate an unlawful act in an unlawful way. What does this mean? It means that the only way in which you could get busted for conspiracy is for one of the parties to the conspiracy to testify against you. That's the only way you can be cracked for a conspiracy. What does that mean? That means, then, that you must be a member of a political organization that is structured in such a way

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as to make it possible for your enemy to be in a position to sit on a witness stand and plausibly run to the Man that you are a part of a conspiracy to do some ridiculous thing.

We say that we do not relate to an organization that permits that kind of penetration, and that is one of the reasons why we have not yet been subjected to efforts at conspiracy. Although there has been one effort, that being the federal grand jury that convened in the city to investigate members of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers who also are among the members of the Steering Committee of the Black Economic Development Conference around the question of the Manifesto. People like Mike Hamlin, Chick Wooten, John Williams, Luke Tripp, and other members of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers were subjected to the microscopic scrutiny of the federal bloodhounds. But we've been successful to date, in that no indictments have actually been returned.

John Watson, Central Staff member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and former famous editor of the South End newspaper. John Watson was attacked. John Watson was sought to be prosecuted for allegedly beating the hell out of a white television newsman in the offices of the South End who came to interview him to get his opinion of a letter written by the president of Wayne State University charging his paper with being anti-Semitic. The Detroit News and other racist institutions in the city of Detroit, including jive liberal institutions such as the UAW, are opposed to Watson because he is a member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which organization was using the South End as an organizing vehicle. That is to say that after the Inner City Voice went out of business, we took over the South End with the explicit purpose in mind of using the resources of that printed organ to organize workers in the plants.

This was being done, and this represented the reason John Watson was attacked...and you found such perverse things going down in the city as the racist Detroit News pretending not to be anti-Semitic and charging the bloods with being anti-Semitic. John Watson was certainly not anti-Semitic. John Watson was not sought to be prosecuted and charged for beating the hell out of a white newsman because he was alleged to have beaten up Joe Weaver. He was sought to be prosecuted and charged because he was a member of a revolutionary organization and he was making efficient revolutionary use of an available resource to replace the resources we no longer had. He took over the South End.

Subject to Attack

Ron March, Central Staff member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, a founding member of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM), which went on strike in 1968, closing down the Dodge Main plant, which related to the Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Movement (ELRUM), another member organization that closed down

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the Eldon Avenue assembly plant which makes axle housings, wheel wells, and so forth, and which if it had remained closed for another day would have paralyzed all assembly operations in all Chrysler plants in the country.

Injunctions were gotten naming members of the Central Staff, naming Wooten, and naming General Baker, who was already on probation for allegedly carrying a concealed weapon during the 1966 so-called mini riot — the Kercheval Street incident, as it is referred to by the press. The Man tried to bust him for violating an injunction by demonstrating against Chrysler Corporation, but was unsuccessful.

Ron March was charged — and we just completed his trial last month — he was charged with assault and battery on a police officer from the Tenth Precinct. They contended that Ronald March had nothing better to do when he got off work than get in a car and play bumper tag with some rollers, riding around in an unmarked squad car. We beat that. Myself, a member of the Central Staff, had some problems in terms of being cited for contempt. Presently, being subjected to disbarment for allegedly characterizing, truthfully, the conduct of a judge — the racist honky fool.

We could go on interminably. Young brothers in Black Student Voice have been ejected from schools, Northern High School, for example — Warren McAlpine, Rocquieth Jackson. Young brother Darryl Mitchell, who has been kicked out of Highland Park High — just put on two-year probation by a Circuit Court judge because he was distributing the Black Student Voice in Highland Park High School.

We could go on and on with persons in organizations who have been sought out for attack. But we proudly proclaim to the world that all of our people who are members of our organization are still on the street and are still working. Moreover, we claim some responsibility for keeping members of other organizations on the street, where they can still work, like Hibbit.

We say that to say what? We say that to say a very simple thing, that conferences like these should, theoretically at least, be designed to produce something. That they shouldn't be designed to have persons' auditory nerves affected by sound waves traveling across the ether. We say that one of the things that ought to come out of such a political discussion is some understanding of what might be regarded as being a proper course of conduct to pursue if you're about the business of revolutionary change.

And that also deals with the question of oppression and repression, because repression is that which is to be logically expected by people who perceive you as a serious threat to the maintenance of conditions which are beneficial to them. You are to be honored when you find that you have become the object of an act of repression, because they would not for a second consider expending energy in directing it toward you if you did not, in some minimal way, at least, represent some threat

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to the way things are being done in this country. But the primary thing that can be done to prevent the occurrence of repression is for those of us of the oppressed classes to take over, to take power, to run every goddamn thing in this country, to run everything in this world — and certainly to start out by running everything in this city.

On the First Responsibility

So, we say the first responsibility of revolutionary organizations is to advance and practice a program that is designed to produce that one and only thing that can bring about an end to repression, and that is to take over power. How does the League of Revolutionary Black Workers relate to that? Just briefly, one of the things the League is indeed now involved in is organizing black workers, because the League proceeds from the analysis that it is necessary to humanize the world, to destroy racism, monopoly capitalism, imperialism, and the whole institutional structure that is designed to maintain those three things. And we say that the point of greatest vulnerability of such a system is the point of production in the economic infrastructure of this system. So we say it makes sense to organize workers inside of the plants to precipitate the maximum dislocation and the maximum paralysis of the operation of the capitalist-imperialist machine. And that is why we organize the workers; and we do not simply define workers in the orthodox sense of those who toil laboriously with their hands over a lathe, or on the line, or in the trim shop, or in the frame plant, or in the foundry. We say that all people who don't own, rule, and benefit from decisions which are made by those who own and rule are workers.

That includes black students who are kicked out of schools, because these black students understand very clearly that the instruction they get is designed to produce fodder or fuel for the maintenance and the on-going operation of this economic machine. We understand, in other words, that the productive relations of this society, the way in which it's organized in terms of its economy, determines how the educational structure is going to respond to it; and we understand that Northern and Northwestern High Schools, for example, have been deliberately structured in such a way as to produce potential unemployed men in periods of what are euphemistically referred to as recessions. Or, as the alternative, bloods can go to Saigon and die bravely for this country for which we have no reason whatsoever to die. That's what the present educational system is designed in such a way as to reflect, precisely what is ordered and required to be done by the economic system. And we see that relationship.

We say that all persons who are oppressed are workers. Whether they are permitted to participate productively in the operation of the society is determined not by whether or not they are workers, but by the fact that the men who control the means of production can organize

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these means in such a way as to make them unnecessary. And the way you solve that problem is to take over the total ownership and complete control of those devices of production, so that you have a society where you have not production for profit but production for the use of people in the society — production for the use of those who do the producing.

We're committed to the development of that kind of society. And we say that you do not develop that kind of society necessarily in the joint. But we understand there are instances in which cats will get cracked and there ain't nothing that they can do about it. They're going to get vamped on; they're going to be jammed up. We understand that. So we organize workers.

We also understand that the only way you end oppression is not by circulating petitions, not by writing letters to the attorney general, not by packing galleries in the state legislature, not by demanding a meeting on the third floor of Detroit Police Headquarters with whoever the black administrative assistant to the current police commissioner might be. We say that the only means whereby you can do this is to run the police department and run the city. So we say we're committed to running the city.

In order to do this we've got to develop a political machine. And when we say that we're interested in developing a political machine, we do not delude ourselves for a second into suggesting there's an alternative route to the destruction of the oppressor short of actually having to destroy him. We don't deceive ourselves. But we don't engage in any superficial discussions between the cats relating to electoral politics. That's bullshit. We relate to whatever's going to give us the power to create and widen the sphere within which we can function to bring about the destruction of this country.

We don't engage in bullshit arguments about "That's reformist, or that's not reformist." That which is reformist is simply that which is counter-revolutionary. What is not reformist or counter-revolutionary is any action that conduces to the creation of a larger predisposition on the part of most people to view revolution as the only course of conduct available to end oppression. That's what we relate to — that's what we understand and see very clearly as being real.

One of the means whereby we begin to approach that is illustrated by the following: There has been a bill passed proposing to decentralize the Detroit School System — to create between 7 and 11 regions and to create local regional governing bodies that will relate in certain ways to the communities in which they find themselves and relate in other ways to what remains a so-called Central Board whose members will be increased, and so on. We have no illusions about decentralization and community control being the solution to the problem. We don't say that community control will end anything; but we do say, for example, that if that bill affords an opportunity to organize people around the concept of taking power, we will relate to the bill on that level. And in

order to do that, the West Central Organization (which is headed by John Watson, a member of the League) has been relating to the holding of decentralization conferences and the attempt to develop a mechanism to organize a political machine so that we can take power by whatever means necessary.

