

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS MATRIX:

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

"Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced back to the policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America."

This is a study in the political economy of racism in South Africa. In its classical sense political economy is the science that studies the recurrence of wealth and poverty in society. In the study of political economy what is of decisive significance is how and why people act and not what they themselves think and say about their actions. The foundations of any society are not about values, religion or morality but the exploitation of nature by human labor.

Society is an extremely complex phenomenon, and the materials with which social scientists have to deal are often frightening in their complexity. The day to day historical happenings are varied in the scope of their significance and are often incomprehensible and chaotic. There is an old saying coined by the Roman poet Plantus and made famous by Thomas Hobbes: "Homo homini lupus est"(man is to man a wolf).

In societies that are torn by racial exploitation, this

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tendency is cultivated to the idea of the inevitable antagonism

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between men.

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In this study I believe that the fundamental cause of racial oppression and exploitation in South Africa is the result of economic imperatives. I believe also that to explain the determinant role of the economy in South Africa's social life, is to explain at the same time the dominant role of non-economic structures in any given society. That is, by determining the socio-economic essence of relations between black and white in South Africa, we shall show the nature of the antagonism between capital and labor, regardless of the concrete forms it takes. In a racially structured society the social struggles between groups are in the final analysis determined by relations of black and white in the economy. To get to know the nature of race conflicts, is to get to know the sorts of unequal relations in the economic system.

To examine the socio-economic relations between black and white, we must begin by disclosing the meaning behind European overseas adventures beginning in the sixteenth century; and the general character of the epoch opened by these so-called voyages of discovery. A theory of race relations must be concerned with the laws revealed by the course of history in the last five hundred years, in particular, the various activities of the Europeans in the areas they acquired by conquest. That is, the theory of race relations must be based on and deduce from these activities the laws that determined race

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relations. In relation to the life-race of the African--the 3rd--Jawas--the slave trade, which was soon followed by the dismemberment and division of the African continent, its resources and people capitalist-^For Europe^ Benefit. And basic to the maintenance of imperialism was an international consensus which developed among Europeans regarding the role and status of black people in the new international socio-economic system.

From the point of view of conceptual understanding it is important therefore to take into account and isolate those definite and more or less stable relations which have characterized relations between blacks and whites in the era of capitalism and their changes in the course of time. The incorporation of the colonized peoples in the productive forces of their conquerors are at once the most stable and the most indicative of the nature and character of societies created by white settlers over the past five hundred years. That is black/white relations in the economic structure of South Africa are necessarily objective, material structure that conditions race relations.

"The dialectics in mutual relationships between people are manifested, on the one hand, in the dependence of human beings upon each other in their lives and activity and existence of certain common problems requiring joint effort; and on the other hand in the presence, within the various groups, of distinctive requirements and interests whose satisfaction results in various conflicts, differing in form, strength, nature and scale, among groups and individuals."2

I cannot in the pages that follow give an exhaustive

account of the entire economic system of South Africa as it has

developed historically. What I plan to do in this study is to select what Anderson calls key sectors which appear to be the privileged expression of the whole economic system, and through these sectors to show the rigorous coherence between economics and politics, basis and super structure.

Though scientific understanding has to confront empirical facts, their analysis must not be limited to their superficial description. Facts must be explained to disclose their hidden meaning. This can only be done with a theory of society that enables the social scientist to rise above individual facts to see the over-all picture of the processes and the connection that exists between individual facts engendered by a particular socio-economic formation. ' Behind the social relations of production is hidden the spirit of an era. When Europeans advanced beyond their shores and created societies of white settlements in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand among what Kipling called 'lesser breeds without the law' they meant to take the land permanently from the original owners. South Africa in the first decade of this century was the latest expression of white settler colonization within the triumphant social machinery of British imperialism. As an historical process white colonial settlement was a violent one involving destruction or forcible integration of 'natives' (as those who occupied the lands by Europeans were called) into the productive forces of imperialism. It was the use to which the African would be put that would necessitate the sparing of his life. Oliver Cox puts out that it is in the colonies that capitalist

use of other people and property of others in the interest of domestic enterprise may be observed in their purest forms; that is, the 'distinctive parasitic' relation of capitalist groups to what are called backward peoples.

In this regard, the most important features of the South African experience, that would explain its evolution, is the predominant influence of power achieved by white settlers over the African and the development of capitalist forms of economic growth in the context of colonization, hrue * ^

Furthermore, the niodeita social structure of South Africa as it was constituted by Britain in 1910, following the defeat of Africans and the Boers, was determined by even more immediate events. In 1854 and 1884 diamonds and gold had been discovered at Kimberly and the Witwatersrand respectively.

These two minerals historically had provided a great deal of enchantment to mankind. In South Africa they attracted speculators' capital and seekers of fortune in large numbers.

