

THE CAPITALIST STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA: MARXIST AND SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACE AND CLASS

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Before the race riots of the 1960s, social science had taken the category of race as a point of departure rather than a point of conclusion. It was, therefore, unable to explain the genesis and reproduction of racism in terms other than the ideologies and counterideologies of racism. But Watts and all that followed forced sociologists to abandon the abstract optimism of race cycle theories and the irrelevant empiricism of prejudice studies. They now turned their attention to the allocation of economic, political, and ideological resources among different races, generally conceived of as homogeneous groups. Although racism was now rooted in conditions outside of itself, namely the unequal distribution of resources,

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these conditions were taken as given rather than something to be explained. For to understand the differential access of races to resources requires a theory of the more general allocation of resources, which in turn presupposes a theory of capitalism.

Logically, therefore, it was necessary to embed a "theory" of racism within a prior theory of capitalism. However, once such a theory is taken as point of departure, then the problem has to be reformulated. The understanding of racism now turns on the precise location of different racial groups within the capitalist social structure and on the unveiling of the different forms of race relations and racial antagonisms that are subsumed under the single overweening formula of "racism." Thus, the original proposition of the "power conflict" models is turned on its head: no longer does one have few resources because one is black; instead, one is black because one has few resources. The primary focus of study is the specific relations into which black and white enter and which entail a specific racial distribution of resources. In other words, the objective is to penetrate the ideologies and counterideologies of racism to the social relations which they both conceal and express.

Recognizing these inadequacies of the "power conflict" models, studies of race in the 1970s have begun to restore "racism" to its very specific roots in capitalist social relations.¹ Foremost among these analyses are those which attribute racism to discontinuities in labor markets. With the development of monopoly capitalism, two distinct labor markets emerge: a primary market which offers jobs with high wages, good working conditions, stable employment, job security, trade union protection, and chances of mobility within the firm; and a secondary market which offers jobs with low wages, poor working conditions, unstable employment, harsh and often arbitrary discipline, and little opportunity for mobility within the firm (Baron and Hymer, 1968; Gordon, 1971, 1972; Harrison, 1972; Edwards, Reich, and Gordon, 1975). Blacks, women, and other minorities tend to find themselves stuck in the secondary labor market; from this fact springs a characteristic pattern of race relations, as competition over access to employment.

Approaches to racism via the dual labor market raise two sets of questions. First, why do Blacks, women, and other minorities tend to predominate in poorer paid, nonunionized, unstable jobs? Too often the answer is sought in the psychological traits that Blacks and other minorities supposedly develop as a result of education, upbringing, etc. The second question is: why does advanced capitalism generate these two distinct labor markets? Here answers rest less on the prior existence of Blacks and other minorities and more on the nature of advanced capitalism, which generates competitive and monopoly as well as state sectors of employment. Each sector is subject to a distinctive set of imperatives in

terms of wages and labor process, giving rise to different labor markets. In other words, racism is understood as the product of particular developments in the capitalist economy. Unfortunately, labor market dualism is usually "explained" by demonstrating its functions for capital accumulation and thereby missing its uneven development in different countries.

Rather than locating the specificity of the dual labor market in the particular history of capitalist development in the United States, Edna Bonacich veers in the other direction, arguing that the dual labor market is but one example of a more general phenomenon—a labor market split into cheap and expensive labor (Bonacich, 1976). By abstracting from the particular U.S. context, she is able to apply a theory of split labor markets to diverse situations in different parts of the world and in different periods of history. Her comparative perspective not only brings important new insights to the understanding of race relations but challenges hitherto prevailing approaches by rooting ethnic and racial antagonism in the competition among different groups for jobs on the one hand and in the interests of capital in cheap labor on the other. She breaks with the orthodoxy of the 1960s by showing that race or ethnicity is not a primordial condition but is produced and reproduced by specific capitalist relations. Significantly she writes, "Even when no ethnic differences exist, split labor markets may produce ethnic like antagonisms" (Bonacich, 1972, p. 557). Moreover, the development and application of her theory has been clear, coherent, consistent, illuminating, and above all compelling—the very acme of contemporary sociology. Undoubtedly her work is a milestone in the study of race relations. But, like all milestones, it has to be passed. That is to say, it has to be transcended but not discarded. By taking her analysis as point of departure, I will try to dissolve some of its untenable assumptions carried forward from the traditional perspectives it criticizes. This paper, therefore, aims to liberate the partial truths of the split labor market theory from the shackles of sociology.

The essay is divided into three parts. The second specifies the abstract arguments of the first through an examination of the history of South Africa, while the third briefly draws together the implications of an alternative approach formulated in the previous parts.

I

One of the sacred tenets of the positivist philosophy of social science is that theories stand or fall on the basis of their empirical adequacy. This presumes a separation between the empirical world and the world of theory—the one being tested against the other. But as Feyerabend (1975) has shown, such a philosophy carries with it an inbuilt conservative bias. First, facts do not exist independently of theories but are produced by

theories. And second, facts tend to validate the theories from which they emerge. New knowledge which is incompatible with a particular theory does not come from the accumulation of "normal science" but from rival theories. Irrespective of whether they are "wrong" or "right," alternative theories find a justification in the questions they pose and therefore the new facts they create. Although rival theories may be inspired by the empirical world as we know it, a more adequate method is to work directly on existing theories. Theories, therefore, must be challenged as theories, in terms of the assumptions they make as well as the evidence they produce.

