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## RACE, CLASS AND COLONIALISM<sup>1</sup>

BY

MICHAEL BURAWOY

As a reaction to race cycle theories, assimilation theses and prejudice studies, it has become increasingly fashionable to view racial stratification from the perspective of intergroup conflict. Two frameworks in particular have gained popularity in the study of societies where racial divisions are prominent. The first, 'pluralism', has emerged from the examination of colonial and post-colonial societies such as South Africa and the West Indies and in some cases the framework has been applied to the United States [e.g. Smith, 43, p. 430 *et seq.*] The second framework, 'internal colonialism' has been most widely adopted in the treatment of patterns of race relations in the United States [Cruse, 14; Blauner, 7; Tabb, 47; Carmichael and Hamilton, 10], but it is also found in studies of Latin American societies [Casanova, 12 and Frank, 17, pp. 218-29]. In South Africa the concept has had a long history in Communist Party thinking, going back as far as the late 1920s when the 'Black Republic' slogan was adopted [Simons, 41, chapter 17].<sup>2</sup> More recently it has gained popularity amongst non-Marxist social scientists who have examined the structure of racial domination in South Africa [Adam, 1; Carter *et al.*, 11], and Marquard, 35].

'Pluralism' as understood in political theory of the Tocquevillean tradition and more broadly applied to 'stable integration' of disparate ethnic groups in American society, must be sharply distinguished from the notion of 'pluralism' as used in this paper. Kuper [32] has succinctly differentiated between 'equilibrium' and 'conflict' models of pluralism. While both models focus on the consequences of the existence of a plurality of groups, in the 'equilibrium' model independent groups mediate between rulers and ruled, promoting integration through balanced competition. The basis of cohesion, according to this model, is value consensus and multiple affiliations of its members. By contrast, under the conflict model, with which we are concerned, the independence of the plural groups implies inter-sectional conflict and the disruption of societal cohesion. Coercion rather than value consensus is the important integrative mechanism.

Furnivall has been associated with the first coherent formulation of pluralism in his treatment of the Dutch colonies in the Far East: '... there is a plural society with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political unit' [Furnivall, 20, p. 304]. Van den Berghe [50] has been responsible for popularising the concept in his treatment of South Africa.

... pluralism is characterized by the relative absence of value consensus; the relative rigidity and clarity of group definition; the relative presence of conflict or, at least, of lack of integration and complementarity between various parts of the social system; the segmentary and specific character of relationships, and the relative existence of sheer institutional duplication (as opposed to functional differentiation or specialization) between the various segments of society [p. 270].

According to van den Berghe, in plural societies, such as South Africa, class, as a basis of cleavage, is overshadowed by race. Such societies persist not because of value consensus or interdependence but through a combination of coercion and 'a network of segmental ties between individual members of ethnic or racial groups, some of whom 'shuttle' or 'commute' between cultural sub-systems' [50, p. 275].

We must turn to M.G. Smith [43] for the most systematic formulation of pluralism.

We must thus distinguish three levels of pluralism and three related modes of incorporation. Structural pluralism consists in the differential incorporation of collectivities segregated as social sections and characterized by institutional divergences. Cultural pluralism consists in variable institutional diversity without corresponding collective segregation. Social pluralism involves the organization of institutionally dissimilar collectivities as corporate sections or segments whose boundaries demarcate distinct communities and systems of social action [p. 444].

Smith's distinction between on the one hand structural pluralism and on the other social and cultural pluralism reflects, in part, the issues that divide the proponents and opponents of the 'internal colonialism' thesis as it is applied to the United States; [See, for example, Tabb, 48 and Glazer, 24]. Reacting to the prevailing models of cultural pluralism, such as inclusion and assimilation theses, and to Marxist theories of class, Cruse stressed the exclusion of the Negro from the United States society. The Negro is a subject of domestic colonialism, 'instead of the United States establishing a colonial empire in Africa it brought the colonial system home and installed it in the Southern States' [Cruse, 14, p. 76]. Tabb [48, p. 431] refers to the black ghetto in the United States as 'an internal colony set off from the rest of society and systematically exploited in a consistent manner to maximize the well being of the 'mother country' (White America).

Smith's concepts of structural pluralism and differential incorporation are implicit in the model of internal colonialism. However, in accounting for societal integration, the pluralist model tends to give more emphasis to 'cross-cutting ties' and the interdependence between segments, while the internal colonial model focuses on coercion and exploitation through political domination.

#### **LIMITED PERSPECTIVES OF THE MODELS OF INTERNAL COLONIALISM AND PLURALISM**

As attempts to provide a theoretical framework for the examination of race relations, both pluralist and internal colonial models suffer from serious deficiencies. By focusing narrowly on relations between races both models fail to view racial stratification in a broad societal context. Frank [16, Chapter 20] for example, has made stringent attacks on those applications of the internal colonial thesis to Latin American societies that invoke the notion of 'dual society'. Such formulations, argues Frank, artificially dichotomise integral societies and thereby fail to attribute the backwardness of one sector to the development of another. On the other hand a number of Marxists and some non-Marxists have taken a more functional or holistic approach. Thus Baran and Sweezy [4], far from viewing blacks as a people apart, stress the

'superexploitation' of black labour as an integral aspect of the social and economic structure of American monopoly capitalism. Lipset and Bendix [33, pp. 105-6], though from a decidedly non-Marxist position, argue that the division of the American working class into white and 'non-white' groups is responsible for upholding stability in the social structure. Harris [27] makes a similar point.

### Economic Factors

More specifically the internal colonial and pluralist models do not give adequate attention to the role of economic factors. It is a peculiar feature of studies of ethnicity and race in the United States and South Africa that they have most frequently been devoted to an examination of social life in communities.<sup>3</sup> Studies of the black worker in the United States, since the classic study of Spero and Harris [44], are conspicuous by their absence. It is one of the consequences of this general neglect that the black population is seen as an internal colony. For, were greater attention awarded to the means of production and the relations of different groups to the means of production, the blacks would be looked upon as an exploited but nevertheless integral and essential part of advanced capitalist societies such as the United States and South Africa. The more one focuses on economic factors the more pluralism and the colonial model become inappropriate.

When economic factors or class are considered by the advocates of 'internal colonialism', it is as an *alternative* or parallel approach. Tabb writes [48, p. 631], "In the discussion of the structural position of black Americans in our society there appear to be two theoretical interpretations which dominate radical perspectives on the question." The first views the ghetto as an internal colony while the second treats the blacks as a marginal working class. But he makes no attempt to integrate the two approaches under a single theoretical framework. Similarly, Casanova [12, p. 33] maintains:

The colonial structure and internal colonialism are distinguished from the class structure since colonialism is not only a relation of exploitation of the workers by the owners of raw material and of production and their collaborators, but also a relation of domination and exploitation of a total population by another population which also has distinct classes (proprietors and workers).

However, it is not enough to *distinguish* between class and race or to argue that in some societies race is more important than class. A theoretical scheme dealing with racial domination must focus on the *interaction* between class and race, between the economic base and the institutional framework.

### A Model of Change

Closely allied to their disregard for economic factors and their stress on political domination is the failure of both these models to generate any satisfactory theory of change. They have tended to be descriptive statements of systems of domination or ethnic differentiation: they do not fit into any wider theoretical framework designed to explain change. When they do attempt to examine such questions, and some pluralists are very sensitive to them, either the analyses have tended to be of an *ad hoc*

and descriptive nature, or they have looked upon change as germinating in inter-racial conflict [van den Berghe, 50, Chapter XI]. In other words both models seek to explain change by reference to the dynamics of inter-group conflict where broader changes, e.g. of an economic kind, may have much greater explanatory power.

That both models have not given greater attention to change over time is a little surprising given their assertion that racial cleavages in 'plural' societies are more significant than class divisions. For, the most convincing way of showing the significance of racial groups and racial interests would be to examine such societies historically, detailing the processes and agents of change. Far from carefully examining historical data, the advocates of the pluralist and internal colonial models have tended to give too much weight to the interpretation of 'current' events by particular groups in society. As I suggest below; they have dwelt too much on appearances at the expense of the substance which gives rise to appearances.