The presence of diamonds and gold in South -Africa- was of special interest to British imperialism especially because of the role gold played and continues to play in the system of international capitalist finance. South Africa produces today

almost seventy-two percent of the world capitalist supply of

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gold. And until 1940's gold was the most important corner of foreign exchange for South Africa. The crucial and strategic importance of gold in backing international capitalist currencies points to the fact that it is not only a privilege industry in South Africa but that the contemporary capitalist

relations of production and exchange in the mining industry delineate South Africa as an economic sector which is international in scope. Thus in the historic conditions that formed South Africa, her conquest, her economy, her classes, her state, in the continuing action upon her of imperialist countries, we ought to be able to find the essence of her racism; in particular, the economic benefits that accrue not only to local settlers but that are enjoyed by investors who find the exploitation of her mineral resources worth whiÅ£e ^Ussaas* of the cheap labor provided by Africans.

The incorporation and deployment of African labor, first in agriculture and most importantly in the gold mining industry as it has evolved seemed to me, to provide a model of labor relations between black and white workers that spread its influence into manufacturing industries and commerce. The most notorious single feature of farming and mining industries, which has persisted unchanged over the past ninety years is the systematic use of forced labor. The slave, the 'apprentice,' the farm laborer, the migrant laborer, the mining compound worker, the prison labor, all represent categories of forced labor determined by South Africa's specific situations. In the steady growth of forced labor methods that have characterized South Africa in the last hundred years, we are dealing with a crucial structural feature of the economy whose practice is somewhat independent of a specific government in power, even though government policies can slow, modify, or tighten the process.

In terms of African oppression and exploitation there is interpenetration in South African colonial development and history., between the local scene and its imperatives and the imperial scene and its requirements. The peculiarly and particularly South African appears and functions within the context first of Dutch mercantile interest and later of British imperial domination and control, the latter fact having a determinant influence upon the nature of colonial development at the same time as the former fact exerts a fundamental influence upon that of local developments. The appearance of the particular does not negate the existence of the general which still fasten on the production and sale of gold.

To gain a correct appreciation of the economic forces at work in South Africa, it is necessary to study the crucial role of gold production in the economy of South Africa and role African labor has played in creating the exploitability of that mineral and the power on which white superiority has been based. In the plantation and mining economies that Europeans established in areas they colonized, a numerous, impoverished, and relatively unfree labor was a prerequisite before the resources of these areas could be volarized. Since the mercantile era black/white relations have either involved legal slavery or the form of present day economic semi-slavery.

Dan Lacy's analysis of the meaning of race in a recent book, *The White Use of Blacks in America*, applies equally to the South African situation and we quote:

"Most studies of white actions and attitudes toward black in America, have treated them as products of irrational racist emotion and as problems in social psychology. Though there has been a marked paranoid component in white racial attitudes, white actions with regard to blacks have not in fact been an aggregation of irrationalities. In their totality they have constituted a deliberate and carefully inter-linking set of policies intended to assure the presence and exploitability of a large semi-skilled labor force, primarily in agriculture whose labor could be commanded at subsistence wages. Changes in the economy that increased or diminished the need for such a labor force have been the principal determinant of racial policy. Indeed paranoid elements in America's ... racial attitudes have in no small part been deliberately created as means of sustaining racial policies having commonly economic objectives."³
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I am here concerned with how institutional racism is structured by government and employers' policies to throw on heavy burdens and give less benefits to Africans as a group defined by powerlessness. Institutional racism is perpetuated by the ruling class as a means of exploitation within a political system that must be understood as a totality.*

In the South African context this means that policies are decided upon, institutions structured, beliefs, values and attitudes inculcated to maintain and accentuate differences between black and white workers for the purposes of systematically weakening their political power so as to deprive and

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exploit the African section of the working class. And conquest facilitated the institutionalization both of powerlessness and

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I use the notion of totality, with Perry Anderson

(1969:279), to mean an entity whose diverse structures are bound together in such a way that any one of them considered separately is an abstraction. It is not an aggregated sum of parts.

racism. To understand structural racism and human behavior in such social situations, is to understand the forces and influences that have exerted pressure on individuals and

impelled them to behave as they do. The institutions are a

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link in the complex chain of socio-historical experiences and processes. The mode of production provides an organic unity upon which social institutions function.

The need for larger masses of cheap black labor confronted the newly-created Union of South Africa with insoluble historical and structural problems from its birth. Almost fully-realized in America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, genocide against the indigenous population (despite several wars of conquest which ranged for over two hundred years) was demographically impossible or unnecessary in South Africa. White settlers, with the help of British imperial power, contented themselves with militarily enforced appropriations, definitive crushing of organized resistance, and incorporation of the conquered subjects into the developing productive relations as a subservient class. Today the African as labor power exists in the very heart of the system that exploits him. Thus the need for

African labor creates conditions that bring together the

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potential forces for the most effective opposition rule

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and exploitation, and even pe& a threat to the very system.'