Edna Bonacich's split labor market theory is a particularly good example of a theory which produces facts which harmonize well with its premises. Because in the sociology of race relations Bonacich finds herself almost without rival, it becomes particularly important to first work on her theory at the theoretical level in order to formulate an alternative approach. I will do this by examining the assumptions behind four key concepts she uses: capital, labor, resources, and racial antagonism. As we shall see, the silent unifying thread in her analysis is a fifth and largely unexamined concept of "interest." Our discussion will revolve around this and another unquestioned assumption, that a *theory* of ethnic antagonism is possible. I will begin the discussion, however, by exploiting the comparison of her own theory with that of the dual labor market to arrive at an absent concept: the state.

1. The State

Both split and dual labor market theorists describe race relations in terms of the coexistence of "cheap" and "expensive" "labor." Broadly, where they differ is in the explanation of the origin and dynamics of such discontinuous labor markets. More fundamentally, this difference is rooted in their conceptions of the interests of different classes. Dual labor market theorists claim that the division of the working class into cheap and expensive labor and the existence of surplus black labor protects the interests of the capitalist class. Thus, Michael Reich (1971) argues that white workers are economically deprived by differentials in the price of labor—the greater the wage differential between black and white workers, the greater the income inequality between capital and white labor. Bonacich confronts this argument directly: the interests of the white working class are to defend the wage differential of the split labor market *against* the attempt by capital to displace expensive white labor with cheaper black labor:

What fits the evidence better [than the dual labor market theory] is a picture of a capitalist class faced with (rather than creating) a labor market differentiated in terms

of bargaining power (or price). *Capital* turns toward the cheaper labor pool as a more desirable work force, a choice consistent with the simple pursuit of higher profits. Higher priced labor resists being displaced, and the racist structures they erect to protect themselves are antagonistic to the interests of *capital*. (Bonacich, 1976, p. 44. Emphasis mine.)

The two theories, therefore, differ over the "interests" of "capital," whether these lie in the maintenance or erosion of the split labor market. Bonacich (1976) approaches the differences as though they can be resolved empirically by examining the action of "capital." Thus, she shows how various historical changes in the United States are compatible with her own theory based on the struggle of expensive white labor with capital, and proceeds to dismiss the dual labor market theory without actually falsifying it. She feels justified in doing this because she erroneously believes that the two theories are incompatible. Confusion emanates from the concept of "capital." The dual labor market theory is concerned with the interests of the capitalist *class* in the survival of capitalism, whereas the split labor market theory, although it is inconsistent in its use of vocabulary, nonetheless refers to the interest of the *individual* capitalist in maximizing profit. Thus, it may be in the interests of an individual capitalist to replace expensive white labor with cheap black labor. At the same time, the interests of the capitalist *class* are in weakening the working class by dividing it into different segments, creating a reserve army of unemployed, and of course guaranteeing the cheapness of black labor. In other words, the conflict between the two theories resolves itself into a conflict in reality between the interests of the individual capitalist and the interests of the capitalist class.

Such conflict between individual and class interests is not confined to the capitalist class. It is a defining feature of any group or class whose members are compelled to compete with one another. Thus, in the pursuit of individual gain, workers frequently sacrifice their class interests by scabbing, rate busting, and so on. Moreover, the contradiction between individual and class interests is not merely part and parcel of the competitive structure of capitalist relations but also a source of its dynamics. As we have seen, Reich argues that the pursuit of sectional gains by white workers weakens the working class as a whole and brings down wages of all workers. This is analogous to Marx's analysis of the dynamics of capitalism. Marx argued that in a perfect market, each capitalist is compelled, on pain of extinction, to search for profit by continuously introducing new capital and reducing wages. At the level of the capitalist class, however, this had the effect of reducing the overall level of profit. Capitalists were all forced to fight a losing battle by running up stairs that were carrying them down to their destiny. To take another example, individual capitalists have an immediate interest in reducing wages, but if all capital-

ists did this, there would be a crisis of overproduction which would threaten the class as a whole.

In all these instances, individual rationality turns into collective irrationality. And the guiding question becomes: how are capitalists compelled to pursue their individual interests in harmony with their class interests? How are they prevented or how do they prevent themselves from undermining the capitalist order? What guarantees the reproduction of the broader conditions necessary for individual capitalists to realize their profits? In particular, how do they ensure the production of "uneconomic" or "public" goods and services such as highways and schools? To the extent that overproduction crises are contained, how is it that wages are sufficiently high to consume that which is produced? How is it that workers generally do *not* realize their class interest to the extent of threatening the survival of capitalism? There are no simple answers to these questions. Although solutions obviously vary according to historical circumstance, in each instance they can be understood as some combination of the self-organization of the capitalist class and the intervention of the state, both of which shape and are shaped by class struggles. Theories of the state must therefore address, first, how and under what circumstances competing capitalists can constitute themselves as a class with class interests prevailing over individual and sectional interests; second, how and under what circumstances the state is able to act as "the executive committee for managing the *common* affairs of the *whole* bourgeoisie"; and third, how these two solutions are related to one another and to class struggle.