### Ideology

More generally, the foregoing criticisms may be traced, in part, to the tendency for both models to uncritically adopt the categories defined by extant ideologies. The internal colonial model gained popularity in the late sixties in response to 'black power' and 'third world' ideology. Though incorporated into academia, it still retains all the original connotations awarded to it by Carmichael and Hamilton [10]. Whereas the internal colonial thesis is an adaptation of the ideology of an oppressed group, the pluralist model adopted in the analysis of South Africa emphasises the categories of the ruling ideology of separate development. However critical such theorists may be of apartheid they nonetheless endorse and take over the official view, namely that in South Africa the dominant cleavages are racial and that economic class is not a significant determinant of social and political process. There are two objections to the elevation of an ideology to a central place in social theory.

First, encapsulation in analytic categories reflecting the interests of specific groups precludes a more profound and balanced treatment of racial domination. The failure of sociologists to extricate themselves from 'folk' theory, i.e. participant's definitions of situations, and delve more deeply into an 'analytic' examination [van Velsen, 52] of racially plural societies based on a general theoretical framework has lent itself to a superficial understanding of change and persistence in such societies.

The second objection is that ideological perspectives incorporated into the model may portray the social structure as a particular group would wish it to be rather than as it actually is. Thus the internal colonial model as applied to the U.S., virtually ignores divisions within the black community, while the pluralist model tends to ignore the active cooperation between races and the value consensus that this implies and which is a condition for the continued existence of South African society. Similarly the internal colonial model when applied to South Africa also tends, along with the ruling ideology of separate development, to view blacks as a race apart

[Horwitz, 28, p. 412 and Carter *et al.*, 11, Chapter III]. But as Simons and Simons [41, p. 611] write:

The model (colonial) fits in broad outline. White South Africans do behave as though they were imperial masters of a distant colony. Yet they delude themselves. The country has in fact advanced well beyond the limits of primitive colonialism.

To draw parallels between the relation of the Bantustan<sup>4</sup> to white South Africa [Carter *et al.*, 11] or the relation of the ghetto to white America [Tabb, 47; Clark, 13; and Blauner, 7] and the relationship between colony and metropolis (mother country) is to miss a number of features peculiar to the colony-metropolis relationship that are not found within these nation states. Above all, while the colony can become 'independent' without seriously affecting the metropolis, the ghetto or the Bantustan is so completely incorporated into the respective wider economies, albeit on an exploitative basis, that the withdrawal of black labour ('independence') would bring those economies to a standstill. Equally the ghetto and the Bantustan rely on their white counterparts for their livelihood in a way that a colony does not depend on the metropolis. In other words the degree of interdependence between white and black America or white and black South Africa is qualitatively different from the relations of subordination and superordination between colony and metropolis.

This particular false comparison [van Velsen, 53] – the treatment of the Bantustan as a colony of white South Africa – leads Carter *et al.*, to pay attention to superficial changes in the political relations between the Transkei and the South African government as though it were an African colony gaining independence from the metropolis. In fact as their book shows only too clearly, the status of the Transkei (the First Bantustan) has not changed materially since 1894 when the Bunga (first form of African administration) was introduced.

The alternative way of applying the internal colonial model is to argue as Adam does for South Africa that the metropolis and colony have come together into a single entity to form a special kind of colony characterised by a unique form of racial domination [Adam 1, pp. 2 and 31].<sup>5</sup> In other words because of its colonial form of racial domination, South Africa is to be treated as a colony. According to conventional notions of colonialism, to every colony there is a metropolis but for over half a century South Africa has severed its major political links with England and pursued an independent line of development. For this and other reasons, which will become increasingly apparent in later sections, South Africa can by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as a colony any more than the United States. On the contrary, it is an advanced nation state in which the disparate ethnic and racial groups, though differentially incorporated into the polity are fully integrated into the economy, albeit on an exploitative basis. In fact it is more appropriate to view South Africa as a colonizing power rather than a colony.

This Adam positively denies, attacking those who would liken white supremacy in South Africa to fascism, "The decisive difference between National Socialism and Apartheid lies in their goals: the former aimed from the outset at aggressive expansion, the latter attempts to defend the status quo" [Adam, 1, p. 42]. This is not only

Adam's interpretation but an entrenched facet of the ruling ideology. Yet expansionism, with varying degrees of aggressiveness, has played a key role throughout the history of South Africa since the Dutch landed there some four centuries ago. In this paper I explain how the interaction of the economic base and the polity has led to the expansionist policy of South Africa, first in search of land, then labour and finally markets. It is as a consequence of the false comparison between South Africa and a colony, that leads Adam to de-emphasize economic development and in respect of expansionism to mistake ideology for reality.

### The Definition of Colonialism

In trying to fit the colonial model to situations which are manifestly not colonial I have shown how writers have offered partial analyses of race relations which tend to deemphasize economic factors. Rather than distort the portrayal of the social structure, other writers have distorted the concept of colonialism itself. Either they have been so vague and general in their definition that the concept applies to almost any situation of exploitation and domination or, by taking it out of its context so as to suit the particular situation under examination, it is made to bear little resemblance to what is conventionally assumed to be colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

Though Blauner's formulation [7] is probably the most systematic, it does violence to the common sense or conventional notion of colonialism. He stresses four features of the colonization complex, namely forced involuntary entry, deliberate transformation and destruction of the indigenous culture, the administration of the colonized by agents of the colonizers and finally racism as a "principle of social domination by which a group seen as inferior or different in alleged biological characteristics is exploited, controlled and oppressed socially and psychically by a superordinate group" [Blauner, 7, p. 84]. The first appears ambiguous since 'forced involuntary entry' may apply either to the subordinate or superordinate group. This has the effect of including 'slave transfers', while territorial incorporation is no longer a necessary feature of colonialism. At the same time the definition precludes many of the settler colonies where force was an insignificant feature of colonization, e.g. New Zealand. The second element is simply not true since it has been an entrenched feature of British colonial policy, particularly in the present century, to reinforce indigenous culture. The third feature is obvious by definition, since where there are rulers and ruled, the latter are administered by agents of the former. The fourth is too restrictive since history provides examples where explicit racism (as defined by Blauner) has not been an aspect of colonialism, e.g. the colonization of Ireland.

Whereas Blauner's model may not fit many colonial situations, it is a close approximation to the patterns of class domination in Britain during the early period of the industrial revolution, if we allow racism to refer to alleged social and cultural inferiority. The enclosure acts forcing villagers off the land must count as 'forced involuntary entry', the destruction of the agrarian family [Smelser, 42], and traditional village life represents the 'destruction of indigenous culture', when villagers came to town they were administered by agents of the ruling class [Thompson, 49] and finally the managerial ideology perpetrated by the manufacturers stigmatised the workers as

inferior and unfit for a decent living. The workers were regarded as a race apart [Bendix, 5; Chapter Two]. In one sense it is not surprising that Blauner's model fits Britain in the 19th Century better than a typical colony, since it was deliberately designed to apply to an industrial nation, namely the United States. In another sense it shows that in so far as it is applicable to industrial Britain, the model does not get at what is distinctive about racial oppression.

I have dwelt on Blauner's formulation of internal colonialism because it seems to be the most systematic and clear. Frequently colonialism is no more than an appealing analogy which is used to evoke images of unrestrained exploitation and community of interests between black America and the 'Third World'. Clark, for example, is quite explicit when he writes of the ghetto, 'the community can best be described in terms of the analogy of a powerless colony' [Clark, 13, p. 79]. Tabb writes [47, p. 23]:

There are two key relationships which must be proved to exist before the colonial analogy can be accepted: (1) economic control and exploitation, and (2) political dependence and subjugation. Both necessitate separation and inferior status.

Though he brings economic factors into his framework, such relationships which Tabb attributes to colonialism are in fact typical of those between rulers and ruled in any modern industrial society. Similar criticisms may be levelled at Carter, Karis and Stultz's *South Africa's Transkei: The Politics of Domestic Colonialism* [11]. Colonialism appears four times in the book (pp. 11, 91, 124 and 175) and each time as a label. At no point do the writers give serious consideration to the analytic significance, let alone a definition, of the concept of domestic colonialism. Its introduction adds nothing to the understanding of the Transkei but on the contrary wraps the analysis in mystery.

Whether by making it so narrow that it excludes circumstances that are normally regarded or so broad that it includes circumstances that are not normally regarded as colonial these formulations or lack of formulations not only render colonialism meaningless but as I indicated in previous sections, give rise to erroneous interpretations of racial domination and exploitation.