It is important to note that the imperialist system itself, of which the newly-created Union of South Africa was a part, in 1914 (Just four years after the creation of the Union) engaged in a suicidal conflict the profound shock of which would

undermine its past certainties and 'mission.' Thus, South

forced to confront the epoch of imperialist decline-and it confronted this reality in a reactionary and despairing mood. The presence of a larger number of conquered, sullen, and dispossessed subjects, indispensable for economic development produced among white settlers not only fear, but a mystifying collective self-consciousness, and an a-historical attachment to a changeless world. The white settlers have clung to the privileges of conquest and capitalist civilization with an arriviste fervour, undiluted by any reference to universal values of change and growth characteristic of the era of ascendant imperialism. They recognize only one 'truth', that their situation demanded the freezing of the status quo and

perpetuation of colonial dominatio South African politics

in part are an attempt to set up by political means a permanent barrier to change. And seen thus, the question of black/white relations becomes an historical tragedy. The white settlers have by their situation proven incapable of serving the twin problems to which their rule has given rise: the problem of

relations between people who differ racially and the colonial problem. That South Africa is unable to justify itself either before the bar of 'reason' or before the bar of 'conscience,'

The new society then was the child of its time during which naked power was the be all and end all here. When South Africa

Africa ^as a society, was from the day of its first consciousness

and that she increasingly takes refuge in hypocrisy and d&iM

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is clear evidence of its moral crisis.

became her own law giver, she immediately passed laws to ensure the rule of white settlers eternally and thus began to follow unashamedly the road of what today is called 'separate development.' This process gave rise to what has seemed an oddity: a capitalist society where everyone has an

assigned role within a fetishized social hierarchy. The

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United States of America earlier had shown that a society may perpetuate social inequalities with far more effectiveness when the deployment of the work force and the maldistribution of income is buttressed by inequities

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structured on racial differences.

My purpose in this book is to discuss the implication of the socio-historical facts of white settlement in the development of South Africa as a society-and of classes within it. For my purpose the question of what classes exist in South Africa and the nature of their structural relations cannot be posed outside the context of conquest and colonization and the actual struggles for liberation from white settler rule. Further, I hope to illustrate that the nature of the South African society is brought out clearly only where analysis does not remain at the purely empirical level; i.e., if it does not merely record facts by themselves, but takes account of the larger sweep of events that make up the epoch of European imperialist expansion.

II

There is an unwritten rule among social scientists of the ruling class to ignore or at least to play down the role of

economic factors in the analysis of racial conflict in South Africa's social and economic history. This tradition unites the imperialist, the Nationalist and Liberal social scientist. This of course is not surprising, it is always safer for the established order to present history in terms of personalities; their policies, attitudes and philosophies than to reveal the naked material interests upon which centuries of oppression have been based. This tendency is no better exemplified than in the recent theoretical controversy involving those who refute the Marxian model of class analysis and employ the pleural theory approach.

The plural society theorists have posed the problem in South Africa as one of contradiction between racism or apartheid as practiced by the Afrikaners and economic growth or "modernization." The argument of the scholars who favour the plural society approach schematically runs as follows: Industrialization inevitably results in progressive integration of all those involved in it because it creates a situation in which 'careers are open to talent' which works against the allocation of roles by ascriptive criteria. According to this theory, the market demands of a growing economy lead to free social mobility and to the break of all claims of political and economic privileges based on racial inequalities. However, because South Africa is a 'pleural' or 'dual' society, this process is inhibited by differences initially, in culture and values between the modern European and traditional African sectors. Within the 'market economy' however, the conservative

values of the pre-industrial society gradually disappear as they are replaced by norms of an industrial society. This inevitably gives rise to a problem of cultural integration which the white polity must solve if the economy is not to stagnate.

But the Afrikaners who control political power today in South Africa are inhibited from solving the problems of socio-economic changes by archaic attitudes that they inherited from earlier periods of their South African experience: from

slavery, colonization, and white/black competition for land in the frontier; they developed an intransigent sense of group-consciousness against both Africans and British. That is, whenever the Afrikaner was faced with a hostile situation he retreated to the laager. It is this intransigence which has created the present impasse. The pluralist approach tries to shift the responsibility for race conflicts to inherited values, cultural differences and religious beliefs.

To understand the theory of social and cultural pluralism, it is necessary to understand what its advocates take for granted, i.e. those aspects of social reality which they consider as settled. Secondly, the theory of plural society is mechanical because it does not view society as a framework of organically connected relationships, but as a series of unrelated facts. This permits the pluralists to consider phenomena that are essential aspects of the capitalist process of development as incidental facts that can be corrected and eliminated.

The highly idealized model of capitalist development is not surprising, in fact it is expressive not only of a major

contradiction in the socio-economic structure but of the ^
isolatfejl^ of racism from the capitalist system.

In South Africa-even though white economic, political and social power is geared towards the exploitation of black men, and social relations between black and white at all levels are structured to maintain Africans in a subservient state-there is still the historical problem of the relations between the

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two white groups:-the Afrikaner and the Englishri After their

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conquest the Afrikaners were allowed the political means to achieve a political majority while the English \$

themselves in the economic field. The historical contradiction

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between the English and Afrikaners is responsible for the theoretical confusions; for it is assumed that there is a conflict between the role of economic and political power. This, of course, need not be the case: In dealing with the problems

of the real world, as distinct from problems of abstract theory, it is almost never permissible to assume and treat economic and political factors in isolation. Yet this is exactly what those who see a conflict between economics and politics do.