Given her exclusive concern with the rationality of the individual capitalist, Bonacich is unable to appreciate capitalism as a *system* of relations between and within classes—a system with its own logic and dynamics that cannot be understood as a simple extension, projection, or magnification of the logic and dynamics of the relations in a single capitalist firm. Without an understanding of the capitalist system and therefore of the class interests, that is to say, political interests of capital, it is not surprising that the concept of the state is missing from Bonacich's theory. Let us now take a closer look at the issues revolving around the notion of capital.

2. Capital

In her exclusive adoption of the individualistic rationality of liberal economic theory, Bonacich can only understand the capitalist class as an individual capitalist blown up in size. This false identification of the individual capitalist, segment of the capitalist class, and the entire class is at the root of more specific shortcomings of the theory.

The split labor market develops in two stages. First, there exists a wage differential between white and black labor and *then* the dynamics de-

velop, with capital seeking to displace white labor with black labor. The individualistic calculus of the second stage presupposes all else to be constant. In particular, it assumes that black labor remains cheap. Although it may not devolve on the individual capitalist, so called cheap labor has to be produced and reproduced. It is usually the state that guarantees the "cheapness" of labor to the individual employer by organizing and repressing struggles, regulating the flow of labor, and so on. Thus, in considering the "cheapness" of labor, it is not enough to consider the "price of labor" as "labor's total cost to the employer, including not only wages, but the cost of recruitment, transportation, room and board, education, health care (if the employer must bear these), and the costs of labor unrest" (Bonacich, 1972, p. 549). In addition to costs to the employer, there are the costs borne by the state. Thus labor may be cheap in terms of its "price" but expensive in terms of the costs of reproduction of the system of labor as a whole.

But the operation of the state and the maintenance of its various apparatuses depends on revenue collected through fiscal measures from different classes. The distribution of the costs of reproducing a system of cheap "labor" becomes the subject of struggles between classes and within classes organized in the political arena. This brings us directly to the recognition of conflicting interests within the capitalist class, apart from the competition among individual capitalists. Situated differently in the national and global production process, different segments of the capitalist class have different interests in the reproduction of cheap labor power in general and of the split labor market in particular. Some segments are more dependent on cheap labor power than others, as reflected in the capital intensity of their labor processes. Some segments are more concerned with expanding consumer markets at home and therefore opposed to a low price for labor, while other segments with international markets may be more intent on reducing the price of labor. When the supply of cheap labor is restricted, then segments of the capitalist class will struggle with one another for monopoly access to cheap labor. Until recently, U.S. agribusiness had secured such a favored position for itself.

The particular constellation of distinctive interests within the dominant class will vary with the issue, that is, with the object of struggle, whether this be import control, cheap labor policies, welfare administration, anti-trust legislation, etc. Nevertheless, we can delineate major economic divisions within the capitalist class that have frequently produced antagonistic interests, namely divisions based on what is produced (consumption, luxury, or capital goods); on how things are produced (level of skill and mechanization); on position in the circuit of capital (financial, industrial, commercial, landed capital); on the level of subordination to supply and product markets (competitive and monopoly capital); on the geographical extent of the market (national and international capital). An

essential historical and theoretical problem is to understand the processes whereby a *segment* becomes a *fraction*, that is to say, the processes through which a specific segment of capital makes or fails to make its appearance in the political arena or to secure the representation of its interests there (Zeitlin, Neuman, and Ratcliff, 1976). Can any segment of capital manage to secure the representation of its interests in the political arena? Are some segments more favorably situated in the process of production to advance their interests? In what ways does the organization of the political system itself shape the emergence of some interests rather than others? It is important to distinguish, at least analytically, between the process through which a segment becomes a fraction from the struggles among fractions (Clarke, 1978). How do we understand struggle within the capitalist class as it is organized politically? How can one fraction manage to present its own interests as the interests of all fractions? Although political resources are important, the issues around which struggle is carried on in a particular conjuncture must circumscribe the candidates for the position of hegemony within the dominant class. While these are all difficult problems, they must be posed if we are to avoid the tautologies of interest group theory whose point of departure is also its point of conclusion, namely the political existence of a group and the formation of its interests. That is, it takes as given precisely what has to be explained.

In summary, until we distinguish the individual capitalist from a segment or fraction of the capitalist class from the capitalist class itself, the notion of interest of "capital" remains ambiguous.² It is not simply that sociology and neoclassical economics take for granted the reproduction of the capitalist order in their study of economic actors, while Marxism is not concerned with the survival of this or that capitalist but with the survival of capitalism itself. I am also suggesting that the capitalist order is continually being threatened and that capitalists, willy nilly, do consume a lot of profits defending that order and not merely obsessing over their individual survival as capitalists. Consequently, the central question of any Marxist theory of the state is how class interests prevail over individual interests. I will attempt to address this problem concretely in the second part of this paper.

3. Labor

We have seen that the interests of the individual capitalist must be distinguished from the capitalist class and its composite segments. We must now consider the individual capitalist as also combining disparate interests, which are concealed in Bonacich's conception of "labor."³ Individual capitalists seek to maximize profit, whose source lies in the

discrepancy between the value of labor expended at the point of production and the value of labor power (which corresponds to Bonacich's "price of labor"); in other words, between the value of labor expended and the costs, borne by the employer, of the reproduction of the "capacity to work" (labor power). The interests of the capitalist are therefore twofold: to reduce the costs of reproduction of labor power and to increase the amount of labor performed.