### A MODEL OF RACIAL DOMINATION IN CAPITALIST SOCIETIES

Having outlined a critique of two current approaches to racial domination, it becomes necessary to attempt to construct a theory which will meet these criticisms. I will therefore undertake the task of briefly outlining an alternative approach to racial domination as found in capitalist societies and then examine its applicability to development of the South African racial oligarchy.

While the internal colonial model has relatively little to contribute to the understanding of racially stratified societies, the pluralist model, particularly as formulated by M.G. Smith, pinpoints the most significant feature of colonial and racial domination, viz. the differential incorporation of subordinate populations into the public domain.<sup>7</sup> I propose to use the term superstructure instead of public domain to denote the central institutions of society shared by all members of that society i.e. the political, legal, coercive, administrative, and religious institutions and the ideologies or

value systems current in that society. A colonial superstructure is one characterised by differential incorporation into the central institutions and by a ruling ideology or dominant value system which justifies that differential incorporation.

I have repeatedly noted how the internal colonial and pluralist models of racial stratification have consistently played down the importance of economic factors and it is with a view to highlighting the impact of economic conditions on the development of racial stratification that I have brought the various components of the superstructure under a single concept. I am suggesting, and I hope to show in the case of South Africa, that in the examination of the development of racial domination, the interaction of the elements of the superstructure among themselves is less important than the interaction of these elements with the economic base. More specifically I hope to show how the superstructure has arisen out of, reacted back and modified the economic base in such a way as to give rise to the South African race oligarchy.

The interaction between economic base and superstructure is mediated by groups not only defined by their relations to the means of production, but also by relations to the superstructure. I have adopted this approach in response to one of the more serious criticisms of Marxian theory, namely its failure to account for the efficacy with which such factors as race, ethnicity and nationalism shape human behaviour. Most Marxian theorists have tended either to avoid such issues or to offer crudified interpretations of Marx's writing. More recently, however, revisionists such as Genovese, have paid increasing attention to the analysis of superstructure. In his work on slavery in the ante-bellum South, Genovese [22, Chapter One and 23, Chapter 19] has suggested that race may be regarded as part of class interest. Such an approach would seem to subvert the basis of the Marxian notion of class by implying that members of the *same class* may have *different class* interests according to their race. This is a contradiction in terms. By contrast I propose to argue that economic interests are determined not only by class interest but also by the existing institutional framework and ideology, i.e. by relations to the superstructure as well as to the means of production. Thus, where the superstructure is not a direct reflection of the class structure but distinguishes and discriminates on the basis of racial categories, then the economic interests of racial groups within the same class may differ. In other words one cannot speak of the economic interests of a class to the extent that the superstructure discriminates between categories within class. It then becomes pertinent to examine how class forces give rise to and perpetrate a superstructure based on distinctions such as race.

Earlier it was argued that the internal colonial and plural models both failed to advance a theory of development or change in racial domination. At the same time the advocates of these models have continually criticised the race cycle model [Frazier, 19] which at least had the virtue of conceptualising race relations as changing albeit in a cyclical determinate fashion. Not only that, but as Frazier [18] suggests, certain institutions persist from one phase to the next constraining further development. In this paper I am concerned to show how the change and persistence of a colonial superstructure constrained and advanced the development of South Africa and in particular her economy.

We may divide into two groups the historical treatments of the South African political economy. The first tends to regard the polity and economy in conflict with one another [Horwitz, 28]. It is argued by 'liberal' economists that intervention by the state on behalf of a racial group leads to artificial restrictions on the mobility of factors of production and interferes with the free play of the market. Such 'irrational' practices must give way to pressures for economic development and growth. Based on Weber's and Schumpeter's notions of economic rationality, such views have tended to support capitalist enterprises as the progenitor of the death of apartheid. Questioning the correspondence between formal rationality [Weber, 54, pp. 278-80] and efficiency, other writers [e.g. Wolpe, 58] have pointed to the realization of economic growth and profit through the cooperation of the economy and polity. Under such a scheme the political factor is held directly responsible for assisting capital to extract greater surplus out of workers be they black or white. They suggest that the persistence of what I have termed the colonial superstructure is compatible, and some go so far as to say a positive inducement [Rex, 39, p. 44], to the expansion of an advanced economic base.

While the first school of thought maintains that the South African political economy is inefficient and wasteful, the second argues that the denial of political, civil and legal rights to the majority of the population is an effective way of making profit. It is not for the social scientist to *speculate* on the profitability of alternative systems, or to argue that labour is 'cheap' because it is 'superexploited' (without examining or being able to assess the cost of upholding an extensive state apparatus which makes superexploitation possible). Suffice to say that the South African economy has advanced rapidly and the capitalist system developed shows few signs of dislodging the restrictions on competition in the labour market and the 'free' movement of factors of production. Blumer [8] has made the same point, that industrialism finds no difficulty in adapting to the constraints of a racially determined social order, but one must go further and examine how capitalism in its turn reacts back and manipulates those constraints for its own ends.<sup>8</sup> Just as Marx [36, pp. 409-12] shows how the enforcement of the Factory Acts, themselves the product of the growing strength of the working class, led capitalists to compensate for the shortening of the working day by increasing the productiveness of labour so as I will show later in the paper, the development of the South African colonial superstructure, itself the product of class forces, led to the introduction of mechanisms for increasing the degree of exploitation of black labour to compensate for the costs of the protection of white labour. This is not to say that capitalist interests do not fight prospective changes in the superstructure which at the time, appear to affect their profits adversely, but that once enforced, such changes stimulate the development of new, compensatory forms of exploitation.

In practice, therefore, the relationship between economic base and superstructure is one of both conflict and cooperation. Stressing conflict tends to explain change but not persistence, while stressing cooperation tends to explain persistence but not change. Clearly any analysis must deal with both conflict and cooperation. That the present system of racial domination in South Africa does function in the

interests of the ruling *class* is undeniable, but it becomes important to go further and explain why and how this particular capitalist framework emerged. Therefore we must now turn to the historical data to discover how the South African superstructure has arisen out of and interacted with the economic base in the development of institutional racism.

### **SOUTH AFRICA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVANCED ECONOMY AND THE RATIONALIZATION OF A COLONIAL SUPERSTRUCTURE**

I propose to divide South African history into four periods and for each briefly outline the economic base, the corresponding class structure and their reflection in the superstructure.<sup>9</sup> The interaction between economic base and superstructure gives rise to a new configuration of classes which in turn generates its own superstructure. The economic interests of any class or segment of any class will be defined relative to other classes. In this way each period will be characterised by a pattern of alliances between classes.

### **THE IMPACT OF CAPITALISM ON COLONIAL FEUDALISM**

We may distinguish two major types of colony, *viz.* colonies of settlement and colonies of exploitation. The former category comprises such countries as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States and South Africa, while the colonization of Africa north of the Zambezi and Asia has generally been of the second kind. Colonies of settlement evolved their own national bourgeoisie committed to the development of 'their' country, just as colonies of exploitation were managed by a colonial administration on behalf of capitalist enterprise which repatriated profits to the metropolis. A demographic factor distinguishes South Africa and Rhodesia from other colonies of settlement, where the colonists were a numerical majority as against the colonized minority. The history of South Africa is the history of the preservation and advancement of the colonist minority at the expense of the colonized majority.

The period before the discovery of diamonds (1867) in the Orange Free State was characterized by territorial expansion and colonial conquest. At the beginning of the 19th century, one and half centuries after the Dutch had first landed there, the British finally took over the administration of the Cape Colony. The new regime attempted to impose order on the Dutch settlement, scattered over a vast area, and to control relations between Afrikaner and African on the Eastern frontier. With the British came ideas of enlightenment which threatened to undermine the fabric of Afrikaner existence based on slavery. Cape liberalism, always a thorn in the flesh of Afrikaner white supremacy, 'stood for racial tolerance and political equality' [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 20]. The Great Trek north – an acceleration of a large scale movement of Afrikaner farmers which had been going on for over a century [De Kiewiet, 15, pp. 52-4] – was stimulated by 'land hunger, dislike of British rule and the rejection of racial equality in any form' [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 18]. In other words the first period of expansionism sprang from the conflict between the colonial superstructure (a form of feudalism based on slavery) and political relations with the metropolis mediated by a colonial administrative staff.

As the Voortrekkers moved North, so Africans were pushed back into an ever diminishing area. Continual warfare ('Kaffir Wars') prevailed at the frontier as Afrikaner and African fought for land on which to graze their cattle. The superior technology of the trekker gave him a decisive advantage and as blacks were ejected from their land, so they were forced to squat on the land of colonists and to render services to their new lords. In this manner, a colonial feudalism was established in the Republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, awarded independence in 1852 and 1854 respectively.