The two white groups in South Africa have a fundamental unity based on their status as a foreign conquering colonial force.

It is extremely naive to accept the existence of the conflict between the economy and politics prima facie. It is important to investigate the real relation between the economy and the state in a situation of conquest. This entails the recognition of the contradictory, but indivisible aspects of the South African reality, and the historical process that these contradictions produce.

The actual study of the position of the whites today reveals that they regard South Africa as a prize of conquest; and a rigidly planned system of domination maintained by force, institutions and forms of law are devised to perpetuate and

solve problems arising from day to day frictions and contrasts

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between the victor and vanquished. These laws make South African history a chain of events which follow each other in a grossly self-evident sequence. The real problem consists, indeed, not in substituting sociology for history as if the latter had been an appearance which conceals behind it a secret reality but in understanding history as a whole, in all its dynamic manifestations, and in understanding it through the aid of economic sociology.[^] In South Africa, economics and politics are very closely connected, which throws even more light on the role of state, as the handmaiden of economic exploitation of the African people. That is, the South African social and economic stratification found expression in racial politics.

The fundamental fact of capitalistic development in South Africa cannot be taken for granted. It is based on conquered cheap black labor and the continued cheapness of this labor is the foundation upon which economic prosperity and white political and social power are based. The status quo is maintained by a repressive legal system developed with extreme cunning and deliberateness. The history of the labor laws in South Africa is, in fact, a history of politics of forced labor. Unless social scientists use these uncomfortable truths as touch-tones,

their works, no matter how serious the claim of scientific reliability will be misleading at best.

In South Africa, the relationships between black and white cannot be isolated or atomized on the strength of some abstract concept or general formula equally valid for capitalist and pre-capitalist social formations as the pluralists attempt to do. We must, instead, make a concrete analysis of the actual historical conditions within which black/white relations take shape and how specific events imparted to the economic system its special character. Behind every isolated fact there is a process which gives it meaning.

Human relationships though based on values, normative patterns and folkways, their character and substance are influenced by persistent social forms of which individuals may not be aware, but within which people's activities take place. Economic relations form the base on which social forms afford the necessary conditions for shaping social relations.

III

This study therefore places a major emphasis on the role of conquest and the capitalist economic development of South Africa first under the hegemony of British imperialism and later under the growth of state and Afrikaner capitalism in the context of political institutions imposed by Britain before she relinquished formal political control. The external dimension of the South African problem still inheres in the characteristics, not only of gold production but of those sectors of the economy which requires modern technology and finance.

The role of gold as medium of international finance and its foreign ownership ties African exploitation into the world capitalist system in very precise ways. The dependence of the gold mining industry on foreign capital and advanced technology to extract otherwise unprofitable ones distorts and deforms the economy creating problems in the countries balance of payments. This indeed is the unique feature of South African development. The Africans exist today in South Africa as exploited, conquered subjects to serve local and international interests. By their labor they have made it possible for the otherwise exhausted mines to continue producing at a profit.

And their existence as such created the factors which produced mutual concessions between the English and Afrikaners after the latter themselves were militarily conquered. The cheap labor supplied by Africans is the main attraction for international companies that find mining of minerals in their countries uneconomic because of high labor costs.

In the political-economic context of South Africa the conflict between the two white groups became non-antagonistic, in the sense that it was marginal to the main conflict; that between the whites as a colonizing force and the Africans as a subject people. Both the English and Afrikaners are agreed that whites must maintain political and economic supremacy to retain the exploitative capitalist economic structures.

Africans are oppressed because the rulers of the country find it highly profitable to exploit them. In terms of fundamental motivation oppression is as simple as that. The actual history of South Africa, therefore is one of conquest, enslavement,

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robbery, murder, etc., established with great pains through

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<' trial and error and sagacious fraud. As a rule, polite scholars

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prefer not to study this seamy side. They find it distasteful and uninteresting: they believe that by ignoring this side of

the matter the better side of man will prevail-let sleeping dogs lie!

Stated in another way, the central questions asked in this book are: what effect did conquest have in the evolution of

today's race relations in South Africa? What implications did primitive accumulation of capital based on diamond and gold

metals have on creating an industrial structure of labor

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relations based on criteri'on on race? Conquest and the political economy based on the mineral industry seem to us to define South Africa as a historical socio-economic formation.

It is through the dialectics and dynamics of conquest and the political economy based on extraction that a model for the whole society can be worked out. This is not an attempt to single out one or two factors as "keys" to the complexities of South Africa, it is rather an acknowledgement that through the psychology created by conquest and wealth created through the exploitation of African people, a socio-political order was evolved. Once Africans were defeated it was easy enough to impose "a final settlement," i.e., to treat them as "inferior" beings. Inverted social relations fit only inverted reality, and conquest inverted the future evolution of society in South Africa. Once physical military superiority was established it tended to spread and invert the entire social order. It is

not difficult to see where the present inversion started in South Africa.,

To put it this way is to open oneself to the charge that the economic factor and nothing else is important. However, there are methodological and theoretical advantages for analyzing the racial situation in South Africa in economic-class terms. The content and meaning of racial-nationalism changes with changes in the forces of production and is transformed with the transformation of the productive forces. Only through studying the place of victors and vanquished in the system of production can we consistently show that in fact the antagonistic forms of race consciousness correspond to the concrete historical interests in a system of production and not to some premodial racial consciousness.