At the same time, changes in the reproduction of labor power can have repercussions in the labor process and vice versa. Reducing wages, for example, can make management's task of extracting effort more difficult. Or reducing the costs of reproducing labor power through the use of migrant labor imposes constraints on the form of the labor process. More significantly, substituting cheap black labor power for expensive white labor power may reduce the overall costs of the reproduction of labor power but also reduce productivity by disrupting the system of control in the labor process, particularly if the latter is organized along racial lines. Thus, in colonial labor processes where authority and skill are vested in white workers alone, the substitution of black for white workers can undermine the form of labor control unless the labor process is first subject to "deskilling." The struggle over substitution is therefore usually first and foremost a struggle over the organization of the labor process.

In failing to disentangle labor power from labor, Bonacich is unable to understand the very struggles which are at the heart of her theory. Moreover, in her exclusive focus on the "price of labor," she reduces the class structure to capitalists and wage earners. She therefore misses the disparate interests that emerge on the basis of location in the labor process. As we shall see, unskilled, skilled, and supervisory workers, whether they be black or white, have distinctive and contradictory interests in the maintenance of a split labor market.

4. Resources

We have so far discussed the *formation* of interests revolving around a split labor market. What can we say about the realization of those interests? Here Bonacich adopts the conventional perspectives of interest group analysis. She explains the original "price of labor" in terms of "resources" and "motives." Under resources, she includes the standard of living to which workers are accustomed, their access to information concerning labor market opportunities, and, finally, their political resources, by which she means "the benefits to a group of organizing" (Bonacich, 1972, p. 550). "Motives" refer to the existence of "target" workers or "sojourners" who accept low wages because they are only temporarily involved in the capitalist economy. Whereas these factors

determine the genesis of a split labor market, its dynamics follow from struggle entered into by "capital" and "expensive labor" over the former's attempt to employ ever more "cheap labor" and the latter's attempt to "exclude" "cheap labor" altogether or, if this is not possible, to enforce a "caste" solution.

If an expensive labor group is strong enough (strength generally depending on the same factors that influence price), they may be able to resist being displaced. Both exclusion and caste systems represent such victories for higher paid labor. (Bonacich, 1972, p. 554)

Needless to say, "such victories" are only victories within the context of capitalism. Furthermore, they are victories only in as much as "capital" actually attempts to displace expensive labor power. Given the ambiguity of "capital's" interests, as suggested earlier, it is not enough to *assert* those interests, as Bonacich does, but actually *demonstrate* their existence. It thus becomes essential to examine carefully the circumstances of individual capitalists, segments of the capitalist class, and the class itself.

Bonacich only refers to the "strength" (measured in resources and motives) of "labor." But if her "theory" is to be more than a tautology and actually account for the outcome of struggles between capitalists and expensive labor power, then she must also examine the strength of "capital." It is significant that no such examination is attempted. For the strength of the different components of the capitalist class cannot be accounted for in such simple terms as resources. The might of the capitalist class and its constituent elements resides primarily in the capitalist state. However, the state is not merely some stick which the capitalist can sometimes wield to its own advantage. It is much more than that, presenting in its very structure the organizational power of the capitalist class. The state, to use Gramsci's metaphor, can be understood as a system of trenches which contain and organize struggles among and within classes in ways that do not threaten the capitalist order.⁴ Since Bonacich never systematically considers the strength, composition, or interests of the capitalist class, it is not surprising that the state is conspicuous by its absence from her analysis of the struggle between "capital" and "expensive labor." And in clinging to the "resource" models of interest group theory, she entirely ignores the structural constraints which shape the patterns of struggle. As in a game, the rules embedded in political structures define the strategies of the different actors and the possible outcomes of their struggles.

Instead of examining the "strength" of "capital," Bonacich focuses on the discrepancy in the strengths of cheap and expensive labor power:

"The fundamental conflict is between capitalists and high-priced labor; cheap labor is merely a tool in the hands of capitalists" (Bonacich, 1975, p. 607). In other words, only by making the primary distinction as one between powerless cheap labor and more powerful expensive labor can Bonacich elevate her secondary distinction between capital and expensive labor power to fundamental importance. Her entire theory presumes the primary differentiation of "powerless" cheap labor on the one side and "powerful" expensive labor and capital on the other. However, if we incorporate, as we must, in Bonacich's analysis the interests and capacity of the capitalist class, then a very different picture emerges. For the state then becomes the central institution in the analysis of the realization of the interests of the capitalist class, namely the interests in the survival of capitalism which are nothing other than the interests in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. That is to say, the essence of the "power" of capital lies in compelling laborers to first sell their labor power and then compelling them to transform the labor power into labor. In this sense all workers, irrespective of whether they are cheap or expensive, are equally powerless.

With this framework as a point of departure, it is then necessary to locate the secondary but yet *fundamental* differences between different segments of the working class, between, for example, cheap and expensive labor power. Different segments will first experience their powerlessness in different ways and second engage in struggles which have different objects, arenas, and consequences. Moreover, to understand how these differences emerge and are reproduced, it is also necessary to understand the labor process as well as the way in which the state disorganizes subordinate classes and discriminates among segments of these classes.