In these different ways whole native tribes became resident upon European owned land where for the most part they continued to live much in the same manner as before the advent of Europeans. Most native tribes were, however, required to render labour service to the European farmers. This labour was demanded as a tribute to their conquerors in return for release from subjection to Mazilikazi; or, finally, from newcomers, as payment for the right to settle in territory claimed by Europeans. Apart from the labour tax (as this forced labour had been called) and the introduction of wagons and guns, the Voortrekkers did not bring much that was new to the Natives. Their economic life was that of a predominantly pastoral people and was not essentially very different from that to which the Natives were accustomed. [van der Horst, 51, p. 54].

Yet at the same time the social, economic and physical dislocation that follows in the wake of colonial expansion was well suited to the needs of capitalism.

Wars, conquest and annexations provided one of the primary requisites of industrialism – an uprooted peasantry available at low cost for rough manual work. Peasant communities lost their self sufficiency under the pressures resulting from confiscation of their land and cattle, the imposition of taxes, the substitution of traders' merchandise for domestic products, the spread of education and Christianity. [Simons and Simons, 41, pp. 31-2].

### **Economic Base and Class Formation**

During the first of our four periods, which ends with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, we may delineate four major classes; an agrarian landed class composed of Afrikaners, the mine owners supported by the British colonial administration in the Cape, the white skilled workers of whom the majority came from outside South Africa and the African peasantry.

*The Mine Owners:* When primitive mining techniques, employing gangs of cheap unskilled African labour, no longer rendered adequate rewards, companies were formed to excavate diamonds systematically using capital equipment financed from Britain largely under the auspices of the British South Africa Company. Similarly when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal, it was not long before the only profitable way of mining was through the use of large scale capital equipment. Begun in 1886, gold mining soon overtook the Kimberly diamond mines in economic significance. As De Kiewiet has noted, the Rand provides at once the poorest and richest source of gold; poor because the ore is of low grade and rich because there is so much of it. Low grade ore has low profit margins and labour was the only significant factor of production whose cost could feasibly be reduced.

From the beginning the cost of labour has been a high proportion of the cost of gold mining. Since the money wages of skilled Europeans was of necessity high, the

terms on which native labour could be obtained was of vital concern [van der Horst, 51, p. 128].

The expansion of the mining industry to include low grade ores and the accumulation of profit was dependent on the ability of the mine owners to recruit cheap black labour. Equally, management had an economic interest in advancing Africans into skilled occupations to minimise the cost of importing white artisans. In other words the mine owners favoured open competition between black and white.

*The Landed Upper Classes:* Except for small areas in the Cape and 'reserves' set aside for African cultivation, land in the four colonies was almost entirely in the hands of Afrikaner farmers. The demand for labour on the Rand and the attraction of money wages for Africans residing or squatting on 'European' land, threatened to undermine the feudal structure of the rural areas. Competition for cheap black labour led to antagonisms between landed upper classes and British capitalism.

European farmers in many parts of the country sought to increase their production and require more labour. But, as in the 'seventies', the forces which induced an increase in the demand for labour for farm work also provided many Natives with new opportunities for the sale of both of their produce and their labour [van der Horst, 51, p. 144].

Though their interests were antagonistic over the distribution of labour, both farmer and mine owner had a common interest in the expansion of the mining industry in that the latter brought increased revenue through tariffs and, in the case of the Transvaal, taxation on mining profits [Horwitz, 28, pp. 70-1]. The interests of the agrarian upper classes in the Transvaal lay in the advancement of the mining industry but in ways that did not threaten their own society and its style of life. Although the degree to which the farmer responded to the demand for produce created by industrialization is a matter of dispute [see MacMillan, 34, pp. 70-86 and Simons and Simons, 41, pp. 61-2], what does seem clear is that change was attempted within the feudal framework.

As land became scarce and rose in value the Afrikaner farmer had to defend himself against Africans who were threatening to buy up land and, in some areas, marketing their agricultural produce [van der Horst, 51, pp. 104-10]. Horwitz [28, p. 46] suggests that the African was responding to the demands of industrialism more rapidly than the Afrikaner.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, unlike the mine owner the farmer had a vested interest in eliminating competition from independent African cultivators.

*Skilled Workers:* Coming from England at a time when craft unionism was at its most powerful, the artisans on the Rand sought to protect their position in the labour market. They attempted to control entry to their occupation through the Witwatersrand Employees' and Mechanics' Union, formed in 1892. Initially the skilled workers on the Rand defended their position against management's plans for cheap emigration from England [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 53]. Nonetheless, as it became apparent in the following year when the first colour bar legislation was introduced, the skilled miner from overseas had a common interest with the Afrikaner farmer in forestalling competition from black labour.

The interest of the white worker in preventing the encroachment of Africans into skilled occupations led him into conflict with the mine owner interested in cheap labour. As far as the white worker was concerned, if labour costs were to be reduced then it would have to be accomplished at the expense of the African and not himself. Thus, not only did the white worker and Afrikaner farmer share a common interest in opposing the mobility of the black worker according to market forces, but also they were both hostile to the mine owners.

An alliance between white worker and Afrikaner farmer was conceivable in spite of language and cultural differences. Both groups were at loggerheads with the capitalists, who exploited the one and plotted against the other [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 54].

While antagonism reigned between management and skilled worker over wages and 'job reservation', and this exacerbated as the price of gold fell, at the same time they shared a common interest in the expansion of the mining industry. For the skilled labourer, such an expansion meant the strengthening of his bargaining position.

*The African Peasant:* Of the four million Africans in South Africa in 1911, some half million were to be found in urban locations [Horwitz, 28, p. 317]. According to the Beaumont Commission of 1916 a third of the African population lived on European land. At the turn of the century the gold mines employed about one hundred thousand African workers, though half of these came from Portuguese East Africa.

African interests lay in entering the labour market selling their produce on the commodity market so as to increase their bargaining power with landowners. Increased productivity on the land meant that higher wages would have to be offered to induce the African off the land. They could only gain by going to the employer who paid highest, particularly in a situation of labour scarcity. Thus, African interest conflicted with interference in the free play of the market such as the introduction of monopsonistic practices by employers to keep down wages, policies that restricted the area of land that could be occupied by Africans and legislation which obstructed the utilisation of his competitive advantage in gaining access to skilled occupations.

Though Africans shared a common interest with skilled workers against management, or with the mine owners against the protectionist policies of white workers, these common interests sprang from antagonisms, referred to above, between different white classes which were invariably reconciled at the expense of the African.

This was possible because the relations of the African population to the superstructure were that of a politically powerless pariah class. Only in the Cape were a few Africans and the majority of Coloureds enfranchised, elsewhere they had no say in political affairs. Not only did the constitution discriminate against them, but structural conditions militated against their developing any class consciousness or solidarity. As a largely migratory labour force, black labourers had no permanent roots in town, and the short period of their contracts made effective organization difficult. Much more important was the style of their urban life, epitomised by the coercive total institution of the compound. Any explanation of the failure of African mineworkers to mount effective resistance to the coercive system in which they operated must give central

place to the compound as facilitating their subordination to mine management. Once encapsulated in the compound they were defenceless against physical violence perpetrated by police and white mine-workers who saw little worth in 'kaffir' lives.<sup>11</sup>

### **Institutional Framework**

In this section I indicate how the class structure is reflected in legislative measures and in alliances and antagonisms between different groups.

Various measures were adopted by the governments of the four colonies to protect white skilled labour from African advancement: to limit African ownership of land to small areas and to ensure the continued supply of cheap labour. Colour bar legislation was first passed by the Transvaal government in 1893 and reflected the shared interest of Afrikaner farmer and white worker in eliminating competition from black labour. The South African Native Affairs Commission (1903-5), highlighting competition from African land purchasers, recommended that 'land dedicated and set apart as locations, reserves, or otherwise should be defined, delimited and reserved for Natives by legislative enactment' [Tatz, p. 10]. However, no specific measures were taken until the Natives Land Act of 1913.

Reserves were not a new idea: they had been a feature of Cape Colony since 1849 and Natal since 1846. It was a specific recommendation of the Location Commission (1846) that the reserves be evenly distributed throughout the colonies so as to provide easily accessible pools of labour. Nonetheless during this first period the reserves were more frequently looked upon as inhibiting the supply of cheap labour by guaranteeing Africans satisfactory standards of living. Only later when larger numbers were pushed into smaller areas, was there a recognition that the reserves were a positive inducement to go in search of wage employment.