Racial laws are therefore actually tendencies, which may or may not develop completely. In the era of imperialism the

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dialectic of racial oppression appears in the colonies and neo-colonies as a typical way to harness the labor of those whose societies fall "outside" the capitalist mode of production and also assumed to be outside even of humanity itself. Thus, issues of class exploitation and national oppression in colonial societies are congruent. The prevailing socio-political order in the colonies is formed in obedience to the economic conditions.

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"external" to the socio-economic whole, actually and significantly

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influence the development and alignment of class forces. The extent, then, that bourgeois theories of racial oppression neglect the factor of conquest and ignore its structural and systematic implications for racial oppression, they must be judged inadequate. To view racism in South Africa as problems of a plural society is a social scientist tendency and one which tends to freeze life in formal conceptions which obliterate the conscious will of men that creates the conditions of oppression. Such an approach would have us view oppression as an arbitrary

occurrence in certain types of society considered a-historically?â– Nothing, however, in South Africa is arbitrary. South Africa as a modern political and economic unit was first organized externally and then internally. Its development is conditioned by the objective circumstance of its external and internal reorganization. Even though it has since passed through various stages of decreasing or increasing dependence upon imperialism, its internal dynamics continue along the logic laid down by the "external" organizer. One of the things that must be determined is if, or to what extent, South Africa has become autonomous of external dependency. In general, the tendency in South Africa's development has been toward greater integration in the imperialist sphere. This integration is reflected not only in the increasing volume of foreign investment in her economy, but by the takeover of companies originally owned by South Africans. Hence, the most complex sectors in the South African economy are usually bound to foreign interests by their technological or financial dependency and patent complexity.

This is clearly demonstrated in the supposedly self-sufficient South African armaments industry. In truth, the armaments are produced from patents bought from imperialist armament

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To understand the ability of South Africa to resist change and maintain the status quo, it is necessary to understand also the relation of that country to other countries within the active imperialist sphere. Certain specific features of the South African national economy must be viewed as a component of the world economy on which its growth and security has always depended. That is, the key to the problem of South Africa is to understand its capitalist development as an international process, not as something which happened on parallel lines as in other countries.

Quite obviously between the white settlers as a conquering ruling national class and the Africans as the defeated ruled and exploited national class, there is constant national and class warfare. The key to this warfare is not race but power. The African is faced with a brute fact: monopoly of power in the

hands of the minority. The peculiar nature of this warfare lies in the conflicting relations to the implanted capitalism between Africans as a group and whites as a group. How the war will be carried out between the two people inhabiting the same territory is a question of far-reaching interest. Its interest is of more than just an historical nature. Its significance for our era stems from the fact that many of the corporations that control the commanding heights of the American, British,

European and Japanese economies are predominant in South Africa and, therefore, the war in South Africa is the great class struggle raging in the world before our eyes.

In white South African politics, agreement that whites must be dominant economically, politically, and socially is more important than methodological differences about insuring the process. It is an agreement that finds an echo in the strategies of imperialism as well. That is, the political success of Afrikaner rule was facilitated by the fact that foreign interest realized that they could also benefit by it.

And given that fundamental assumption, attempts are made by both the English and Afrikaner to create institutions that would insure their eternal domination. The absence of articulate class divisions within the white population (which has baffled some scholars) is to be explained precisely by the colonial situations; Europeans collectively derived their privileges: their employment, their riches, their place in the sun, from classes the vigorous exclusion and exploitation of Africans. That is, in struggling against one another the Whites increasingly gained advantages by forcing sacrifices on the African people, whether it is the question of land or jobs. Imperialist investors also derive their super-profits from this political set-up-hence, their vested interest in the status quo.

The economics and politics of conquest could not, however,

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have existed over an extended period as just a set of shrewd
market-oriented operations. Imperialism is not, after all,

just an economy-it permeates and is supported by many other social and ideological facts. Thus, there have been elaborated in South Africa a whole culture of control-with political, social and ideological formulations-to justify and hold white dominance over the subjected Africans and to keep the poorer exploited white contemptuous of Africans.

Imperialist ideology in the nineteenth century was already structured around a colour-oriented exploitation and mystification. Accordingly, this culture of racial domination of colonial peoples rapidly diffused from the whole North Atlantic capitalist civilization to all the European colonies. In South Africa racism-that is, the subjugation and exploitation based on blackness and other associated stereotypes rather than on servitude alone-was more sharply defined than in most other places in the British empire because of the ratio between the colonizer and the colonized. To understand the evolution of South Africa as a social formation it is necessary to understand this other dimension of its reality.