We have seen how the adoption of a "power resource" model of interest group theories cannot comprehend either the interests of the capitalist class or its capacity to realize those interests, and in consequence leads Bonacich to confuse primary and secondary contradictions. But the problems with her model do not stop here. In her examination of the "strength" of expensive labor power, she also succumbs to an empiricist fallacy of attributing the establishment of an exclusionary or caste system to the strength or militancy of expensive labor power, without recognizing the role of other allied groups. This is the fallacy of clauseology. It is as if young John's discovery in his Christmas stocking of a desired item earlier requested from Santa Claus is conclusive proof of the existence of Santa Claus. Just as the discerning John might have noticed mum or dad stealing into his bedroom at night, so a discerning sociologist might observe that the "victory" of expensive labor power is often due to the alliances it strikes with particular fractions of the dominant class and of the petty bourgeoisie.

Bonacich's understanding of the realization of interests through resources, motives, and organization finds confirmation in the world of appearances. Here the stage is indeed dominated by virulent outbursts of racial hostility between different segments of the working class and the protectionist struggles of expensive white labor. Behind the scenes, however, the imperatives of capital accumulation and the more covert class alliances shape the context in which those struggles take place. Her succumbing to appearances stems from her methodology. First, her individualistic perspective reduces the operating principles of an economic system to those of a single capitalist enterprise, rather than treating the system as composed of disparate classes and segments of classes with diverse interests. Second, the realization of interests through struggles takes place in the political arena, which Bonacich reduces to an unmediated reflection of her three-class economic structure. In reality, the political arena has its own logic and structure, where classes find their representation through political parties and make their presence felt by striking alliances and forming coalitions. Those classes which cannot gain formal representation become effective historical forces through struggles which may be less "noticed" but are no less important. The homogenization of class structure and the reduction of politics to economics leads to the homogenization of history. The "dynamics" of the split labor market can bear only a limited relationship to the forces propelling a society toward racism.

5. Racial Antagonism

Racial antagonism or race conflict is frequently identified as antagonism or conflict between races. The object of such conflict is often left unspecified or rooted in the "distribution of resources." Bonacich makes a major advance by specifying the material basis of racial or ethnic antagonism as the opposition of interests between capital and expensive labor power in the deployment of cheap labor power. While this is an important arena of struggle, it is by no means the only one. Nor is it necessarily the most significant arena of racial antagonism. Moreover, the split labor market gives rise to a much more complex array of struggles than simply those between "capital" and "expensive" labor power, reflecting the disparate interests at work *within* white labor, black labor, and, as I have already indicated, "capital." In this section, therefore, I propose to uncover the multiplicity of interests concealed in the split labor market.

Bonacich blurs two dimensions. First, as already pointed out, she does not distinguish between two *arenas* of struggle: the reproduction of labor power and the labor process. Second, she does not distinguish between two *objects* of struggle: the allocation of people to places (jobs, firms,

etc.) and the nature of the places and relations among the places themselves.⁵ Combining the two dimensions gives four types of racial antagonisms. The first type concerns the allocation of different racial groups to firms through the external labor market. A good example is the pattern of race relations emerging from the dual labor market. The second type involves the allocation of different racial groups to particular jobs within the firm through the "internal" labor market. Here we find the racism of job reservation. Alternatively, the internal labor market may operate on the basis of seniority, leaving racism as operative in the external labor market. A third type involves struggles over the very mechanisms of the reproduction of labor power, including struggles over wages, housing, social security, and so on, as they affect racial groups differentially. Finally, struggles over the form of the labor process, over modes of control, and over skill constitute the basis of a fourth type of racial antagonism.

Struggles over patterns of mobility (the first two types) are of course intimately connected to struggles over relations of exploitation (the second two types). Yet it is crucial to distinguish between them if we are to begin to understand the different interests at work within racial groups. For example, struggles for "African Advancement" in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia concealed conflicts over whether it referred to general wage increases and improvements in working conditions or Africanization, that is, the displacement of white labor power by black labor power. Thus, long before political independence, class conflict had developed within the African population between the mass of unskilled workers, who were mainly concerned with reducing the level of exploitation, and the skilled, supervisory, and salaried staff Africans, who were more interested in eliminating color bars that reserved jobs for whites. Equally, among white workers, conflict developed between those immediately threatened by Africanization and those who felt more secure by virtue of their skills or expertise. Therefore, the strategies pursued by white labor in the face of capital's intent to deploy cheap black labor are likely to vary according to location in the production process. Skilled workers, artisans, technicians, supervisory workers, and so on might seek to impose a caste solution through apprenticeships and closed shops, while unskilled and semiskilled workers might adopt "exclusionary" or "inclusionary" policies.

Where the state does not impose or encourage an exclusionary strategy, white workers faced with the mechanization of the labor process have often sought collaboration across racial divisions. Even in South Africa, between 1925 and 1930, when mass production was entering certain secondary industries, many white workers abandoned craft exclusivism for an all-inclusive industrial unionism. This accounts both for the

upsurge in multiracial Communist activity during the period and the subsequent repression perpetrated by the state against white and black alike who engaged in collaboration.

By focusing on white fears of displacement, Bonacich underplays the "exploitation" forms of racism and, therefore not surprisingly, largely ignores or dismisses as ineffectual the struggles of black labor. While it is true that their struggles, often illegal and unorganized, do not receive the same publicity as the defensive struggles of white labor, this is not to say they are any less important. They may appear unsuccessful in that they do not achieve their goals, that is, black labor power may remain cheap labor power, but that is not to say that their struggles are without consequence. Indeed, the manifestation of the struggles of cheap labor power are to be found in the structures of the state created to repress those struggles and reproduce that cheap labor power. In a racist society, the strength of the black working class is reflected in the state apparatuses or organized coercion.