More effective in 'pushing' Africans towards the towns was the imposition of hut or poll taxes. Other attempts to induce Africans to seek work included legislation against squatting. The first of such measures was enacted as early as 1855. In the Transvaal a 'squatter law' was passed in 1895 which limited to five the number of African squatter families permitted on each farm [Horwitz, 28, pp. 44-5]. However this was never effectively implemented as it encountered severe opposition from Afrikaner farmers whose interests were in retaining a ready supply of labour on their land.

A labour agreement reached between the Transvaal government and Portuguese East Africa mitigated the competition for labour between farmer and mine owner. Not content with importation of black labour from Mozambique and other territories outside South Africa, mine owners in 1902 eventually secured the agreement of the British government and overcame resistance in the Transvaal to the importation of indentured labour from China. Though this was to be the first and last time such imported indentured labour was to be used on the mines, indentured labour from India had been used on the sugar plantations in Natal since 1860.

While labour importation reduced competition amongst employers, it did not eliminate such competition. However, the Chamber of Mines introduced monopsonistic recruitment and remuneration policies to prevent inter-mine competition

rebounding to the advantage of African labour. Recruitment of labour from outside South Africa was monopolised by the Witwatersrand Native Recruitment Organisation established in 1900, and within South Africa the Native Recruitment Organisation was set up in 1912. As early as 1902, the Chamber of Mines introduced the 'maximum average arrangement' which fixed the average earnings on each mine so as not to exceed a maximum average. (For details of these policies see van der Horst [51], Chapter XII).

So far we have considered how the institutional framework sacrificed African interests. Yet during this period conflict between white classes was also intense despite increasing subjugation of the colonized. The mine owners opposed the colour bar legislation passed by the Transvaal government, were embittered by Afrikaner unwillingness to establish more stringent policies towards labour recruitment (in particular opposition to the importation of indentured Chinese labour) and resented the tariffs and taxation on mining profits. The relationship between Afrikaner farmer and British mine owner was one of antagonistic symbiosis until the Anglo-Boer which 'stands as a classic example of imperialist aggression prompted by capitalist greed' [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 63].

His (J.A. Hobson's) first-hand study of the Transvaal just before the war persuaded him that the mine owners had provoked it to obtain a government suited to their purpose. Their 'one all-important object' was 'to secure a full, cheap, regular, submissive supply of Kaffir and white labour'. This concisely stated, he argued, was Britain's war aim. [Simons and Simons 41, p. 62].

The peace settlement in 1902 put the Afrikaners back in power.<sup>12</sup> It was not until the South Africa Act of 1910, establishing the Union, that a more stable alliance was struck between the landed aristocracy in the Transvaal and the mine owners who held political sway in the Cape.

The British wanted union for economic, political and military reasons. Afrikaners accepted cooperation as the price to be paid for the spread of nationalism and the maintenance of white supremacy [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 108].

Despite the embryonic concordat between the Afrikaner farmer and white worker against the capitalist, the Transvaal government was twice responsible for breaking strikes by white workers. In 1897 when wages were drastically cut and in 1907 when management threatened to replace white with cheap black labour, landed interests acted as the agents of industrial capital. Afrikaner farmers had a vested interest in the protection and development of capitalism, so long as it reinforced the agrarian social structure. However, the consequences of capitalism and the institutional framework it creates are not always easy to predict or control, as the following sections will illustrate.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LANDLESS PROLETARIAT

Between 1910 and 1924 the fate of South Africa was sealed. This period saw the emergence and entrenchment of a white unskilled proletariat. In a situation of intense class conflict any inclinations towards inter-racial solidarity gave way to inter-class alliances and the exacerbation of racial divisions.

### Economic Base and Class Formation

Many of the forces 'pushing' blacks to town, had a similar effect on a class of poor whites, *bywoners*, who found their subsistence livelihood torn away by economic, political and natural forces.

This class of squatters or *bywoners*, as they were called, had no parallel elsewhere in the British Empire. At one end of the scale were those who were little more than labourers, earning their keep, an occasional sheep or calf, and, more often since the Great War, some cash as well. At the other were those with rights of grazing and cultivation over an entire farm in return for shares and services. Between them was the great body of landless *bywoners* who eked out an existence by the grace of the landowners. Common to all was some plan of working on shares whether of crops or cattle. With enough acres for the plough or enough grazing land for their beasts, the lot of some was tolerable. Too few acres and too little grazing land thrust others into perpetual struggle for existence [De Kiewiet, 15, p. 193].

The institutional framework and in particular the legislative measures designed to accelerate the movement of Africans into the labour market were possibly less effective than drought, rinderpest, soil erosion and over-crowding on the land which had been an on-going process for decades. These same forces drove many poor whites, now made landless, to the towns. Increases in the value of land occasioned by scarcity and mineral discoveries and the fragmentation of existing landholding through inheritance combined with the devastation wrought by the Anglo-Boer War to render thousands of whites destitute.

The demand for agricultural produce, improved transportation and marketing facilities led to attempts at commercialization and compounded the problems of poor whites and poor blacks alike.

Because the *bywoner* was so clearly the product of an uncommercial age of subsistence farming, it followed that his lot was made worse by the development of modern farming. . . . A more efficient use of labour, the use of fences, more intensive agriculture, better stock-breeding, or more economical grazing were incompatible with the haphazard system of squatters and hangers-on [DeKiewiet, 15, p. 194].

MacMillan's assessment of South African agriculture tends to be less enthusiastic. Though he writes that in many areas, ' . . . population has outgrown the old superficial farming methods of the Black Veld. In a new age not all farmers can be landowners' [MacMillan, 34, p. 46], at the same time his general conclusion is more significant.

. . . the South African rural economy has failed as a system suited to the age of competition, which began with the great development of mining in the 'nineties. We would go further and say that history is now having its revenge. In the old days the Natives were 'exterminated'; now they are disastrously overcrowded, with results which we all see. But the peculiar disease of white agriculture in South Africa is that there is too much land for efficiency and an utter failure to use it. [MacMillan, 34, pp. 68-9]

In other words though there were enclosures, there was no fundamental structural change in rural society. Whereas in England the agrarian revolution preceded and to some extent financed the industrial revolution, in South Africa the process was reversed. The South African landed upper classes relied on their political power to

ensure a large share of profits from advancing industrialism to subsidise commercialization. In this we have the making of what according to Moore [38] is the crucial ingredient of fascism; a reactionary coalition of the landed aristocracy and bourgeois capitalism. From this general setting we can now turn to specific aspects of the class structure.

*Poor Whites:* The emergence of this 'class segment' had the effect of transferring the political 'centre of gravity' away from the mine owners. Though holding identical relations to the means of production, the economic interests of poor whites deviated significantly from those of poor blacks.

In the towns as upon the land they (poor whites) were caught between the upper and nether millstones of two classes. In the country they had been excluded from the ranks of the landowning and prosperous farmers; in the town they could not enter the ranks of the skilled and well-paid workers, for they had no skill of their own. In the country the system of cheap labour and tractable native labour gave them no chance of becoming a useful race of rural labourers; in the town the same natives obstructed the absorption of the poor whites in the ranks of unskilled labour . . . The real difference was that the black poor were favoured over the white poor. [De Kiewiet, 15, pp. 196-7].

Economic interests of black and white segments of the lower classes diverged because of their differing relations to the superstructure. The prevailing ideology of white supremacy and the institutional framework which discriminated on the basis of colour, militated against inter-racial solidarity and led to shared interests between landed and landless Afrikaners. To the extent that the superstructure favoured black over white, so the poor white had a vested interest in rendering support to those who were concerned to improve his competitive position *vis-à-vis* poor blacks.

*Landed Upper Classes:* Any class solidarity between the nation's poor blacks and poor whites threatened the foundation of Afrikaner colonial feudalism based on white supremacy and cheap black labour. Indeed it was the failure to achieve any such solidarity that aborted the agrarian revolution that would have transformed South African farming into a modern 'rational' rural capitalism. The Afrikaner resolved to uphold the repressive system of cheap labour by promoting the interests of the poor white at the expense of the poor black.