We understand the need for a theoretical organ, for a revolutionary organ, for a newspaper for a means of communication; so we're making efforts to develop a high-quality press. We've had some problems on that score. We've printed the paper, and there are persons who have all kinds of views of the Inner City Voice; but nonetheless we keep on pushing it because we think it's a very-serious revolutionary document. Apart from that the League runs journalism classes. The League is training young people to write. In addition to training young people to write, the League is in the process of establishing printing presses and printing shops and printing newspapers in four parts of this country. That's another program because we understand the need for an accurate and truthful dissemination of information.

What we say very simply is that yes, we can stand up and raise our hands and declaim mightily about the existence of Honkies, that Black is Beautiful, and we can hang bullets around our necks and wear all kinds of dashikies, but that's not going to bring about an ultimate end to oppression. What really is going to bring about an end to oppression is doing very-serious and very-hard work over a fairly-protracted period of time that is designed to increase the likelihood of the people's taking power. And we say that the League represents that kind of an organization and that it's important to talk about the League in that connection at what is styled a repression conference, because we say that the only means of ending that repression is to take power over that system you find yourself in. And that's how we relate to repression.
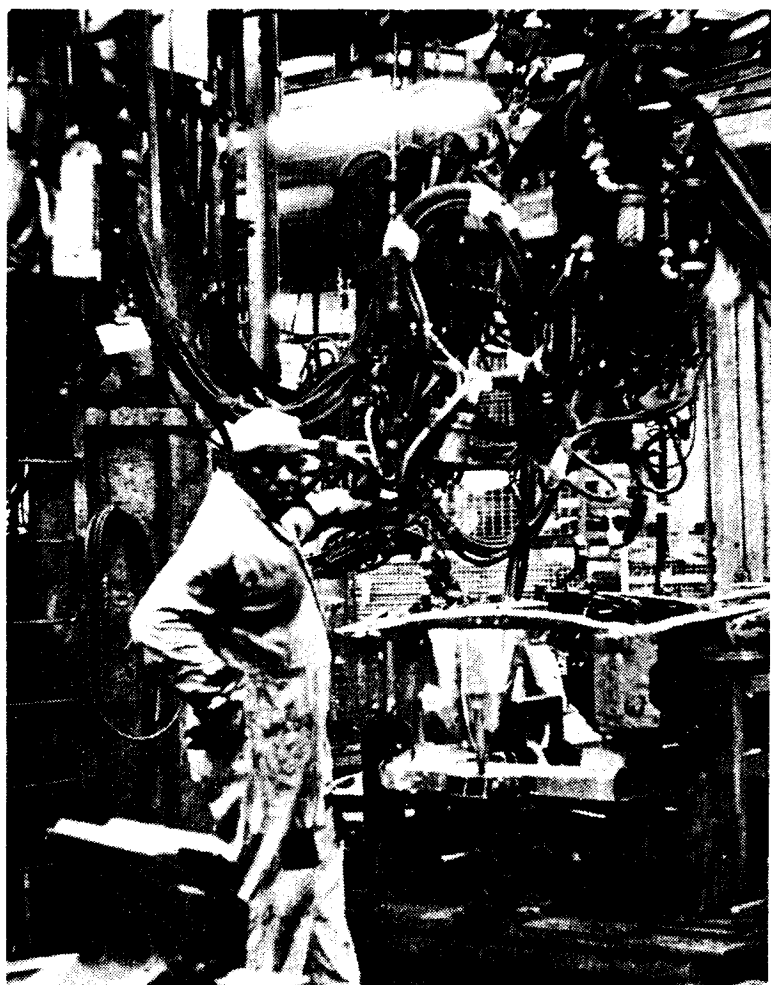
DRUM'S CANDIDATE

RON MARCH
FOR
TRUSTEE NO. 10

As this issue of Radical America, including the following article, was being set in type, we were shocked to learn of the suicide of Bob Starobin. It is hard to know how to respond in any adequate way to the death of a friend and comrade who was barely 30 years old.

Bob's life was inextricably bound up with the development of the new American Left during the past decade. As an undergraduate student at Cornell University (Class of 1961) and managing editor of the student newspaper, he was a leading spokesman for students beginning to react through various ad hoc organizations to such evils as nuclear testing, race discrimination, the House Committee on un-American Activities. He maintained these same interests during his years as a graduate student at Berkeley, where he helped to organize peace demonstrations, worked actively in the campus Friends of SNCC group, and played a key role in organizing graduate-student participation in the 1964 Free Speech Movement.

Bob came to the University of Wisconsin in 1966, and during his three years on the faculty enjoyed an exceptional rapport with students. Despite his lack of smoothness as a speaker, he communicated a great excitement about history and about the political questions that serious history inevitably entails. His own politics moved left with the politics of the student movement. He _identified_ with students rather than with the university administration or his more-conservative colleagues, and it was that identification, and the various questions it raised about his "departmental citizenship", that lay behind his failure to obtain tenure.

He was in the university, but by no means of the university. His PhD dissertation, published last year by Oxford University Press under the title of _Industrial Slavery in the Old South_, was a solid work of social history. Using a standard form of academic commendation, Harvard's Frank Friedel called the book "a calm, thorough investigation". Bob Starobin, however, was far from a calm person. His introduction to a documentary book on the Denmark Vesey uprising, also published last year, spoke angrily of the continued attempts to crush black militancy in America, as evidenced by the shooting of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. It was a matter of great pride to him that his introduction to the Vesey book was reprinted in the Black Panther newspaper.

Whatever may have been the personal anguish that went into his final tragic decision, in the background lay a burning hatred of social injustice — particularly the racism that has been so central to life in America. The final sentences of the article that follows give a hint of the kind of despair he may have felt when he considered the political prospects in America today. Some of us may have a greater degree of "long-range optimism" than Bob Starobin did, but it is impossible not to see in his death a horrifying reminder of so many dashed hopes.

Racism and the American Experience

ROBERT S. STAROBIN

Recent historical research has made it possible to understand the development of white racism and the centrality of the black experience in America. This has not always been so, because until very recently the writing of American history as it affected blacks has been largely characterized either by traditional white racist assumptions of black inferiority, or by a revisionism based on a liberal world view. (1) Racist historians held in brief that blacks were of little consequence to the American experience, as they were basically unequal to whites. Liberal historians, on the other hand, held that Negroes have made many important contributions to the American heritage and should be included in the study of the "great melting pot". Within the last decade, however, a group of younger scholars has challenged both these views, so that the study of black history and of white racism has now begun to undergo a radical re-interpretation. For the newer studies stress the persistence of racism and the centrality of institutions like slavery to long periods of American history; they view the oppression of blacks as a key to the meaning of the American experience.

I

Racist historiography conceived of black people as being altogether passive in the American story. It ignored, distorted, or disparaged the contributions of blacks to the shaping of American institutions. Blacks had no significant history of their own, and their presence in America was either an unfortunate mistake or at best a nuisance to be tolerated. Least of all did the racist historians view American development as dependent to any extent on the position of black people; they denied or overlooked the centrality of racial prejudice as in independent force in American development.

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Racists dominated historical writing on slavery and reconstruction from the late 1890s until World War II. Products of an age when blacks were being more and more disfranchised, brutalized, and generally denied human dignity, and when the US was simultaneously carrying on overseas expansion in the name of the "white man's burden", historians exhibited white-supremacist attitudes when they dealt with the topic of black history. Ulrich B. Phillips, the Georgian whose American Negro Slavery (New York, 1918) was the first systematic study of bondage, and William A. Dunning, the Northerner whose Columbia University students wrote the first state studies of reconstruction, were among the historians whose work was pervaded with racist assumptions (2).

These traditionalist historians never really took blacks seriously. If they considered Negroes at all, they generally depicted them as

"WHO SAID WATERMELON?"
George Washington Watermelon Columbus Brown.
I as black as any little coon in town.
At eating melon I can put a pig to shame.
For watermelon am my middle name.

Samboes — that is, as shiftless, docile, happy-go-lucky, intellectually incompetent and almost sub-human children. Since Africa was, to the racists, a land of dark tribal savagery, slavery had been absolutely necessary to uplift the "black barbarians" to the standards of white society. Africa itself had no history worthy of investigation, and African studies were as unheard-of as black studies. Slave owners were simply benevolent masters who maintained and supported bondage not because it was profitable, but because it was the only conceivable system of race relations. Since slavery was dying out of its own weight, the Civil War was a "needless" bloodbath caused by fanatical abolitionists and Southern fire-eaters. Reconstruction was likewise a "tragic era", to use Claude Bowers's title, when the "natural" (that is, white) Southern leaders were denied political rights. The reconstruction governments led by blacks, carpetbaggers, and scalawags not only were corrupt, but, worst of all, promoted the amalgamation of the races. While the Redeemers — white Southerners who overthrew Radical Reconstruction — were the ultimate saviors of the South, since they restored the black man to "his proper" (that is, the lowest) place in Southern society.