In the realm of the social sciences, and especially in the study of the operation of the capitalist system, the task of distinguishing between surface and inner meaning of phenomenon is of the essence. Marx tells us in fact, that if the form of phenomena and its essence always coincided there would be no need for science. But for this assumption, scientific analysis of society would be altogether impossible. The international system of imperialism (of which South Africa is a fragment) developed over the past five centuries on the basis

of international division of labor and capitalist property relations is the main determinant of class and national contradictions which characterize our era.

What then does this mean in terms of racism and capitalist development in South Africa? What forms did the development of capitalism take (under conquest and imperialism)? It is our task to describe and relate the development of capitalism in South Africa and to set up a model which would take into account the historical evolution of its capitalism as an adjunct of imperialism. This implies the necessity to comprehend as fully as possible the structure and mode of the functioning of capitalism in its imperialist phase—we must understand the mediations by which racism became the force which is revealed to our immediate consciousness as a motive force whose origin is independent of capitalist economic forces.

A scientific analysis calls for an effort on the part of the social scientist to identify and recognize the national and international context of South Africa's racism. South Africa today bears the brunt of the irrationality of imperialism, which sooner or later would provide the energies of its abolition. The mere study of the internal patterns of its economic, political and social organization can not account sufficiently for all the dimensions of the South African situation. Only the study of how external relations impinge on the political economy of South Africa gives a fuller understanding. It will also explain the almost unanimous support South Africa receives today at the U.N. from imperialist countries which,

in fact, has exacerbated the relationship between the newly-emerged states and their former colonial masters. The super-profits historically derived by metropolitan ruling classes from South Africa explains their rhetorical 'condemnation' of South Africa at the same time as they continue increasing their investment in the South African economy.

The fear of the international consequences of the South African racial situation has forced certain ideologists of neo-imperialism to disassociate Afrikaner racism from its

capitalist imperialist base and to identify Afrikaner racism

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as playing an independent, and major role in South Africa.

The -fears in the study of racism is indeed

producing mystifying debates of the chicken and egg-type. In fact, when the Nationalist party assumed political control in

1948, they demanded of the whites that racism, rather than

being hypocritically concealed, be boosted, force-fed, swollen into an immutable and omnipresent conscious reality, that it be made the very mode of social existence between black and white. This demand forced those who had thrived behind the laissez faire racism to identify their true position. The theoretical assumptions that attribute racism to the working out of Afrikaner archaic political ideals or to the importance of Afrikaner ideological heritage is a refusal to study the structural basis of racism. In fact these developments instead of being studied are taken st face value as proof that the importance of racism, a characteristic feature of the present _____ historical period has nothing to do with capitalist exploitations

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has no place in Marxist theory, lies outside Marxist framework, and was completely unanticipated by Marxist exponents. Thus on those occasions when some effort was made to deal with racism and race conflicts, the attempt is guided by unarticulated yet widely-shared ideological assumption to discredit Marxism. In fact, in recent studies the meaning of racism in capitalist societies is deliberately distorted ' " "J "'f ',J 'j.'

In modern South Africa racism developed hand-in-hand with capitalist and imperialist economic dialectics. The Afrikaners, as a people, and the Nationalist Party, as their political organ, have worked within the institutions of capitalism as implemented by the British near the end of the nineteenth century. The Afrikaner political elite, in spite of its violent anti-British sentiment, in reality sought collaboration with British imperialism. For it, conquest of the state power and achievement of political majority represented their final ratification and they were willing to offer a quid pro quo to British imperialism so long as they were spared African competition in economic, social and political spheres. In relation to South Africa, British imperialism acted like the sorcerer's apprentice who could no longer control the forces of the nether world which he had called up by his spell.

Those who ignored this fact misunderstand the behavior of Afrikaners; their discussion of the behavior of the white working class serves only to conjure up a grim picture of an unchanging story of embittered race relations between English and Afrikaner and between the two white groups and the Africans;

a dead-locked story traced back to the Calvinist's beliefs inherited by Afrikaner from forebearers.* In this version Calvinism determines South Africa's race relations between white and black. Here, however, we have to attempt to look beyond the rhetoric of the Afrikaner spokesman into the concrete historical and material bases that underlies the dynamics of present-day Afrikaner racial nationalism.

Any situation as Marx tells us "is concrete because it is

a combination of many determinations, i.e., a unity of diverse

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elements." In the interplay of often conflicting tendencies,

all of which are related to that objective structure the meaning

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of these conflicts should be derived. The conquest of South Africa by Britain meant not only domination of other groups by another, but it also meant the subordination of pre-capitalist modes of production by the capitalist. Thus, South Africa as a society is at once an aggregate of many determinations whose diverse structures form not only a whole but has built-in contradictions. Theoretically, this should be the point of departure and the key to the historical understanding of the ideological heritage of its members and their social

9

relations.