The urban poor white was nonetheless a potential recruit for a radical non-racial class movement. The Nationalists (Afrikaner Party) recognised the threat to white solidarity. Subsidised employment on public works would isolate him from the dark-skinned labourers and give him a stake in the perpetuation of colour-class discrimination.<sup>13</sup> [Simons and Simons 41, p. 306].

To ensure a ready supply of labour in the rural areas, it was to the interests of the Afrikaner farmer to replace black labour in town with the more expensive white labour. The landed upper classes were not opposed to the expulsion of white squatters from their land if in return they received 'cheap' black labour. The greater use of 'cheap' black labour in industry was therefore not to his immediate interests. Competition for black labour brought the farmer into conflict with the mine owner whose profits were secured on the basis of 'cheap' labour. At the same time, the landed

aristocracy was subsidised by the profits from the mines and to that extent had common interests with mine owners in expansionist policies. This entire period reflects the ambiguous class interests of the Afrikaner farmer in relation to the British capitalists who owned and controlled the mining industry.

*Mine Owners:* With expansion, the mining industry's needs for 'cheap' black labour increased and, as the gold price fell, so the mine owners had a vested interest in using them on more skilled tasks in place of the expensive white labour. Essentially, there were two methods of inducing African labour to come to town at low wage rates. The first was to undermine the control white farmers exercised over their black labour and insisting on a more efficient use of the latter. This brought the mine owner into opposition to the landed upper classes. The second possibility was to increase the supply from the African reserves. By reducing the size of the reserves or at least not increasing it, the population density would increase which, in turn, would make it more difficult to maintain a subsistence existence and more necessary to gain additional income through wage employment.

*White Skilled Workers:* As profit margins fell after World War II, so class conflict between white skilled worker and the mine owners intensified. Not only were white wages threatened but their very employment was placed in jeopardy by Africans who showed themselves able to perform skilled jobs as efficiently as whites but at much lower wage rates. Under such circumstances all white workers shared a common concern to eliminate competition from cheap black labour. Roux succinctly describes the economic interests of the white worker in relation to the black worker. Commenting on scabbing and violence perpetrated by white miners during the mine wide strike of black workers in 1920, Roux writes: [40, p. 134]

... the white workers believed that they had nothing in common with the blacks. A realist, one not obsessed with Marxist doctrine, might have pointed out that the white miners earned ten times as much as the blacks, that many of them employed black servants in their homes, that a victory of the black miners would have increased the desire of the mine-owners to reduce the status of the white miners, since any increase in black wages would have to be met either by a reduction in white wages or by a reduction in profits. Such was the reality of the situation which the white workers consciously or not, understood very well.

Thus unskilled poor whites and white miners had a common interest in establishing a 'white labour policy' which placed whites in unskilled positions on 'civilised' wage rates. With the Afrikaner farmer, like the poor white, the skilled miner had a common interest in making available greater supplies of black labour to the rural areas by reducing the numbers employed in industry.

*African Labour:* African labour could either side with one or more white classes against other white classes and hope for returns for such support or it could organise opposition to the institutional system independently of other races. Its interests lay in resisting interference with the free play of the market forces which favoured black produce and black labour. Disenfranchisement in the Cape, restriction of areas of land occupation, colour bar legislation, pass laws, etc., in short the rationalization of a

colonial superstructure violated the material interests of Africans, rendering them constitutionally powerless.

### **Institutional Framework**

During this period the most significant coalition of classes was the pact between the National (Afrikaner) Party and the Labour Party. Though the National Party hardly existed in 1910, when most Afrikaners voted for the South African Party against the Unionist Party, representing the interests of industrial capitalism, in 1915 the National Party secured a third of the votes cast at the expense of the two other major parties. The Labour Party, appealing to the interests of the white worker for the persistence and extension of a racially discriminatory institutional framework, also gained support during this period so that in 1924 the National Party and Labour Party were able to form a government together. The coalition was based on a common opposition to industrial capitalism which increasingly threatened to take black labour from the farmer so as to replace white labour on the mines, and a common interest in upholding white supremacy.

During this period the South African Party remained strong, continuing to draw much of its support from Afrikaners. The division of the Afrikaner population was along the axis which placed Afrikaner nationalism at one end and continued connection with Britain at the other end. Underlying the division one may discern the different class basis of each party. The National Party grew out of the Afrikaner party in the Orange Free State and drew its greatest support from there, while support for the South African Party was transferred from the *Het Volk* – the Afrikaner Party in the Transvaal. Having grown rich on revenues from the gold mines, the Transvaal was more likely to support industrial capitalism and the British connection than the Orange Free State which had remained a relatively poor region, gained little from industrialism and contributed a disproportionate number of ‘poor whites’ to the nation’s towns. The division within Afrikanerdom may also be seen as a reflection of the ambivalent attitude towards industrial capitalism; on the one hand requiring its profits to subsidise agriculture, while on the other representing its capacity to destroy the fabric of Afrikaner existence based on white supremacy. The two components of this relationship of ‘antagonistic symbiosis’ can be seen in operation in the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Afrikaner support for striking miners.

The Natives Land Act can be interpreted as an attempt to reconcile differences between farmers and industrial capitalists over the supply of labour.

The act scheduled some 10½ million morgen, with a promise of more to come, for occupation by Africans, who would be prohibited, except in the Cape, from buying or leasing from non-Africans outside the scheduled areas, without the Governor-General’s express permission. This protected white landowners from competition by Africans, who were slowly buying back some of the land filched from them or their fathers. By outlawing tenancy agreement between landowners and Africans, the act would prevent some farmers from maintaining reserves of African labour while other farmers complained of labour scarcity. Finally, the restriction on landholding by Africans would force peasants to leave the overcrowded, impoverished reserves to work for mine owners and farmers [Simons and Simons, 41, p. 131].

Wilson [56] suggests further that the fundamental objection to African sharecropping and squatting was the advantage it gave to some farmers and not to others. The Natives Land Act may therefore be regarded as an 'act of collusion amongst the hirers of farm labour not to give remuneration above a certain level' [Wilson, 56, p. 128], which was also to the advantage of the mine owners.

While the landed aristocracy and industrial capitalism were resolving their differences over cheap labour, expensive labour was becoming increasingly belligerent in the wake of mounting industrial grievance. In June 1913 a General Strike was called, the government brought in troops and 20 people were killed in the fighting. The mines were kept in production by African labourers whom the police forced to work. Though the strikers were far from satisfied with the agreement signed by the leadership, the war intervened to put a temporary halt to class warfare. After the war, as the price of gold dropped and production costs rose so class struggles were resumed. The Chamber of Mines resolved to violate the colour bar and threaten white workers with retrenchment by 'repudiating the *status quo* agreement which defined the ratio of white to black labour' [Roux 40, p. 147]. Negotiation collapsed and a strike declared under the slogan 'Workers of the World fight and unite for a White South Africa'. White workers formed armed commandos and when facing defeat, rampaged the Witwatersrand in an anti-black pogrom. The Rand Revolt of 1922 was eventually crushed by government troops. Over 200 white lives were lost. While the South African Party government, led by 'imperial minded Afrikaners', became the protectors of industrial capital, the National Party had unequivocally thrown its weight behind the white workers of whom three quarters were themselves Afrikaners. The opposition of the National Party and South African Party reflects the crystallisation of class divisions within Afrikanerdom, and the alliance of class across national barriers.

During this period Africans and Coloureds were far from passive. In 1919 the African National Congress organised non-violent resistance to the Pass Laws, but the defiance failed to bring about any change in the system. Religious protest and millenarian movements, usually a reliable index of social unrest, became increasingly prominent. In 1921, 163 Israelites – members of a black separatist church – were machine gunned to death for refusing to leave Bullock commonage. In 1922 over 100 members of the Bondelswart tribe were massacred in a similar way for their refusal to pay a debilitating dog tax which threatened their livelihood based on hunting. African workers outside the mining industry organised themselves into the large Industrial and Commercial Union, about which Roux has said, 'No single mass movement of the black workers in South Africa has ever even remotely approached the power that was in the I.C.U.' [Roux 40, p. 197]. After scoring initial successes amongst dock workers, the union declined and concentrated on the resolution of internal power struggles [See Simons and Simons, 41: Chapter XVI]. Attempts at coalition with white workers invariably turned into betrayal [See Roux, 40 pp. 146 and 309-10]. On the mines attempted strikes by Africans, frequently following on from white strikes, were crushed by police and hostile white miners. Indeed the postwar years had more than their share of 'those periodic massacres of Natives by which civilised white South Africa asserts its right to rule over the inferior races' [Roux 40, p. 157].