II

By the 1930s, liberal revisionist historians were undertaking a full reassessment of the role of blacks in American history. Unlike racists the liberals (including pioneer black historians like Carter Woodson and A. A. Taylor as well as whites like Vernon Lane Wharton) tried to combat racial stereotypes by emphasizing the outstanding contributions of Negroes to, and the success of their progress in, American life. Highly inspirational, the liberals urged both whites and blacks to appreciate Negro achievements and to revere certain worthy Negroes in order to assimilate Negroes into the American heritage. Whereas the racists ignored blacks altogether, the liberals avidly praised them and attempted to bring them into the American family, Merl R. Eppse's The Negro, Too, in American History (Chicago, 1939) being a typical revisionist survey. Moreover, to the liberals American history showed an underlying consensus in favor of equal opportunity, and American society was based on a pluralistic "melting pot" of immigrant groups of which Afro-Americans were simply another ethnic case. America's ultimate hope lay in the fulfillment of the promise of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal (and are) endowed with certain unalienable rights...." The liberals believed, without a clear understanding of the origins of racism, that the South alone was the source of the "racial prejudice" which was retarding such full equality.

Liberal revisionism differed strikingly from racist historiography in many respects. The liberals regarded Negroes as full human beings, and they conceived of slavery as a profitable albeit "peculiar" system of labor exploitation. The Civil War was therefore necessary to abolish

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slavery as well as preserve a model republican union. Reconstruction was thus a time of great hope and positive participation by blacks in a "democratic experiment". Reconstruction failed because the freedmen were not given enough economic power to secure their political rights. Despite some corruption and mistakes, however, Reconstruction was not a complete disaster, as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments held promise of a later fulfillment of legal equality after World War II. As Kenneth M. Stampp wrote: "If it was worth four years of civil war to save the Union, it was worth a few years of radical reconstruction to give the American Negro the ultimate promise of equal civil and political rights." (3) The Compromise of 1877 between the conservative Southern Democrats and the Northern Republicans led directly to the "nadir" of the Negro experience at the close of the Nineteenth Century — a time of dashed hopes and deep despair poignantly depicted in Rayford Logan's The Betrayal of the Negro (New York, 1965 edition). Nevertheless, the essence of the liberals' faith in the soundness of American institutions is revealed in the title of John Hope Franklin's textbook on Negro history: From Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1947, 1956, 1967).

Like racist historiography, liberalism was in part a response to the latest intellectual events and political trends. Modern anthropological conceptions of race shifted dramatically by the 1930s, so blacks could now be regarded as full ("though culturally deprived") members of the human family. The Negro's image was upgraded at home in order first to defeat fascism, then to counter Soviet propaganda against the United States as part of the Cold War's intellectual offensive, and finally to woo the "Third World" nations emerging from European colonialism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It became public policy to integrate black people into the electoral structure of the Democratic Party, the military, the national work force, and the market economy. The early beginnings of the civil-rights movement in the "forgotten years" of the Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower Administrations (4) tended to accelerate liberal assimilation of blacks into American historiography.

Moreover, much intellectual underpinning for liberal revisionism came from Swedish scholar Gunnar Myrdal's classic work on race relations and the condition of blacks, An American Dilemma (New York, 1944). Financed by the Carnegie Corporation and employing many young black scholars, Myrdal based his study on an explicitly liberal premise —namely that, as he wrote in 1942, "the Negro problem in America represents a moral lag in the development of the nation...a problem in the heart of the American.... Though our study includes economic, social, and political race relations, at bottom our problem is the moral dilemma of the American — the conflict between his moral valuations ...." Myrdal recognized that black oppression was determined by "what goes on in the minds of white Americans", but he never doubted that the "American Creed" was moral and that American institutions

were capable of change which would assure Negroes of justice and equality. As a result of these intellectual and social trends, the rather patronizing liberal studies of the Negro began to overcome prevailing racist writings.

Of all the white liberal historians, C. Vann Woodward has made the most-profound contribution to the understanding of Reconstruction, the New South, and Populism. In a 1958 essay, "Equality: the Deferred Commitment" (5), Woodward held that Lincoln and the North moved from the original Civil War aim of preserving the Union to a second goal — freedom — upon promulgating the Emancipation Proclamation. This new aim included a concomitant one of equality, a "commitment" which was made under Abolitionist and Radical Republican pressure in a piecemeal fashion, "but it was made." However this commitment to equality was never honored because, according to Woodward in a graceful Myrdallian manner, of a "moral lag on equality" that was most stubborn in the South but most decisive in the North. However despite this deferment of equality, Woodward held in his 1954 essay entitled The Strange Career of Jim Crow that the post-Civil War amendments and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 had their effect, so that the period from the demise of Reconstruction around 1877 through the 1890s was characterized by a rough equality in law and practice between races, when there were several "indications that segregation and ostracism were not nearly so harsh and rigid". Thus in C. Vann Woodward's view segregation, disfranchisement, and discrimination against black people did not stem from or immediately follow upon Reconstruction. Rather, proscription resulted from the politics of the 1890s, when the Populist threat of a new coalition between black and white farmers and workers under the leadership of agrarian radicals like Tom Watson of Georgia (about whom Woodward had written a biography in 1938) and based on a program of anti-monopolism, co-operative control, and the political equality of the races, provoked Southern white conservatives to raise the spectre of racial amalgamation and "nigger rule". To defeat the Populist threat, blacks were terrorized by lynchings, disfranchised at the polls, and then socially segregated from public life in the period from 1890 to 1920.

Despite the liberals' integration of Negroes into American history, revisionism suffers from grave shortcomings. An elitism and political conservatism tend to characterize much, although not all, of liberal historiography. Liberalism glorifies those blacks who tried hardest to assimilate themselves into the mainstream of American society. Thus Benjamin Banneker, the astronomer-architect; Phillis Wheatley, the poetess; Frederick Douglass, the fugitive-slave abolitionist; George Washington Carver, the scientist; and Booker T. Washington, educator and politician, are elevated to the pantheon of the acceptable "Worthy Negroes in Our Past". (6) Those blacks who advocated the violent overthrow of bondage, those who embraced socialist alternatives, and

those who became militant nationalists or Pan-Africanists were either neglected or disparaged by the liberals. Thus David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet, the early black revolutionists; Bishop Henry Turner, Martin Robison Delany, and Marcus Garvey, the militant nationalists; W. E. B. DuBois, Washington's great antagonist; and Malcolm X, the Muslim internationalist, have received little scholarly study. Further, the liberals frequently forgot that black "common folk" — field hands, factory workers, house servants, and artisans — "made" just as much history as the Negro "talented tenth". These common folk were usually illiterate, but this does not mean that their traces do not survive. When liberal scholars, librarians, and foundations spend less time and money collecting and analyzing the records of plain people than they do for elites, this only reveals their racial and class assumption that working people do not count in the making of history.

Because white Marxists in the 1930s and 1940s themselves believed in much of the liberal mythology of American history, and betrayed in their day-by-day organizing efforts an elitist paternalism with respect to blacks, they have much in common with the liberals they claimed to oppose. Marxists could neither understand nor condone the tradition of black nationalism because of its allegedly "petty bourgeois" origins. They did not comprehend that once the ideology of racism emerged from class and economic forces it acquired an autonomous force of its own. Moreover, the dominance of racist historiography and imminence of a fascist victory over the Soviet Union led Marxists into a Popular Front with New Deal liberals, which resulted in the Marxists' political and ideological capitulation to liberalism and reformism. (7)

Marxists like Herbert Aptheker and Philip Foner therefore really have more in common with liberal scholars than they would be willing to admit, and less in common with the radical historians of the 1960s than one might suppose. Foner's work on Frederick Douglass, with typical liberal elitism, magnifies the ex-slave's heroism out of all proportion to his contribution to the abolitionist struggle and fails to grapple with Douglass's miscalculations and weaknesses. Foner slights Douglass's early idiosyncrasies, such as his erroneous view that the Federal Constitution was an anti-slavery document, when in fact it protected the continued practice of slavery in the states, and excuses Douglass's later conservatism in the 1870s and 1880s, when Douglass became, for all practical purposes, a Republican Stalwart. Is it not possible that Douglass was unable to build a real political base in the community of common blacks, slaves and freedmen, precisely because he originated in the privileged slave and then free black group of his day? In a similar manner, Aptheker's patronizing hero-worship of W. E. B. DuBois — "DuBois was a Renaissance Man who lived in our own era...and chief founder and inspirer of the liberation movements of peoples of African descent now shaking and remaking the globe from Mozambique to Mississippi. DuBois's range was as wide as that of

Leonardo da Vinci...." (8) — actually interferes with an objective evaluation of the intellectual strengths and organizational weaknesses of a great black figure.