It is, indeed, the task of economic sociology to get below the problems created by the many-sided realities of the South African situation. Today South Africa provides a classic case

*1 use the word 'story' rather than history advisedly because those who use this argument betray an anti-historical temperament in that they fail, to see the past as active in the effective present.

capitalist industrialization built by a deliberate fostering of racism and maintenance of obsolete and antiquated structures; a process which seems only to have produced a pattern of growth leading to higher and higher levels of political stagnation resulting in a clear division between superior and subordinate, between colonizer and colonized, the masters and servants. In fact, once this 'duality' was on its legs, it was maintained and reproduced on a continuously expanding scale by a deliberate system of racial legislation. Because force was initially necessary to clear the way, and since it created an unequal structure in rewards, the system has had to be maintained by even more force, whether it be the structural ossification of African traditional institutions, the violence of power, the symbolic violence of socialization,

and/or the institutional violence of day-to-day police

10

pacification.

The theoretical challenge posed by the South African society has taken many forms among social scientists. For some, the challenge appears to be that of identifying a key factor between race and class or the seeking out of an underlying causes of racism. For others, the issue seems to be one of showing in correct order and sufficient detail the sequence of events that have led to the present state of affairs. For some still, nothing predominates over anything, every 'factor' following the golden rule! "Live and let live" is supposed to play its part. For others the issue is one of nomenclature, that is, of finding a word or concept that supposedly fits in

a kind of one-to-one relationship the South African society.

For others the problem is one of exhaustive description of every fact and every event. Thus a great deal of energy is dissipated on pretentious models conceptualizing the situation. And the latest fad is that South Africa is a plural society. Earlier, South Africa was described by as a

Pigmentocracy. What all these terms fail to do is to disclose the actual content of race relations in South Africa.

The rise of Afrikaner racial oppression and exploitation and concomitant racist ideology in South Africa cannot be understood apart from the developing capitalism, and in the context of imperialism. Since their violent incorporation within the expanding capitalist-imperialist system, the African suffered what can be called "forced retardation" both in the development of their productive capacity (technological skills) and in the growth of historically required needs and their means of fulfillment because they were assigned roles in the secondary rather than the primary sector of the economy. Instead of South Africa being a pleural society, it is in fact a society with a dual labor market; a white primary market of relatively well-paid jobs and a black secondary market of hot,

11

dirty, and low-paying jobs. The socio-political implications of this situation are clear: on a deeper level, African workers

as a group are confined to marginal yet indispensable roles by fraud, violence and a system of institutionalized racism that has built artificial ceilings to protect what in the high-noon of imperialism seemed to be a natural position of the white masters of the world.

Marx has described the role of 'aboriginal' people during the birth of European capitalism as follows;

"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of conquest and the looting of East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for commercial hunting of black skin signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momento 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 fostering of a new system of slavery to exploit their labor."¹²

The development of a dependent capitalism in South Africa seems to confirm Marx's observation with an irresistible logic. The discovery of diamonds and gold accelerated conquest and turned Southern Africa south of the 22nd parallel into a reserve for commercial recruitment of black skins, thousands of whom have since been entombed in the deep bowels of the South African mines, where fortunes were made over night. Their cheap labor brought about the extraction of the precious metal which has been the basis of the world's capitalist monetary system.

Since the discovery of diamonds and gold, the mine owners, the capitalist farmers, and the industrialist took advantage of the historical situation. To prevent competition and to avoid the rise in the price of African labor, they compelled the government to lay down a nation-wide plan to obtain African labor cheap. A set of circumstances were created through land seizure and legislation which in time would force every African to toil for their white masters at the cheapest price. From all the

corners of South Africa and beyond, channels were created leading African labor to the mines, white farmers and industry. The threat of starvation would compel the Africans to accept the most menial and the least remunerative work. The threat on their jobs would force white workers to ally themselves with the ruling class in order to escape the fate of African workers.

By way of relevant history, it is important to recognize that the Dutch and English settlers had come from societies in which lives of their own subjects (especially if poor) were evaluated very cheaply, thus some of the most violent methods had been used to divorce the peasants from their subsistence.

This inhumanity-mirroring an acquisitive society-showed itself at its worst when confronted by African societies.

For here, the people, who were ruthlessly oppressed and who possessed the wealth and land coveted by the invaders-were black andtrown, the whole scene demanded a theory of white superiority and black inferiority. There was in reality but one method of handling the labor problem: 'forced labor.'

The reason for the easy institutionalization of racism and oppression must be understood in terms of the historical inheritance that Europeans brought with them in the areas they settled. The Dutch East India Company then introduced slave labor, which, after the abolition of slavery was replaced by labor tenancy which was later made permanently operative by conquest in the farming, and mining industries as these developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

In Natal this tendency to use forced labor was encouraged by the importation of 150,000 indentured Indian laborers. Brought by the British capitalist to labor in Natal's sugar cane plantations, these Indians were a class of underpaid bound laborers. Thus a tradition was reinforced in South Africa that it was impossible for a white man to do manual work. In like manner, the diamond and gold mining industries, and the complex of industries which developed in connection with them, were based on the employment of large, low paid, semi-slave, non-white labor. Since the slave era of the sixteenth century, one can detect efforts of British capitalist to structurally integrate white settlers as a class as well as racist tyrants on the subject peoples. This is also obvious in the importation of Chinese 'coolies' to work in the gold mines. In a speech on the use of African labor Earl Grey stated:

"They must dismiss (the mine owners) from their minds the idea of developing their mines with white labor. Means had to be sought to induce the natives to seek, spontaneously, employment of the mines, and to work willingly for long terms of more or less continuous service. In time, he believed, the education of the natives would cause them to seek work to gratify those growing wants which were the certain result of increasing contact with civilization. Meanwhile, an incentive to laborers must be provided by the imposition of a hut-tax of at least £1, in conformity to the practice in Basotland and also by establishment of a small laborer-tax, which those able-bodied natives should be required to pay who are unable to show a certificate for four months' of work."¹⁵

This is a perfectly straightforward policy and would be endorsed by almost all future South African employers of African labor and government, but they would learn to be more discreet

about their aim or methods. The instrument for the complete control of African labor would be the native reserve, the urban location and the pass system.