The African National Congress formed in 1912 and the African Political Organization formed in 1902 were both 'constitutional' parties which fought within the system for the restoration of African and Coloured rights and for an equality between the races which was consistent with white rule [Simons and Simons, 41, pp. 386-7]. Their failure to adopt unconstitutional tactics or resistance, such as the passive resistance used so effectively by the Indians of South Africa, and their continual appeal to London for support made them powerless to reverse the process of rationalizing the colonial superstructure.

### THE GROWTH OF A MANUFACTURING CLASS

In his revealing comparison of ancient and medieval cities, Weber stresses the importance of the coexistence of free and unfree labour in the former and the universality of free labour in the latter.

... all parties, though by different means, sought to forestall the emergence of a class of citizens which had been economically ruined leaving them in debt, without property, and unable to equip themselves for military service. Such a stratum could become a prop to a tyranny which would promise the redistribution of land, release from indebtedness or support out of public means... The typical needy person, the proletarian of antiquity, was the person politically declassed because he no longer possessed property. In Antiquity the specific means to meet the needs of the proletariat were through great public works such as instituted by Pericles. However, the considerable role of slave labour in the economy prevented their (proletariat) entry into crafts... The coexistence of slave and free labour apparently destroyed all possibility of the development of guilds in Antiquity [Weber, 55, pp. 198-201].

The distinction between free and unfree labour is that between the sale of 'labour power' for a specified duration and the once and for all sale of the individual labourer to the employer. While in South Africa the employment of both black and white constitute 'free' labour, nonetheless the proletarian of the ancient city is unmistakably the poor white of the South African city. Neither was able to compete effectively with subjugated labour which had secured a monopoly (based on its cheapness) of certain occupations. Just as the coexistence of free and slave labour in the ancient city prevented their union in guilds, so in South Africa solidarity between black and white labouring classes was equally unlikely. In both cases the two segments of the working classes were differently related to the superstructure.

The political threat to the stability of the social structure posed by the declassed citizen has been as apparent to the South African ruling class as it was to Pericles. Both sought to protect their position by the creation of public works.

In the gold-mining industry, the Mines and Works Amendment Act (1926) ensured the regulations that re-established an unchallengeable category of Whites-only jobs. In government undertakings, more particularly in the South African Railways and Public Works Department the 'civilized labour policy' was forthwith implemented directly to increase the numbers of white employees in labouring categories. Tariff protection of secondary industry *politically* was intended to ensure that this 'civilized labour policy' was made effective in what was thought of as a secondary field of economic activity [Horwitz, 28, p. 245].

or even more to the point:

The empirical examination has shown, however, that the polity accepted and applied a protectionist policy only because it promised increased, improved employment of whites, otherwise described as 'civilized labour'. That this was the *raison d'être* of industrialization, if needs be under the encouragement of protection, is brought out unequivocally by the Customs Tariff Commission of 1934 as well as by launching of a state-controlled iron and steel industry by the Pact Government [Horwitz, 28, p. 251].

Pericles was able to finance his public works out of booty gained in conquest and the domination of the hinterland. The South African ruling class has financed its public works such as the Iron and Steel Corporation out of profits from gold mining made possible through the exploitation of 'cheap' labour.

At this point a radical distinction must be drawn between 'colour bar' legislation designed to prevent the advancement of Africans into skilled occupations and the 'civilized labour policy' which created jobs for unskilled whites at 'civilized' wages. Whereas the former is a response to a division *between classes*, i.e. groups with different relations to the *means of production*, the latter is a response to a division *within a class*, between segments differently related to the *superstructure*. The apparatus of civilized labour and colour bar represent but one side of the growth of the state. The other side flows directly from the corresponding need to perpetuate the availability of 'cheap' labour through such colonial institutions as the compound, migrant labour, pass laws, etc. It is this second face of the colonial superstructure which is to be associated with the growth of the South African police state to commandeer black labour to employers at diminishing or unchanging wage rates.<sup>14</sup> The complementary development of both faces of the institutional framework represents what I have referred to as the rationalization of the colonial superstructure.

Changes in the economic base and class structure give rise to new institutional mechanisms in the superstructure which in turn react back and modify the economic base. Thus, the appearance of unskilled, unemployed whites in urban areas, occasioned by changes in the agrarian social structure, gave rise to the 'civilized labour policy' which in turn transformed the economic base through the creation of a manufacturing industry.<sup>15</sup> Changes in the economic structure are reflected in the emergence of new classes, in this case a manufacturing class. Each new configuration of classes, however, gives rise to its own peculiar problems resolved by further modification of the superstructure. While agriculture and gold mining were always assured of a market, manufacturing industry has had greater difficulty in finding a market for its produce. The civilized labour policy, World War II and the threatened boycott of South Africa have all provided powerful incentives to expand the manufacturing industry in the past. Further growth, however, is constrained by the availability of a market for their relatively expensive products.

### **EXPANSIONISM AND THE EXTENSION OF THE AFRICAN MIDDLE CLASS**

This rise of secondary industry has gradually shifted the political 'centre of gravity' away from the farmer and white worker towards the interests of the manufacturing classes. The shift is reflected in the superstructure in at least three ways, outlined below.

One of the major factors propelling nations toward imperialist policies in recent history has been the search for commodity markets. In this respect South Africa has a greater stake in expansionism than other 'advanced' nations since the exigencies of political domination and superexploitation of the majority of the population precludes the emergence of an internal commodity market which can absorb the produce of South African industry. The stability of the South African social structure rests on maintaining three quarters of the population at or near subsistence levels of existence. Consequently commodity markets must be sought outside the geographical boundaries of South Africa. Moore's description of fascism as internal oppression leading to external aggression is as true of South Africa as it is of Japan [Moore, 38, Chapter V].

The split of the Afrikaner National Party in the late sixties into 'verligte' and 'verkrampste' sections revolved in part around the relaxation or intensification of 'apartheid'. More fundamentally it reflected the rise within Afrikanerdom of a powerful class of manufacturers whose economic interests favoured a more 'pragmatic' approach to apartheid and in particular black Africa. Subsequent attempts by the South African government at rapprochement with African states north of the Zambezi have met with some success. There have been diplomatic exchanges between Malawi and South Africa, culminating in 1972 with the visit of Dr. Hastings Banda, President of Malawi, to South Africa. Other countries such as Ghana and Malagasy have also responded positively to overtures from South Africa. Even those countries which have displayed a militant opposition to South Africa, and in particular Zambia, have for a long time been dependent on the importation of South African produce [Hall, 26, Chapter 6]. It is unlikely, however, that external markets in black Africa will provide an adequate outlet for South African goods for some time to come and moves in the direction of Latin America have been mooted.<sup>16</sup>

Wolpe [58] has argued that the major function of the Bantustan policy has been to ensure the persistence of the subsistence basis of migratory cheap labour. Just as the rise of the colonial superstructure prevented the emergent capitalism from transforming the feudal structure of agrarian society, so equally the rationalization of the colonial superstructure in the form of the 'Bantustan' policy may be viewed as an attempt to prevent the destruction of the African subsistence economy by the expansion of capitalism.<sup>17</sup> While the African reserve has traditionally been looked upon as a labour reservoir, and Wolpe advances this line of argument, its recreation in the form of a Bantustan may also yield a new domestic market.

The logic of economic growth in South Africa lies in the creation and extension of black middle classes, so long as this is accomplished without undermining either the protection of white employment from black competition or low wage African labour. The government is creating in the first 'Bantustan' (the Transkei) an African middle class composed of administrators, politicians, a few professionals and businessmen which supplements the boundaries delineated by Kuper [31]. Such a consumption oriented class does not violate the principle of colour bar, resting on the unidirectional flow of authority from white to black and black to black, nor does it threaten to undermine the Transkei's total economic and political dependence on the white political economy. Raising the level of the colour bar in the 'Bantustan' or in the

border areas does not conflict with its persistence at lower levels in the major commercial and industrial centres of the distant cities. While not actually making any economic investment in the Bantustan, but rather in the border areas, the government is at once reducing labour costs [Wolpe, 58] and creating a new internal market while upholding the elements of a colonial superstructure.