III

Recently a group of younger scholars has radically challenged both the traditional racist and the liberal revisionist interpretations. Unlike their predecessors, who stressed the "Worthy Negroes in Our Past" and the anomaly of racism, the new scholars emphasize the centrality of the black experience and the functionality of racism to American development. They do not contend that all American history turned on "The Negro Question"; rather, they contend that long periods centered on the problem of slavery and the place of the freedmen. Relating slavery directly to the formation of such basic American institutions as the Constitution, political parties, and economic growth, the radicals view Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century American politics as reflecting racism. The radicals approve of the equalitarian ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, but they stress that the slaveholders who helped write this document did not intend it to apply to blacks. The newer studies contend that early Nineteenth Century trade and industrialization depended mainly on the growth of the Southern slave economy, and that United States diplomacy as well as its territorial expansion were also direct functions of slavery and of its white racist underpinnings. The emergence of anti-slavery politics in the 1840s and 1850s was of course related to the expansion of slavery itself, while the roots of segregation lie more in the antebellum and Reconstruction periods than they do in the 1890s. According to these radical historians racism is a national phenomenon, and not simply a Southern problem. In short, the most-recent scholarship views racism as a functional component in American development in which the continual oppression of black people is a central theme. (9)

This reinterpretation corresponds to new political and intellectual trends as well as to some of the same factors which created liberal revisionism more than a generation ago. Many of the young scholars were either participants in or close observers of the civil-rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The failure of American society to make significant changes in the lives of most blacks — especially ghetto and black-belt residents — has demonstrated how deeply racism is entrenched in American society. From this insight these historians have gained a deeper understanding of how firmly imbedded slavery was in the political economy of the Nineteenth Century and how much racism persists into the Twentieth. They regard racism not as a "peculiar" accidental anomaly, but as functional to American society from its early beginnings. Moreover, the current wars of national liberation overseas, the emergence of an independent Africa, and the

corresponding call for "Black Power" in the United States has led
many radicals to question the liberal assumption about "moral lag"
in favor of a more-realistic assessment of the institutional roots of
racism. Rather than perceiving American society as a pluralistic
"melting pot", these scholars recognize that blacks were not simply
another immigrant group like all the rest, but came unwillingly to the
New World, where the pot never melted for them. In fact, Herman
Bloch's The Circle of Discrimination (New York, 1968) argues that
racism was so functional in American society that Eastern European
and Italian immigrants, in turn - of - the - Twentieth Century New York
actually achieved their upward social mobility at the expense of black
ghetto dwellers. Rather than granting Gunnar Myrdal's assumption of
a "moral dilemma" reconcilable within existing institutions, radical
historians recognize that racism is so deeply imbedded in American
political economy and ideological superstructure that only profound
social changes will be able to exorcise it. Of course, not all of these
historians are activists or even radicals, but the implications of their
research certainly point to the necessity of revolutionary changes to
eliminate racist oppression from American society. (10) Thus, while
there is some continuity with the earlier liberal revisionism, the new
scholars have so deepened their insights that their work is qualitatively
and radically different.

Though the radical reinterpretation is far from complete, and much

more research must be done, it is still possible to discuss some of its most-important findings. For the colonial period, Winthrop Jordan's White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill, 1968) shows that even before Elizabethan Englishmen had any direct contact with West Africans (which was not until after 1550, a hundred years after the Portuguese), they already held prejudiced attitudes toward Negroes. This racism resulted from English tradition, Christian religious assumptions, lack of encounter with Africans, and the opinions of Europeans who traded with Africans. From the outset, Englishmen were struck by the difference between their own whiteness, with pinkish skin being the Elizabethan standard of beauty, and African blackness. They accounted for the black man's color by associating it with his heathenish "defective" religion, his "savage" bestiality, his ape-like features, and his alleged supersexual lust for white women. To the English, blackness connoted filthiness, sin, baseness, ugliness, evil, and the Devil, while whiteness meant purity, virginity, virtue, beauty, beneficence, Godliness. "The Negro's color set him radically apart from the Englishmen," argues Jordan, and the whites' sense of Africans as constituting a separate group made possible their being enslaved. This debasement occurred not only in the Caribbean and in the Southern colonies, where there was a clear economic need for new labor, but even-more-interestingly in the New England colonies, where slavery was not an economic necessity.

Though Jordan is uncertain, from lack of evidence, about the status of those first "twenty Negars" who were "sold" by a Dutch warship to the Virginians in 1619, the fact that they were purchased and designated as Negroes, as well as their being taken from their African homeland, should prove that they were being treated differently from the white indentured servants. Even so, there is little evidence that the first English colonists intended deliberately to establish the institution of slavery, and we know little else about the status of blacks for the first 20 years of their residence. Jordan then demonstrates on the basis of wills and court records that between 1640 and 1660 evidence occurs of enslavement and differential treatment in practice for some, but not all, Virginia and Maryland blacks, while no such thing as perpetual servitude ever existed for any whites in any English colony. Then, as the number of blacks began to increase after the 1660s, and as the tobacco plantation economy became important, there was a marked increase in slavery legislation. Finally, in 1705, after the termination of the Royal African Company's monopoly on slave-trading, importation of slaves into the British colonies greatly increased, so that slave laws were codified in the colonies into comprehensive slave codes. (11)

Thereafter there was great concern about miscegenation, and the fear of slave insurrections united all whites. The racial beliefs of the early colonists were passed on to the Revolutionary generation almost intact, and the formation of a national union in the 1780s "tended to

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make the presence of Negroes in America a national problem". But even the most-enlightened intellectuals and most-skillful politicians, like Thomas Jefferson, were incapable of dealing with the problems of slavery and racism. Jefferson's central dilemma was, according to Jordan, that "he hated slavery but thought Negroes inferior to white men". He could declare that "all men are created equal", but years of "scientific" observation on his own slave-run estate convinced him that blacks were mentally inferior to whites. He thus refused to emancipate his own slaves and favored various schemes for deporting blacks from the United States.

Staughton Lynd provocatively argues in "The Compromise of 1787" (12) that slavery was as central to compromises of the Constitutional Convention as the traditional conflicts between big states and small states, conservatives and democrats, and real property and personal property. Lynd suggests that the famous "three-fifths" clause, which added part of the slave population to the Southern white population for the purposes of taxation and representation and increased Southern power, as well as the clause denying Congress power over slavery in the states, was of primary importance. Furthermore, the issue of the Western lands was part of the sectional conflict between Northern and Southern states. The clauses providing for the federal suppression of insurrections and capture of fugitive slaves (later legislated by the fugitive-slave acts of 1793 and 1850), as well as for postponing the abolition of the slave trade at least until 1808, were all integral to the framing of the new government. Moreover, slave-state representatives at the last Continental Congress acceded to the Northwest Ordinance, despite its anti-slavery proviso, because they expected pro-slavery Southerners to settle in the area. News of the Ordinance apparently reached the Constitutional Convention being held in Philadelphia in time to persuade Southerners there to incorporate the three-fifths clause into the Constitution so long as it applied equally to representation and taxation. Then, late in the summer of 1787, Georgia and the Carolinas accepted the Constitution after Northerners had yielded on the issues of the slave trade and fugitive slaves.

Thus, on June 30, James Madison stated that "the States were divided into different interests not by their difference of size, but by other circumstances the most material of which resulted partly from climate but principally from the effects of their having or not having slaves". It was "pretty well understood", said Madison on July 14, that the "institution of slavery and its consequences formed the lines of discrimination" between the contending states at the Constitutional Convention. In short, according to Lynd, slavery was "an independent force in the shaping and ratification of the Constitution". The important Compromise of 1787 was reached by men who mostly disliked slavery, but who acted ambivalently on it because of their desire to keep the Union together, their belief in the sacredness of private property, and

their "inability to imagine a society in which Negroes and whites could live together as citizens and brothers".

Regarding the early decades of the new republic, Robert McColley's _Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia_ (Urbana, 1964) broadens the concept of slavery's centrality to American politics. Whereas most liberals did not question the theory that slavery was moribund until the cotton boom after 1815, McColley believes that "the slave-based plantation system was...fundamental in the large economic affairs of Virginia". Describing Jefferson as "the father of slavery in Louisiana", McColley argues that "the Virginia dynasty in national politics...pressed the claims of American planters for wider access to world markets and opened up the rich lands of the lower Mississippi Valley to plantation agriculture." Moreover, Jefferson's vision of an "Empire for Liberty" in the Southwest actually led to an empire for slavery. "The Virginia influence on the Old Northwest was a pro-slavery influence, and nothing was done by the National Government under Jefferson and Madison to restrain the pro-slavery efforts of their migrated countrymen" to also capture Indiana and Illinois. (Of course, the Jeffersonians refused to extend diplomatic recognition to the new black Republic of Haiti, or to appear at international conferences with black diplomats.) Refuting the myth of Jeffersonian liberalism on slavery, McColley concludes that, along with the axioms of democratic republicanism for whites, the Virginians worked out and transmitted "the model theory of American racism".