In order to understand the balance of forces propelling a society forward, it is necessary to unveil the different relations and antagonisms that all go by the name of race relations and racial antagonisms. On the other hand, it is precisely because "race relations" and "racial antagonisms" do conceal such diverse interests that "racism" is such a powerful ideology, binding together classes within racial groups, shaping class interests, promoting particular configurations of alliances, and generally shaping the terrain and expression of class struggle.

6. Theory and Ideology

In a study from which Bonacich draws many of her ideas, Marvin Harris (1964) explains differences between patterns of race relations in the deep South and Brazil by reference to the presence of a large white population of yeomen farmers, artisans, and semiskilled workers in the former region and the absence of such a population in the latter region. Similarly, Simons and Simons (1969) suggest that the evolution of different forms of race relations in the Cape and the Transvaal of South Africa stem from the strength of the white working class in the latter and its weakness in the former province. Both studies make it clear that what is the critical factor in accounting for differences is only a factor in the shaping of each racial order. The novelty of Bonacich's contribution lies precisely in turning what others have regarded as a factor into the factor which above all else determines racial antagonism.

While there can be no doubt that she has unveiled something of great importance, at the same time, by elevating the dynamics of the split labor market to such a dominant position, she risks losing what is unique to

each society. In universalizing what are in fact very specific racial orders, Bonacich imposes a certain artificial uniformity on the societies she examines, which undermines her capacity to understand their history. In other words, she inverts the logic of inquiry by constructively appropriating history to illuminate a theory rather than appropriately constructing a theory to illuminate history.

By imposing the dynamics of the split labor market on very different racial orders, Bonacich's treatment produces the same effect as an ideology which explains away very different situations by labelling them as "racism." As in ideology, so in the split labor market theory the specific forces arising out of concrete political and economic structures and leading to particular types of racial order are awarded only incidental treatment. As I shall try and show in the next part, race relations cannot be understood outside the specific class structure and state in which they are embedded. Furthermore, there can be no theory of racial antagonism outside a theory of capitalism, slavery, or whatever the society in which it occurs. To suggest otherwise is to reify racism and therefore to succumb to ideology.

II

So far I have suggested that the compelling plausibility of the split labor market theory rests in part on its close correspondence to a dominant ideological vision in which racism is the product of a white working class seeking to protect its interests. Taking Bonacich's analysis of South Africa published in this volume as point of departure, I propose to show how a new history emerges from the specification and development of my earlier general criticisms.

1. Individual and Class Interests

From what was said in the first part, it is clear that a purely economic approach to racial antagonism cannot explain the specific forms and direction of the dynamics of race relations. Labor market theories are inadequate because they are economic rather than political economic theories. They cannot comprehend the formation and realization of interests. It is interesting, therefore, that Bonacich should introduce her paper on South Africa by distinguishing between so-called liberal theory, which regards South Africa as "a society in which the political and economic systems are in conflict, the political goal of racial domination superceding economic rationality" (1981, p. 240) and "neo-Marxists [who], in contrast, believe that, far from being inefficient or irrational, the racial system in South Africa was constructed to serve economic ends.

There is no conflict between the polity and economy, the state by and large promoting the interests of capital" (1981, p. 241).⁶ Paradoxically, having formulated the problem in terms of competing perspectives on the relationship between state and economy, Bonacich resolves the contradiction by losing sight of the political and substituting her own materialist theory:

I propose that the South African racial order arises out of a split labor market (or discrepancy in the price of labor) between white and "nonwhite" workers. Capital is attracted to cheap black labor, and, if left to its own devices, would fully absorb Africans into the capitalist sector, displacing high priced white labor in the process. White labor has acted to prevent their own displacement by trying to limit capital's access to African cheap labor. Out of this class struggle, between capital and white labor over the former's freedom to use black labor, have emerged the major racist structures in South Africa. (1981, p. 242)

The state, if it appears at all, does so as a consequence of the split labor market. It is left unexamined.

According to Bonacich, the "exclusivist" struggles of white labor power and capital give rise to the distinctive feature of the South African racial order.

There is a declared policy, Apartheid, backed by not immoderate funds, to perpetuate and even reconstruct a precapitalist sector living in "tribal" Bantustans. . . . The puzzle is: why is South Africa apparently trying to prevent the full absorption of the African population into the capitalist sector? (1981, p. 239)

I will return to the validity of such a characterization of South Africa at the end of this section. Leaving this question aside for now, how does Bonacich confront the arguments of so-called neo-Marxists that the reproduction of the "reserves" and the policy of creating Bantustans in different ways at different times coincided with the objectives of certain segments of the capitalist class because they guaranteed a supply of cheap labor power? Rather than denying the fact or even the reason for cheapness, she denies capitalists the capacity to act on such foresight.

While neo-Marxist authors are correct in asserting that the complete breakdown of the precapitalist sector would eventually lead to an increase in the price of African labor, I do not believe that capital acts in terms of this long-range consequence. In the short run, they see in African labor a highly profitable resource which is "going to waste" in the precapitalist sector. (1981, p. 253. Emphasis mine.)