The racial franchise agreed upon by Britain in 1908 and the play on color differences concealed the realities of capitalist exploitation behind the myth of racial superiority. The color line became historically a subterfuge used to persuade the world that the darker races were inferior and incapable of undertaking so-called white man's work. Hence, social relations, attitudes and habits corresponding to those found in the slave societies became the most deeply ingrained in the white capitalist and white working class and the latter would defend their privileges post factum with their lives. The important point here is the economic basis of racial attitudes rather than the reverse.

The extractive industries, mines and farms by nature of their organization and structure have always been the backbone of forced labor policies and African enslavement and exploitation. In the era of imperialism the extraction of minerals and cash crop could be done with feudal-like methods of exploitation simply by imparting on them a predatory and slave-like character. Monopolistic economic strength of those classes with interest in mining and farming enabled them to accumulate political muscle to safeguard their interests and to influence the new forces of industrialization.

There is thus no question of the significance of the economic factor: it was certainly a necessary condition of the

Anglo-Boer War which resulted in the formation of the Union of

South Africa. But it must also be pointed out that the economic factors worked the way they did because of historical and other social factors. The elevation of all whites into an aristocracy happened (as we shall see below) in the aftermath of conquest, when the Africans could only look back at a series of debacles, and when it seemed that all other alternatives were futile. Even more important than this negative outlook, the society which had won the war (against the Africans and Boers) was possessed of the most formidable battery of cultural weapons with which to justify its conquest and with which to mystify its victims.

IV.

In terms of the evolution of colonialism and racism in South Africa, three qualitatively distinct phases can be distinguished even though they cannot be abstractly separated.

The first type of colonialism extends from 1652 to 1806 and was practiced by the Dutch East India Company. Dutch colonialism was based on methods of plunder. Cattle and land provided the only meaningful resources to the social systems of both white and black pastoralists and racism expressed itself in genocidal struggle for land and cattle. The second period runs from 1806 to the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand. This era is characterized by the insatiable need British industrial capitalism had for markets and raw materials. During the British colonial era there was not only a long and sustained search for mineral wealth, but Britain subsidized white settlers who came to develop

plantations which would need African labor. During this period there is progressive dispossession of Africans of their best lands and their incorporation as instruments of labor for British settlers. The third and final phase of colonialism was reached in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the other capitalist nations caught up with Britain. This led to the division of the world among the European powers and ushered in the period of modern imperialism. It is the period which saw the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa which led the conquest and constitution of South Africa as a British Dominion. The fourth phase is one in which the new Dominion tries to find its identity and runs up to 1948. It is an era characterized not only by two world wars, but also by the solidification of white supremacy and the full blown exploitation of the country's mineral wealth. This period also saw the development of secondary industries and Afrikaner political and economic power. The fifth phase began in 1948 when the present Afrikaner government gained political control of the country and the struggle by Africans on an extra-parliamentary plane led by the African National Congress reached a new level of militancy which caused the banning of the African National Congress which until then had been the guardian of the national aspiration of the African people. It is also a period characterized by the emancipation of Africa from the colonial rule. This has caused great fears among white settlers and has made them to adopt extremely oppressive forms of rule. In spite of such repression it was during this period that the armed

struggle for national liberation began. Thus the character and mood of the new nation (South Africa) and the content of its history were significantly influenced by the activities of Africans.

Any clear-cut separation of these periods is arbitrary, since each of them bears within itself the seed of successive development and the reason for its own demise. But, no less arbitrary have been attempts to interpret the past in terms of isolated facts apart from the whole of reality, as if each fact, each action, each moment, each phenomenon were not a link in an infinite chain of reciprocal actions and reactions.

Those who study South Africa have remained pitiful toys of what seems to them blind and chaotic historical developments: they

refuse to see through the motley fabric of social phenomena the motivating force behind it-the struggle of classes occupying different positions in a system of social production.

V.

The aim of this book is a modest one: to point to certain

crucial variables that define the South African social history and which have been either ignored or played down in current literature. It suffers from many shortcomings of a work done with urgency of the times and not altogether favorable circumstances. It also suffers from lack of enough empirical research. Nevertheless, I am convinced that work along the lines developed here is long overdue. One cannot wait until enough empirical

The essays, written polemically, are directed against thoughtless apologetics of South African political economy now widespread in the works of certain liberal scholars.