Continuing this line of re-interpretation, Richard H. Brown's "The Missouri Crisis, Slavery, and the Politics of Jacksonianism" (13) in turn contends that "the central fact" of American history from the inauguration of Washington until the Civil War was that "the South was in the saddle of national politics". From the outset, Southern partaking in national affairs was governed by "one single compelling idea" which united all Southerners in spite of their diverse social and economic interests. This was that the institution of slavery, whatever its faults, should not be handled by outsiders. "The presence of the slave was a fact too critical, too sensitive, too perilous for all of Southern society to be dealt with by those not directly affected. Slavery must remain a Southern question."

Like Lynd, Brown stresses that slavery and Southern power underlay the framing of a constitutional government with limited powers. Then, in the 1790s, Jefferson and Madison sought to protect that constitution from "change by interpretation" by creating a national party based mainly on an alliance of Virginia planters and New York farmers whose requirements from the Federal Government were then minimal. With almost all early Presidents — like Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and Polk — being large slaveholders, a Southern white minority was converted by the Jeffersonian formula for political ascendancy into a national majority which assured the pre-eminence

of the slave states until the Civil War.

The Jeffersonian Republican success was also, however, its undoing as the Jeffersonian Republicans became an "amalgamated" party of the whole nation. As a result, they became unresponsive to the South. This, according to Brown, invited the Missouri Crisis of 1819-1820 over whether or not the Federal Government had the constitutional power to exclude slavery from the territories. White Southerners believed that this debate as well as the "pernicious" influence of Haiti caused the Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy in Charleston, South Carolina in 1822.

These crises led to an urgent and ultimately-successful attempt to revive the old Jeffersonian party with its political formula for Southern control. The new Jacksonian coalition rested on slave-owning planters of the older South and the newer Southwest combining with the "plain Republican" farmers and planters of New York and Pennsylvania. The new coalition depended on the election of presidents who were either Southerners with a Western image (Jackson and Polk) or otherwise Northern "doughfaces" with Southern principles (Van Buren, Pierce, Buchanan). As before, the price of Southern participation was, first, the suppression of any discussion of slavery which might endanger the white Southern interests by forcing the South into a permanent minority in the Union; and second, a stricter interpretation of the Constitution, so that the Federal Government would never gain sufficient power to deal with slavery.

According to Brown, the architect of the new Democratic party was Martin Van Buren, who engineered Jackson's victory in 1828. The two most-important examples of Van Buren's policy were the veto of the Maysville Road Bill, which had provided for federal support for a local Kentucky section of a national highway, and the destruction of the Bank of the United States. Despite their economic consequences, these two vetos were <u>political</u> measures designed to consolidate the new party on the basis of strict constitutional construction. Van Buren thereby created a party predicated on limited government powers over both the economy and slavery, but at the same time flexible enough to serve the interests of its constituents. However after 1844 the growth of Northern anti-slavery and free-soil sentiment forced Van Buren to relinquish leadership, and compelled the Democratic Party to sustain itself solely by territorial expansion.

William W. Freehling's <u>Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836</u> (New York, 1966) likewise demonstrates that the suppression of debate on slavery was crucial to the politics of the Jackson period. In the 1820s most South Carolinians were experiencing their first and longest economic depression, while the low-lying parts of the state were nervous about recurrent malaria epidemics. In 1822, the Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy severely distressed most low-country planters. Then, in 1831, Nat Turner's

Virginia slave revolt frightened the whites all over South Carolina. To these causes of unease, Freehling adds the feeling of guilt among white Southerners resulting from the discrepancy between Jefferson's declaration that "all men are created equal" and the existence of slavery, as well as from the contrast between the harsh reality and the myth of the mellow plantation.

These tensions in the Carolina mind and economy caused recurrent uproars over slavery by coastal Carolinians in the 1820s. Partly for economic purposes, but mainly to win constitutional protection against the abolitionist challenge, they advocated tariff nullification. Freehling contends that though the anti-slavery crusade remained "relatively undeveloped" and a "distant threat" in 1832, the Carolina politicians responded hysterically to slavery and delivered fire-eating harangues at the least mention of abolition. They decided to fight the abolitionists indirectly by fighting against the tariff. "Put in simple terms, the nullification crusade was produced by two acute problems : protective tariffs and slavery agitation, (which) had long since intermeshed in a single pattern of majority tyranny" over the state. Freehling concludes:

> Nullifiers, then, considered protective tariffs to be not only an inherently-onerous economic burden, but also an integral part of a pattern of sectional exploitation which would lead to slave revolts, colonization schemes, and ultimately the abolition of slavery. The nullification impulse was both a result of the severe pecuniary distress which afflicted many Carolinians in the 1820s and an expression of the anxiety surrounding the discussion of slavery.... Depressed economically, frightened by recurrent slave conspiracies, disturbed by nagging qualms about slavery, threatened by rising world moral condemnation, South Carolinians had every reason to dread an encounter with the abolitionists. To leading Carolina nullifiers, the chance of avoiding the encounter, lowering the tariff, and winning some permanent security seemed worth the risk of provoking an American civil war.

Another theme reconsidered by the new scholars is that "historical perennial", the profitability of slavery, which bears greatly on the importance of slavery to American economic development and on the causes of the Civil War. Alfred H. Conrad's and John R. Meyer's "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South" (14) argues persuasively that most of the slave-owners could expect to receive a reasonable rate of return on their investment in slaves. Not only was it profitable to grow cotton with slave labor, but slavery's intermediate product — marketable human offspring — could be efficiently sold to newer regions of the South. Similarly, Douglass North's Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860 (Englewood Cliffs, 1961) shows

that slave-grown cotton exports were the main stimulus to economic growth during most of the ante-bellum period, despite the expansion of the domestic market. Slavery was therefore essential to the rapid "take-off" of the national economy. If this is true, then there was good reason for the South's being, as Richard Brown says, in the saddle of national politics.

The radicals have also re-examined the relationship between slavery and territorial expansionism. Rejecting the traditional interpretations, Eugene Genovese's Political Economy of Slavery (New York, 1965) holds that slavery had not reached its natural geographical limits of expansion by 1860; its growth was not limited by the expansion of cotton planting. Since bondsmen could perform a variety of tasks, slavery could easily have spread to Mexican and Californian mining regions, and the slave-owners were well aware of these prospects. Moreover, Southerners attempted to annex Cuba in order to further extend sugar production, obtain new slaves, and increase their political power. If the Northern free-soilers had not interfered, slaves might also have been used in hemp production in Eastern Kansas, in California agriculture, and, according to my own study of Industrial Slavery in the Old South (New York, 1970), in Western lumbering and in transcontinental and isthmus railroad building. To the radicals, the traditionalist view that the territorial issue of the 1850s was phony is therefore dubious. The North fought the Civil War in part to scotch Southern and slavery expansionism — a point stressed by Eric Foner's Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (New York, 1970) — while Southerners left the Union to protect their class, economic, and racial interests in slavery.

Concerning the origins and scope of racism, as well as the politics of the Reconstruction period, C. Vann Woodward's formulations from the 1950s, previously described, have come under close scrutiny by radical scholars some of whom derive theories from W. E. B. Du Bois's Black Reconstruction (1935). Woodward's account of the origins of segregation in the 1890s has been challenged, for example, by Leon Litwack's North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1961), which demonstrates that even before the Civil War racist bigotry pervaded every sector of Northern society, and even some of the moral abolitionists were prejudiced against blacks. Most Northerners treated free Negroes with contempt, segregation originated in ante-bellum Northern cities, and the "free states" had disfranchised 93% of black voters before 1861.

"In virtually every phase of existence," contends Litwack, "Negroes found themselves systematically separated from whites. They were either excluded from railway cars, omnibuses, stagecoaches, and steamboats, or assigned to special 'Jim Crow' sections; they sat, when permitted, in secluded and remote corners of theaters and lecture halls; they could not enter most hotels, restaurants, and resorts except as servants; and they prayed in 'Negro pews' in the white churches....

Moreover, they were often educated in segregated schools, punished in segregated prisons, nursed in segregated hospitals, and even buried in segregated cemeteries."