In the first place, she is simply wrong. For a long time, mining capital held governments in South Africa to ransom by threatening to withdraw investment if the system of migrant labor were not reproduced.⁷ Mining capital has acted quite explicitly to preserve the reserves in the recogni-

tion that this was the basis of cheap labor power (Simons and Simons, 1969, pp. 52, 86). Indeed, the Boer War was in part instigated by Rhodes and the interests of mining capital he represented because the Kruger government was not prepared to legislate pass laws to guarantee the system of migrant labor. Presenting the case of the mining industry before the Lansdowne Commission (Mine Native Wage Commission) in 1943, Gemmill, for long a powerful figure in the Chamber of Mines, claimed that:

. . . "the basis of the employment of Native labour by the mines is in complete accord with the balanced South African Native policy laid down practically unanimously by Parliament after thorough investigation and discussion in 1936-7 and embodied in legislation (in particular in the Native Trust and Land Act 1936 and the 1937 Amendment to the Urban Areas Act and reaffirmed by the Minister of Native Affairs in the House of Assembly on February 26, 1943). In brief that policy is the enlargement and planned development of the Native reserves and the concurrent restriction on the number of Natives permitted in towns coupled with the proper housing of those so permitted. It aims at the preservation of the economic and social structure of the Native people in Native areas where that structure can be sheltered and developed. The policy is a coherent whole, and is the antithesis of the policy of assimilation and the encouragement of a black proletariat in the towns, divorced from its tribal heritage. The ability of the mines to maintain their Native labour force by means of tribal Natives from the reserves at rates of pay which are adequate for this migratory class of Natives but inadequate for the detribalised urban class of Natives is a fundamental factor in the economy of the gold mining industry." . . . Against the pressure for improved wages he urged that where the argument in favour of such improvement was based on the adequacy of the landed basis of the mine labourer to provide him with a livelihood even with his periods of contract on the mines, it was the obligation of the Government to provide adequate holdings for this class of Native. (Cited in Ballinger, 1945, p. 28. Emphasis in the original.)

At least until the end of the Second World War, there seems to be little doubt that mining capital actively sought to realize its interests in the preservation of the reserves.

If the empirical shortcomings of Bonacich's criticisms of "neo-Marxist" studies are now clear, the theoretical inadequacy of her criticism is perhaps less obvious but more fundamental. How are we to interpret her speculations about the behavior and rationality of "capital," in particular her distinction between short- and long-term interests (1981, p. 253)? How long is short? How short is long? In practice, the short-term rationality appears to refer to the interest of the *individual* capitalist in maximizing profit through replacing expensive white labor power with cheap African labor power, whereas long term rationality appears to refer to the interests of all capitalists, of the capitalist *class* in reproducing a system of cheap labor power. Moreover, these two sets of interests—individual and class—are often opposed. As Bonacich points out:

It is part of the dialectic of capitalist development that it brings cheap (often rural) labor into its orbit, transforming that labor into a self-conscious class which organizes to improve its position and ceases to be cheap. (1981, p. 253)

How may these conflicting interests be reconciled? We have already considered one strategy adopted by the mining industry, namely the concerted effort of an entire fraction of capital, constituted through the Chamber of Mines as a monopsony, to preserve the basis of a pool of cheap labor power. A second strategy is pointed out by Bonacich herself, namely for capital to turn to new sources of cheap labor power. Although she appears unaware of it, throughout its history, the Chamber of Mines has negotiated, cajoled, bribed, and even threatened to use force in order to gain access to labor reservoirs all over Southern Africa, including countries such as Nyasaland (Malawi), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Mozambique, Angola, South West Africa (Namibia), and the British Protectorates (Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho) (see, for example, First, 1961, and Roger Leys, 1975). During the last three decades, political changes in all these areas have contributed to the mounting pressure on the mining industry to reconsider its labor policies.

Bonacich rejects both these strategies of the mining companies as inapplicable to the South African context and instead argues that the reconciliation of the individual (short-term) and class (long-term) interests has been brought about by white laborers who, in protecting their own interests, prevent "the full absorption of Africans into the capitalist sector." But white workers can at most only dictate to capitalists which jobs African laborers may occupy. White workers cannot and do not guarantee the cheapness of black labor power. This is ultimately accomplished by the state. Although white labor *may* be a factor in shaping the policies enforced by the state, it is only one among many others, including, of course, certain fractions of capital.

Leaving aside the question of what shapes state intervention into the economy for subsequent sections of the paper, let us now briefly consider the specific strategies designed to reproduce a system of cheap labor power, adopted and organized by the state. Harold Wolpe (1972) has demonstrated the existence of two distinct policies. The first, *segregation*, was legislatively implemented between 1903 and 1923 (Legassick, 1973) and aimed to preserve the precapitalist African economies in order to subsidize the capitalist wage economy. While single workers would migrate to towns for employment and receive a wage little above bare maintenance costs, their families would, in theory, remain behind in the reserves and there absorb many of the costs of renewing the labor force through subsistence agriculture and kinship networks. The state orches-

trated the separation of maintenance and renewal processes through taxation policies, pass laws, influx control, and so on, all designed to regulate the flow of African labor (Burawoy, 1976). As capitalism expanded after the First World War, the reserves rapidly disintegrated. Incapable of providing a subsistence existence except for a small minority, the populations in the reserves became increasingly dependent on earnings remitted from kinsfolk in the towns. After the Second World War, therefore, the basis of cheap labor power was transformed as the state extended and intensified repression at the same time as reconstituting the reserves as Bantustans—agencies of political control. The era of segregation gave way to the era of apartheid.