## CONCLUSION

Blauner [6] and Stinchcombe [45] have both argued that an industrial organization assumes a form in response to the environment (social, economic, political and technological) at the time of creation and that this form may persist. Similarly, I have shown how the South African superstructure, created in response to colonial feudalism, has persisted despite the transformation of the economic base. The South African economy has advanced interdependently with the rationalization of its colonial superstructure, facilitated by expansionist policies, first in search of land, then in search of labour and finally in search of commodity markets.

With this framework in mind it is interesting to compare South Africa with a colony of exploitation, such as Zambia. While the South African colonial superstructure has persisted alongside a transformed economic base, in Zambia it is the colonial economic base that has persisted alongside a transformed superstructure [Burawoy, 9]. How can one account for their different development? Though the colour bar has figured prominently in the history of Zambia [Burawoy, 9: particularly Chapter II] at no point has there been anything that resembles a civilised labour policy. I have argued in this paper that the civilised labour policy arose out of the intrusion of capitalism onto colonial feudalism, and it is the latter which is the unique feature buttressing and perpetuating the colonial structure.

In our earlier formulation of colonialism we not only drew attention to the 'internal' characteristics of the colony but stressed the importance of external economic and political relations. South Africa's relationship with Britain before 1910, and indeed after the formation of the Union, was both antagonistic and cooperative. As Frank [17] has pointed out for Latin America, the economic base within South Africa was a reflection of the wider capitalist system in which South Africa was embedded. Yet as Genovese [23] has suggested, the slave systems in the New World developed their own peculiar class structure independently of and in conflict with the political relations with the metropolis. Moore [38] suggests that the origins of the American Civil War lay in the conflict of the political systems in the slave South and industrial North. In a similar fashion the feudal structure in the South African colonies came into conflict with the political system emanating from the metropolis. The result was first Afrikaner withdrawal and the Great Trek and then the Anglo-Boer War. Therefore the debate between Frank and Genovese as to whether one should look upon relations between colony and metropolis as being conflictual or cooperative, resolves itself into the separate examination of economic relations which are frequently complementary and political relations which may be antagonistic.

In the post-colonial period economic relations with the metropolis may become competitive as in South Africa where an indigenous manufacturing industry emerged

or, as in the case of Zambia, the economic base may persist as a reflection of the metropolis colony relationship. On the other hand, the South African superstructure still reflects its original colonial status while that of Zambia has been transformed into a more democratic form.

What conclusions can be drawn as regards a conceptual framework for the examination of race relations in modern nation states? Two separate but related questions must be asked. First, what are the determinants of group behaviour at the macroscopic level? I have suggested that where the superstructure recognises categories other than class, such as religious, ethnic, sexual, linguistic statuses, then it is the product of relations to the means of production and to the superstructure that determines group behaviour. How the two sets of relationships combine varies according to the situation under examination. In community studies relations to the superstructure may assume greater significance, while in industrial studies relations to the means of production are more salient.

The second question looks to the origin of a particular base-superstructure arrangement. As I have attempted in the case of South Africa, it is necessary to examine historically how the superstructure emerges out of, interacts with and modifies the economic base. The generation of such interactive change is mediated and engineered by the rise of new classes or modifications of the existing configuration of classes. Though the superstructure is a reflection of the economic base, the former is in no way uniquely determined by the latter. Thus, as we have seen, an advanced economy is as compatible with a colonial superstructure as it is with a 'democratic' superstructure. In other words while the superstructure corresponds to and its development is constrained by the economic base, it is at the same time the unique product of historical events and economic change.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York, August, 1973. My perspectives on South Africa have been considerably influenced by Professors Jack Simons and Jaap van Velsen. I am very grateful to Professors Raymond Smith, Richard Taub and Jaap van Velsen and to Terence Halliday and Eddie Webster who have all made criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper. I am particularly indebted to Professor William Wilson not only for his stimulating introduction to American perspectives on race relations, but for his continual interest in and criticism of my ideas forcing me to focus and revise the content of this paper.

<sup>2</sup>The South African Communist Party began to look upon non-white South Africa as a colony of white South Africa under the influence of Leninist theses of colonial revolution and when it became apparent that solidarity between black and white segments of the working class would not develop. As conflict between black and white workers exacerbated so white South African communists had to choose between attaching themselves to white racist labour movements or organising black workers and peasants. After much internal friction, the communist party eventually adopted the latter path.

<sup>3</sup>Suttles [46], for example, justifies the artificial isolation of life within the Adams area from life outside as follows, 'Actually occupational identities are pushed aside by more important considerations . . . If pressed, a person will tell where he works, but it is somewhat impolite to ask what he does.' (p. 46) In other words, what the sociologist does not know is not important.

<sup>4</sup>A Bantustan is a theoretically self governing black territory within the geographical area of South Africa for which it normally acts as a labour reservoir. In fact the degree of self government is limited to aspects of internal matters and for revenue it is largely dependent on the discretion of the South African government in Pretoria.

<sup>5</sup>Kuper [30] uses the word 'colony' in a similar way to denote a 'white minority ruling an African majority in an independent or semi-independent state' (p. 149).

<sup>6</sup>Colonialism may be defined as the conquest and administration by a 'metropolitan country' of a geographically separate territory in order to utilise available resources (usually human or natural) for the creation of surplus which is repatriated to the metropolis. Thus colonialism has both political and economic dimensions.

<sup>7</sup>Smith formulates the concept of 'differential incorporation' in connection with structural pluralism which

. . . presupposes social and cultural pluralism together by prescribing sectional differences of access to the common public domain . . . (and) may be instituted in one of two ways: by the total exclusion of subordinate sections from the inclusive public domain, which is then the formally unqualified monopoly of the dominant group; or alternatively by instituting substantial and sufficient inequalities of sectional participation in and access to this sector of the societal organization. [Smith, 43, p. 440].

<sup>8</sup>For illustrations of the types of manipulation open to management in a similar situation, see Burawoy, [9], Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>9</sup>This approach is inspired by and parallels Arrighi's treatment of Southern Rhodesia [Arrighi 2].

<sup>10</sup>Wilson [56], p. 129, suggests that the Native Affairs Commission of 1903-5, on which these writers base their assertions of African adaptation to the market, exaggerated this trend and 'examination of the figures shows that the amount of land that passed into black hands was insignificant'. However, Arrighi [2] shows in the case of Southern Rhodesia, that only political measures and discriminatory subsidies enabled white farmers to compete with black farmers and then monopolise the marketing of agricultural produce.

<sup>11</sup> The mine compound was an extreme form of the more general urban 'locations', set aside for Africans working in towns and governed by the Location Superintendent and his staff which included a police force.

<sup>12</sup> The parallels between the Anglo-Boer War and the American Civil War are indeed intriguing. Unfortunately space does not permit a discussion of the pregnant implications.

<sup>13</sup> As the depression of the late 20s and early 30s affected South Africa, so poor whites were compelled to suffer alongside poor blacks. As a consequence there emerged a class consciousness and solidarity, albeit weak, among the nation's workers. Instances of inter-racial solidarity may be cited as evidence. Thus, Simons and Simons [41, pp. 381-5] refer to collaboration between white and black trade unions. Roux [40] describes multiracial demonstrations by the nation's unemployed in 1930 (p. 257) and again in 1933 (pp. 272-4). In each case deliberate and discriminatory intervention by the state set the unemployed white against his fellow sufferers of darker skin. Roux comments, 'Under such conditions, with both police and white reactionaries against them, the communists now found that joint activity of black and white unemployed was practically impossible to organise.' [40, p. 274].

<sup>14</sup> Wilson [57, p. 46] shows that real incomes of Africans employed in the mining industry have remained constant since 1911, while those of white employees have doubled over the same period. While whites earned eleven times as much as blacks in 1911, in 1969 the ratio was twenty to one.

<sup>15</sup> The employment of whites in manufacturing industry has expanded from 41,000 in 1924 to 184,000 in 1954, while output (net) increased from 25,000 pounds to 482,000 pounds sterling [Horwitz, 28, pp. 264-5].

<sup>16</sup> There are a number of sources which deal with South African expansionism, see for example, Kellock, A., *et al.*, [29]; Good, K., [25]. *Africa Today*, Vol. 17, No. 5; Moltens [37] and Gervasi [21].

<sup>17</sup> Wolpe suggests that the periods of segregation and apartheid cannot be regarded as continuous, but that apartheid aims to recreate the precapitalist mode of production which capitalism has virtually destroyed. However, this is still the rationalization of the colonial superstructure in the face of countervailing economic forces.

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