Litwack's thesis that racism was national, and not just Southern, in scope has received support recently from several scholars. Eugene Berwanger's Frontier Against Slavery (Urbana, 1967) argues that from 1787 to 1861 residents of the Old Northwest, California, Oregon, and the Plains States opposed the extension of slavery and free Negro emigration more because of their fear of black inundation and their belief in white superiority than because of moral or humanitarian purposes. As the question of slavery expansion became more significant after 1854, according to Berwanger, the racial prejudices of most of the Westerners so increased that they favored containment of slavery in the South. Similarly, V. Jacque Voegeli's Free But Not Equal (Chicago, 1967) concludes that "Except for the South, the Middle West (that is, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota) ...was the region most firmly committed to white supremacy." Indeed the outbreak of the Civil War increased the virulence of racism, since both Midwestern Democrats and Republicans feared inundation and economic competition by Negroes should they be emancipated. To win support from this racist electorate, the Republican Party championed various colonization schemes designed to rid the country of blacks, and made every effort to keep blacks confined to the South during the War. Thus, according to Voegeli, "the chief reason most Midwestern Republicans did not support full equality was that they did not believe in it....Upon this most-fragile foundation rested the radicals' hopes for future equality and racial amity. Small wonder," concludes Voegeli in contrast to Woodward, "they would fail during Reconstruction." (15)

Like Litwack's argument for the North, Richard Wade's Slavery in the Cities: the South, 1820-1860 (New York, 1964) demonstrates that segregation of free Negroes and slaves was already beginning in the South's largest cities before the Civil War. "....Even before slavery had been abolished," writes Wade, "a system of segregation had grown up in the cities. Indeed, the whites thought some such arrangement was necessary if they were to sustain their traditional supremacy over the Negroes....Segregation sorted people out by race, established a public etiquette for their conduct, and created social distance where there had been proximity. Urban circumstances," concludes Wade, "produced this system long before the destruction of slavery itself." Finally, in After Slavery: the Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill, 1965), Joel Williamson holds that "the physical separation of the races was the most-revolutionary change in relations between whites and Negroes during Reconstruction". Williamson admits that "formal discrimination" was not practiced by railway operators, for example, but he nonetheless strongly contends that "unofficial racial separation did occur on a large scale". In any event, he concludes:

The real separation (of the races) was not that duochromatic order that prevailed on streetcars and trains, or in saloons, restaurants, and cemeteries. The real color line lived in the minds of individuals of each race, and it had achieved its full growth even before freedom for the Negro was born.... Well before the end of Reconstruction this mental pattern was fixed ...and South Carolina had become in reality two communities — one white and the other Negro.

Two recent publications by C. Vann Woodward — the 1966 revision of The Strange Career of Jim Crow and "Seeds of Failure in Radical Race Policy" (1966) (16) — attempt to accommodate the challenges to his earlier views, and in the process yield some, but not all, ground to the radical historians. Woodward incorporates the findings by Wade about the beginnings of segregation of blacks in ante-bellum Southern cities, but concludes that "the urban contribution to racial segregation in the South would seem to be less impressive than the encouragement that city conditions gave to interracial contact". In response to criticism that he mistook legal codes for actual practice, Woodward emphasizes that "it is well to admit...that laws are not an adequate index of the extent and prevalence of segregation and discriminatory practices that often anticipated and sometimes exceeded the laws". Woodward clearly acknowledges that some segregation existed during Reconstruction even in the absence of laws, but he severely criticizes Joel Williamson for concluding "that the full-blown Jim Crow system sprang up immediately after the end of slavery". The experience of South Carolina described by Williamson may have been "exceptional in some respects", contends Woodward. "But in most parts of the South, including South Carolina, race relations during Reconstruction could not really be said to have crystallized or even stabilized."

Following Litwack's findings, Woodward then grants that racism indeed pervaded Northern society before the Civil War, so that "the constituency on which the Republican Congressmen relied in the North lived in a race-conscious, segregated society devoted to the doctrine of white supremacy and Negro inferiority". Racial attitudes hardened, instead of softening, during the War, and "on the issue of Negro equality the (Republican) Party remained divided, hesitant, and unsure of its purpose" — a position which Woodward admits "represents a change from (his) views earlier expressed on this subject". The Fourteenth Amendment was thus equivocal on freedmen's rights, leaving the main decision on Negro suffrage up to the Southern states while permitting Northern ones to continue prohibitions against black voters. Following William Gillette's pessimistic reasoning in The Right to Vote : Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (Baltimore, 1965), rather than Kenneth M. Stampp's optimistic opinion quoted earlier, Woodward acknowledges that the Fifteenth Amendment "reveals more deviousness

than clarity of purpose", since it was intended to assure bloc voting by blacks for Northern Republicans, not justice for Southern freedmen. Clearly, then, the Reconstruction era was not a time of great idealism, burdened as it was by the previous history of racism in Northern and Southern society.

The one overriding weakness of most of these works is that they tend to treat white society as an undifferentiated monolith and to neglect the importance of class factors in shaping white responses to blacks. Still, the contours of the centrality of racism and of the black experience have been delineated by the new scholarship. Clearly, white racial prejudice was an important factor in colonial development, and slavery was integral to institutional developments in the American political economy at least as early as the 1780s. Slavery and the position of the blacks determined important political decisions, party formations, and diplomatic strategies down through the Civil War. Racism pervaded American society before the 1860s, making equality for the freedmen after emancipation the key issue of Reconstruction which would remain unresolved. The radical re-interpretation of American race relations thus does not inspire optimism toward the past or the future, for as one historian has concluded: "If (the white man) came to recognize what had happened and was still happening with himself and the Negro in America...faced the unpalatable realities of the tragedy unflinchingly ...then conceivably he might set foot on a better road....But there was little in his experience to indicate that he would succeed." (17)

FOOTNOTES

1. This article represents a revision and updating of an essay in 1967: "The Negro: A Central Theme in American History", Journal of Contemporary History, 3 (April 1968), Pages 37-53.

2. Racism was national in scope, not peculiarly Southern, and still pervades school textbooks, despite recent revisions. As late as 1947, E. Merton Coulter could publish a frankly-racist study of The South During Reconstruction (Baton Rouge, 1947) for the otherwise excellent "History of the South" series.

3. Kenneth M. Stampp: The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1966), Page 215.

4. Richard M. Dalfiume: "The 'Forgotten Years' of the Negro Revolution", Journal of American History, 55 (June 1968), Pages 90-106.

5. The Burden of Southern History (New York, 1961), Pages 69-87.

6. The limitations of liberal elitism are clearly revealed in Richard Bardolph's The Negro Vanguard (New York, 1959) and August Meier's Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (Ann Arbor, 1963). Benjamin Quarles's The Negro in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1961) and The Negro in the Civil War (Boston, 1953) stress the outstanding contributions of blacks to the Revolutionary and Civil War efforts, but do not fully explain why blacks bled for whites who supported slavery, why they fought to preserve a racist Union, or why in later conflicts blacks would die to exterminate the Indians and make the Caribbean and Asia safe for American penetration.

7. Eugene Genovese: "Marxian Interpretations of the Slave South", in Barton Bernstein (editor): Toward A New Past (New York, 1968), Pages 91, 109.

8. Political Affairs, the theoretical journal of the Communist Party USA, March 1966.

9. Vincent Harding: "Beyond Chaos: Black History and the Search for a New Land", in Amistad 1 (New York, Vintage Books, 1970), Pages 267-292.

10. Jordan: White Over Black, Page 582.

11. Jordan's work criticizes the liberal version of enslavement set forth in Oscar and Mary Handlin: "Origins of the Southern Labor System", William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, 7 (1950), Pages 199-222. Compare David B. Davis: The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, 1966).

12. Political Science Quarterly, 81 (1966), Pages 225-250, reprinted along with other important essays in Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States Constitution (Indianapolis, 1967).

13. South Atlantic Quarterly, Winter 1965-66, Pages 55-72.

14. Journal of Political Economy, 66 (1958), Pages 95-122; Robert Starobin: "The Economics of Industrial Slavery in the Old South", Business History Review, 44 (Summer 1970), Pages 131-174.

15. These views have been substantiated by Leonard Richards in "Gentlemen of Property and Standing" (New York, 1970), a study of anti-abolition mobs in the 1830s and 1840s; by Lorman Ratner in Powder Keg: Northern Opposition to the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1831-1840 (New York, 1968); and by John and LaWanda Cox in Politics, Principle, and Prejudice (New York, 1963), a study of racial prejudice during Andrew Johnson's administration.

16. Harold M. Hyman (editor): New Frontiers of the American Reconstruction (Urbana, Illinois, 1966), Pages 125-147. In the 1966 edition of The Strange Career of Jim Crow, Page v, Woodward states that some of his views changed not only because of new scholarship, but also because "the intervening years of social upheaval and political travail since 1955 have inevitably altered the perspective from which the earlier history was viewed".

17. Jordan: White Over Black, Page 582.

Jeff Sharlet (Indiana University Chapter, New University Conference):
Disorientation, 1970 (available from Chuck Kleinhans, 515 North
Washington, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, 50¢)

Manhattan Community College People's Handbook, 1970-71 (available
from Ruth Misheloff, 32 West 71st Street, New York, New York, "free
and to be shared")

Case-Western Reserve University Strike Community: Disorientation
Handbook, 1970 (available from Stu Greenberg, 1816 Chapman, East
Cleveland, Ohio 44112, $1 plus 25¢ postage)

These pamphlets represent an effort by campus-based radicals to
develop an overview of their respective schools and to provide students
with the means of survival and resistance within them. In contrast to
earlier handbooks published at elite universities, most notably Who
Rules Columbia? (1968) and How Harvard Rules (1969), these three
handbooks deal primarily with students and their experience rather
than with exposing the ties between the university and the nation's
corporate elite.

All three have common aspects: a critique of the university (which
is illustrated in various ways) based on its training of docile manpower
for the corporate system; an often-incisive discussion of how the
university fits into its immediate physical surroundings and what that
means in social terms; a brief history of student protest at the school;
and a hodge-podge of tips about matters ranging from bookstores and
cheap restaurants to draft counseling and birth control. Beyond that,
there are a number of individual features. Worthy of note are a cartoon
history of the college in the Manhattan Community handbook, a long
discussion of grading and its implications in the Indiana booklet, and
an analysis of the relation between Cleveland's "welfare establishment"
(including many Case-Western trustees) and the real problems of the
city's poor. The Case-Western handbook also contains some amazing
graphics, one of which (done by Reed Thomason) is reproduced here.

Except for the Manhattan Community College People's Handbook, all
the handbooks produced so far have been too vague in regard to the

particular types of jobs students at the college are being trained for, and where those jobs fit into the corporate system. In a recent series of articles in the Madison underground newspaper Kaleidoscope, George Hanley described four "tiers" of American higher education. These are worth summarizing briefly here because they help to provide a basis for analyzing particular schools and their functions. Tier 1 consists of elite private colleges and universities (Harvard and other Ivy League schools, Stanford, Chicago, Swarthmore, Vassar, Amherst, et cetera) which still have their traditional role of preparing a ruling elite for national service. Tier 2 includes the best public universities (Indiana, California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, et cetera) which contribute to a substantially-lesser extent to this national elite, but which also produce the future state-level political and corporate leaders. In Tier 3 are the backwater state universities (many of which were normal schools not so very long ago), from which emerge small-town school teachers, newspaper editors, Chamber of Commerce officials, and others who help enforce "the American Creed" at the local level. Finally, Tier 4 (the community Colleges) produces chiefly dropouts. A schematization

such as this is useful for understanding a myriad of aspects of colleges —for example the extent to which graduates of a particular college will be expected to take orders rather than giving them in later life can be correlated with the prevalence of petty rules governing student life on campus.

Nearly all the handbooks done so far, including these, have neglected the question of academic content. Yet it is surely one of the primary results of a standard university education (graduate or undergraduate) in the United States that students are imbued with the notion that things are hopelessly complex and/or working out for the best. Increasing numbers of students over the past few years have been rejecting these academic formulations out of hand as belied by their own perceptions, but the issues need to be argued out. This is especially true since, with the general tightening of university admissions and rules, students are likely to be forced to take their courses more seriously than they have in the recent past.

A few additional comments, based on information furnished by people involved in producing these handbooks, may be in order. One is that handbooks of this sort can be very useful in helping to build a sense of community among dissident students, although the group publishing a handbook will not necessarily find it a shortcut to recruiting members into its own organization. Another comment is that giving handbooks away free apparently does not mean that people will take them any less seriously once they get hold of them; the possibilities of advertising and fund-raising ought to be fully canvassed before setting a price on such handbooks. Finally, an attractive layout and appealing graphics (especially cartoons) are extremely important.

People interested in doing these handbooks at their own schools can get help from a number of sources. Chapters of the New University Conference are involved in several of these projects, and the national office of the NUC (622 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614) can provide information about them. The NUC can also supply copies of How Harvard Rules Women, an excellent booklet that affords a good example of how a school can be analyzed in regard to its treatment of women, including employees as well as students and faculty members. The North American Conference on Latin America (Box 57, Cathedral Park Station, New York, New York 10025) has material on how to do power-structure research. How Harvard Rules ($1 from New England Free Press, 791 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02118) lends an example of an attempt to comprehend the academic liberal ideology that pervades so many college courses.

Jim O'Brien

Louis Aragon: <u>Nightwalker</u> (<u>Le Paysan de Paris</u>), translated by Frederick Brown (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970)

Louis Aragon: Irene (<u>Le Con d'Irene</u>), translated by Lowell Blair (Grove Press, New York, 1969)

The almost-total incomprehension of surrealism in this country is at least partially attributable to the extreme paucity of surrealist works available in good English translations. All but a handful of surrealist works remain untranslated, and too many of those which have been translated have been translated poorly. Only in 1970 did a sound, accurate translation of Lautreamont's <u>Les Chants de Maldoror</u> appear (Allison & Busby, London), finally enabling us to dispense entirely with the execrable version published by New Directions. Even the translation of Andre Breton's <u>Manifestoes of Surrealism</u> contains absurd errors owing to the translators' obvious ignorance of Hegelian, Marxist, and psychoanalytic terminology, so that Breton's precise formulation "crisis of consciousness" becomes "attack of conscience", et cetera.

In Nightwalker we have the first and generally acceptable English translation of Louis Aragon's <u>Le Paysan de Paris</u> (another translation is forthcoming in England), which should, however, have been titled simply <u>The Peasant of Paris</u> (especially since the walks occur by day). The fact that the translator happens to be one of the more obstinately obtuse of the academic cranks presently leeching off the history of surrealism, one who generally loses few opportunities to impose his own obscurities upon the material he pretends to elucidate, fortunately interferes only slightly with his abilities as a translator. (Although he once decided that the term "le merveilleux" (the marvelous) — a key term in surrealism — should be translated as "the revelation", in this book it turns up as "the wondrous", which is surely a step forward.) But in his "Afterword" Brown reveals the depths of his intellectual debility and dishonesty. Pretending that the surrealists "believed like cultists in the unconscious, preferring to sanctify it (rather) than to understand it, cherishing it as the locus of Being, in the theological sense", he proceeds, easily enough, to discredit this straw man that, indeed, exists only in the minds of critics such as himself. But this critical platitude, which reduces surrealism to the literary reproduction of the unconscious, constitutes a veritable fountainhead of the errors of American critics of all persuasions in regard to surrealism. As a particularly hideous distortion of the surrealist point of view, it was capably answered by the Surrealist Group in England, who wrote (in the <u>International Surrealist Bulletin</u>, September 1936), responding, in fact, to attacks by the London <u>Daily Worker</u>: "They refuse to accept the existence of the world of the unconscious, and their whole system is built up on the simple plan of man and the real world. It is therefore

quite impossible for them to appreciate our strictly dialectical and materialistic synthesis of inner and outer world as the basis of general theory. Having no coherent attitude to the world of the dream, they appear to be obsessed and governed by it. In our work they see only the dream, while for the other element of our synthesis they have a blind spot. Naturally, they see nothing of the synthesis itself." And Rene Crevel had reason to declare, in 1932, that "to draw frontiers between the different psychic states is no more justifiable than to draw them between geographical states. It is for surrealism to attack both, to condemn every kind of patriotism, even the patriotism of the unconscious." This dialectical conception lies at the very heart of the surrealist project, and the failure to recognize it contributes only to the perpetuation of the most pathetic misunderstandings.

Along with his A Challenge to Painting (a manifesto on collage) and Treatise on Style, The Peasant of Paris is among the very finest works of Louis Aragon, whose role in the foundation of surrealism, and throughout its first decade, was considerable. Originally published in 1926, it is rightly considered a masterpiece of the first surrealist generation. But not because of its literary quality, in which surrealism has not the least interest, but because of its extraordinary and prodigious unveiling of the mechanisms of the marvelous in everyday life. Let it be understood from the start that this is in no sense a novel. It is a factual account — replete, to be sure, with theoretical excursions, polemical assaults, and outbursts of the wildest lyricism — of various surrealist expeditions through the streets of Paris and an outlying park. It cannot be too greatly stressed that surrealism is primarily a way of life and a method of knowledge, and that if this life and this knowledge happen to coincide with the occasional publication of a book, this is purely incidental. "Man tends toward poetry," said Aragon. Those who do not understand that surrealism is lived more than it is written understand nothing.

Irene (actually Irene's Cunt), one of several under-the-counter books written by Louis Aragon in the 1920s (which he presently refuses to acknowledge, however, so that this translation appears as being by "Albert de Routisie"), admits of no easy classification. Billed by Grove Press as classic pornography, it is not a novel, nor even truly fictional; not an essay, nor truly autobiographical: it is, rather, a sustained eruption of poetic exhuberance interspersed with the particularly ferocious sort of moralizing that characterizes much of Aragon's best writing. A minor work according to most criteria, Irene nonetheless reveals the unrestrained violence, defiant humor, erotic flare, and meteoric intensity of surrealism in its earliest years.

But since it is Aragon who said "I do not admit criticism" — an opinion for which I have the highest respect — I prefer, having called attention to these translations, to say nothing more about them.

It should be added, however, for the benefit of those who are unaware

of it, that the Aragon who wrote these early works has nothing in common with the later Aragon who around 1932 became one of the most servile litterateurs of French stalinism, an exponent of "socialist realism", and an author of sentimental patriotic verses. The surrealist who wrote in 1928 "I shit on the French army in its entirety." is not the same as the hack who wrote "I salute you, my France." in 1944. "When the marvelous loses ground," we are told in The Peasant of Paris, "the abstract prevails." After 1932 it was Aragon's misfortune to have succumbed, definitively, to the prevalence of abstraction in its most rigidified, pestilential, and bureaucratic form.

Franklin Rosemont

A Review of Industrial Relations Research: Volume I, with essays by Woodrow L. Ginsburg, E. Robert Livernash, Herbert S. Parnes, and George Strauss (Industrial Relations Research Association, Madison, Wisconsin, 1970)

This is one of several special review volumes which the Industrial Relations Research Association has sponsored seeking to provide some extensive bibliographical essays on the research in the field known as "Industrial Relations" since World War II. For radicals these volumes (and this one in particular) can be helpful if used as introductions to the literature on the economic, social, and organizational status of the US working class since 1945. A Review of Industrial Relations Research (Volume I) reviews research in four areas from 1956 to 1970: "Labor Force Participation and Labor Mobility", by H. S. Parnes; "Wages and Benefits", by E. R. Livernash; "Organization Behavior and Personnel Relations", by George Strauss; and "Union Growth, Government, and Structure", by W. L. Ginsburg.
The quality of the work is mixed in that the theoretical concerns of the writers are sometimes so obscure that the material is unusable to non-"experts". Parnes's essay, for instance, surveys the attempts of modern economics — the model builders — to construct a "theory" to explain labor-force mobility and participation rates within the context of supply and demand. While this discussion is of little value for anyone outside academic economics, it is followed by a review of the secondary and primary works on the vast changes nationally and regionally in the age, sex, and color composition of the labor force. The latter aspect of discussion and the literature reviewed can be of great significance — depending on the critical view with which it is approached.
Livernash's essay on wages and benefits is less dominated by such abstract theoretical discussions, providing valuable reviews of the literature on the unions' impact on wage levels, wage structures, and

the share of national income going to labor. The essay places this focus in the context of the larger economic forces which also affect wages.

Strauss's review of organizational behavior and personnel relations is limited by its subject matter. He surveys a literature whose purpose seems to be to find ways to make workers work harder and also more insidiously — and enjoy it. Of all the fields relating to the area known as "Industrial Relations", "Personnel Relations" is the most completely dominated by management perspectives, and openly so. However within this context some very-revealing evidence is uncovered. Extensive research on "Needs and Motivation", for instance, has tried to find out what motivates workers to work. Various systems have been employed to get them to work harder. In the failure which inevitably follows these systems, evidence of workers' patterns of resistance emerges at every turn.

The most-important essay is the last one, Ginsburg's review of union growth. Here can be found a detailed discussion of where, when, and how unions have grown; of the occupational and sectoral shifts in the US economy which have occurred since the middle 1950s; and of the impact on unions which the growth of the white-collar work force in the professions, service sectors, and government has had.

These four essays will be followed in 1971 by another volume which will deal with patterns of collective bargaining; labor and industrial relations abroad; public policy and labor-management relations; and public policy in the manpower field. Together these volumes will then bring up to date two earlier studies covering the preceding decade : A Decade of Industrial Relations Research : 1946-1956, edited by Neil Chamberlain and others (1958), and Employment Relations Research, A Summary and Appraisal, edited by Herbert G. Heneman Junior and others (1960). Together these four volumes will provide a thorough survey of research in the social sciences and (to a more limited degree) in history which bear on the impact of industry and the economy on workers' lives.

Paul Richards

Joel Seidman (editor): Communism in the United States: A Bibliography (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1969, 526 pages)

This useful but little-publicized bibliography is an updated revision of Charles Corker's Bibliography on the Communist Problem in the United States, 1955. It covers the period 1919-1959, with the inclusion of 178 "antecedent" (pre-1919) items as well as a number of items of "unusual interest" published since 1959. The new edition contains 7,000 annotated entries (3,000 of which are new) of books, pamphlets, and magazine articles that deal with material "centrally concerned" with

the official Communist Party of the United States. All the items are listed alphabetically by author, an inconvenience largely overcome by an adequate index.

Seidman has excluded government publications and newspaper articles as well as most unpublished material (such as dissertations) and most fictional writing (at least self-consciously-fictional writing). Although over half the Party membership, in the early years, was attached to foreign-language federations, the bibliography omits material printed in languages other than English. There is the inclusion of much material by non-communists and anti-communists which specifically criticizes the Party (such as four critiques by the Reverend Billy James Hargis) and the exclusion of material on or by "non-official" communists (such as Trotskists and Lovestoneites) unless it deals directly with the CP. Such idiosyncrasies, however, do not overshadow the outstanding value and utility of the book.

Roger Keeran

Mitchell Goodman (editor): <u>The Movement Toward a New America</u> (Pilgrim Press and Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, 752 pages, 8 1/2 x 11, lots of cartoons and photos, $5.95)

This book is serious history; that's the first point. (The second point is that $5.95 in this case is NOT a rip-off. Most publishers would have charged two or three times as much.)

It is serious history because Goodman, who along with Doctor Spock was one of the defendants in the first anti-war conspiracy trial in 1968, and his collaborators on this book have set out to do much more than produce another "anthology" of the Movement in the 1960s. Numerous anthologies have been done, Massimo Teodori's being the best, but they have infinitely less to tell us than does <u>The Movement Toward a New America</u>. Starting with the premise that the Movement represents, in the words of the book's subtitle, "The Beginnings of a Long Revolution", the editors set out to capture the essence of these beginnings by molding a great variety of materials (largely from the underground press) into a coherent whole. Rather than compressing it all into standard book form, which would have squeezed the life out of the documents, they have used a creative, expensive layout which gives the writing added force and makes it fun to read. The picture that emerges is one of the Movement at its best: an immensely creative and positive response to the social disintegration of present-day America.

One can, of course, fault the editors for not presenting a "balanced" picture. They do not stress, for example, the manipulation that has been endemic to most Movement groups nationally, the sheer boredom of most political meetings, the penetration of speed and acid into the most

seemingly "together" youth communities, or (except in Marge Piercy's article reprinted from Liberation) the way in which youth culture and the Movement have provided new outlets for various kinds of destructive individualism. But saying this is like criticizing Arthur Schlesinger Junior for his books on Jackson and Roosevelt — these books are badly unbalanced and uncritical, but they are good history in the sense that they represent an honest attempt to make sense (from the perspective of the writer) of a mass of factual data about a period of history. The more-important question is whether the particular "unbalanced picture" that Goodman gives us is a basically-sound one. My guess is yes, that (a) there was and still is something that can be called a "Movement", despite all the rancorous splits within and all the attempted co-optation from without, and (b) the period we are now living in represents a playing-out of the possibilities of capitalist culture and a premonition of the revolutionary society which Marx foresaw as following upon the historical stage of capitalism.

Whew! Having disposed once and for all of that question, there is another criticism of the book that ought to be considered. There isn't much of a self-conscious sense of the class base of the Movement in the '60s: of the extent to which it was (among whites) predominantly a phenomenon of the upper middle class, or of the significance of its gradual fusion with traditional forms of working-class protest in the neighborhoods, community colleges, armed forces, and factories. The salient intellectual theme in this book is one of middle-class idealism and quasi-pacifism, combined with a cultural critique but with not much sense of class.

Well, yes, that is a weakness of the book, but as Kathy Mulherin says in her sub-introduction: "The Movement changes and grows every day. This book, like all others, has to stop at some point and allow itself to be fixed in black ink and enclosed in book covers." Besides, the sense of political moralism that has so-strongly characterized the Movement (derived largely from pacifists and from the middle-class civil-rights movement) has for a long time been an element of strength. Moralistic, romantic, utopian thinking was what allowed the possibility of a new and better society to be broached in the 1960s, in spite of all the scholarly "proofs" that advanced capitalism is the best of all possible worlds. While many people may be reluctant to admit the importance of this strand of thought, it is nice that this book recognized it — even though in the process it blurred over important questions of class.

As a kind of postscript, the very fact that the book is so long and comprehensive makes it hard to resist pointing out omissions. There is nothing from the Washington Free Press, which at its best was the best underground paper; none of the excellent cartoons of Lisa Lyons or of Nick Thorkelson; no poetry by d. a. levy (and no credit to levy for his collage on Page 368); and so forth. Obviously, though, no two people will agree on what should have been included. (For example, the

lack of organizational materials regarding SDS, Progressive Labor, the Young Socialist Alliance, the Student Mobilization Committee, et cetera may annoy some people, but it seems to me that the importance of such organizations is usually overstressed, and that it's better to err on the other side.) The fact that anyone who was awake during the late 1960s will find fault with some aspects of the book does not alter the fact that it is an excellent piece of work.

Jim O'Brien

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