... Apartheid, including separate development, can best be understood as the mechanism specific to South Africa in the period of secondary industrialization, of maintaining a high rate of capitalist exploitation through a system which guarantees a cheap and controlled labour-force, under circumstances in which the conditions of reproduction (the redistributive African economy in the Reserves) of that labour-force is rapidly disintegrating. (Wolpe, 1972, p. 433. Emphasis in original.)

Thus what Bonacich regards as distinctive of South Africa in general is in fact only found in the era of segregation. Under apartheid, although "differentially incorporated" into the *political* order, Africans are fully integrated into the economic order. To regard the Bantustan as "precapitalist" is to make the same claim for the urban ghetto in the United States. Economically, the Bantustans serve as a pool of unemployed labor and a dumping ground for surplus and unwanted populations (Legassick and Innes, 1977; Legassick and Wolpe, 1976; Desmond, 1971). What is distinctive about apartheid is its mode of political repression, which is a product of the black population's total dependence on and incorporation within the South African capitalist economy: "[economic] integration and [political] segregation are two sides of the same coin, and the pass laws serve to maintain caste like differences within a common society" (Simons, 1956, p. 63).

However, Wolpe does not answer or pretend to answer how it is that the state continues to reproduce a system of cheap labor power. How is it that the state miraculously restructures itself in order to protect the interests of the capitalist class? These questions motivate the remainder of the paper. But first we must map the broad changes in the class structure of South Africa as they are rooted in the uneven development of different modes of production.

2. The Specificity of South African Development

Bonacich states her objective to be the explanation of the South African racial order (1981, pp. 239, 242, 249, 255, 270). Even were she right in her

characterization of that racial order, her methodological approach would make it difficult to explain. For the distinctiveness of a society cannot be understood by reference to what that society *shares* with other societies. Inasmuch as the split labor market is a universal phenomenon (Bonacich, 1981, pp. 242–243), organizing one's analysis around it at best takes as given and at worst washes out what is unique to a social order. Furthermore, uniqueness can only be established by relation to that which is different. But Bonacich fails to supply such comparative study. If, by implication, she is arguing that the specificity of South Africa lies in the strength of the white working class, then it is curious that the comparative data she offers points to the opposite conclusion (1981, pp. 251–252).

Instead of drawing on her knowledge of other countries, Bonacich reduces the history of South Africa to the emergence and "dynamics" of her three "classes"—cheap black labor, expensive white labor, and capital. But even then, such an awkward juxtaposition of incompatibles—a continuous unidimensional sociological concept of class based on income and a discontinuous relational Marxist concept of class (an unhappy marriage rather than a harmonious synthesis)—leads only to further mystification. An alternative approach is necessary.

The development of a class structure can be understood to emerge out of the historically specific manner in which determinate modes of production impinge upon one another. Thus the class structure that emerges as a result of capitalism in an advanced phase being grafted onto feudalism under the sponsorship of an absolutist state (prerevolutionary Russia) is very different from one that emerges as a product of capitalism developing alongside the dissolution of feudalism (Britain), which in turn is very different from the class structure that evolves when capitalism confronts only very weak precapitalist modes of production (United States). Moreover, it is one thing to begin industrialization in the twentieth century under the domination of already established advanced capitalism; it is quite another matter to be the first industrial nation. History never repeats itself and this is reflected in the diverse forms and development of class structures of different societies.

Class structures then are rooted in the modes of production that coexist within a given society. Such a combination of modes of production or a social formation, as it is called, develops in accordance with the interaction of two sets of struggles: first, among the dominant classes of different modes of production over the *transfer* of surplus between modes through flows of labor power, raw materials, manufactured goods, etc.; and second, between dominant and subordinate class within each mode of production over the *appropriation* of surplus. The state both shapes and is shaped by both types of struggles and the alliances to which they lead. In addition, it mediates the linkages of modes of production across social

formations. Here I can only briefly point to the fruitfulness of undertaking an analysis of South Africa's social formation as a means of highlighting the specificity of South Africa's development in a comparative framework.⁸

The precolonial modes of production, scattered through the area now called South Africa, were by no means either static or necessarily classless. Their articulation was shaped by trade and war. The colonization of the Cape in the middle of the seventeenth century by the Dutch led to the establishment of slavery, with slaves being drawn from the East Indies, Madagascar, and Mozambique. World trade stimulated the commercial production of wheat and wine (Legassick, 1974a). The British took the Cape in 1806 and extended commercial ties. The political subjugation of the Dutch settlers by the British led, as elsewhere, to the abolition of slavery. In response, the Boers trekked out of the Cape and after bitter wars with Africans subjugated the latter. Thus, in the Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and what was later to be the Transvaal, there emerged quasi-feudal relations of exploitation based on labor services and other forms of rent, while in the Cape, commercial agriculture turned to wage labor. Simultaneously, the extension of an exchange economy and the imposition of taxation stimulated the formation of an African peasantry. In Natal, the government was forced to import indentured labor from India for work on sugar plantations and other projects because Africans were wedded to independent agricultural production, often for the market. In short, throughout South Africa, precolonial modes of production underwent transformation: either they were subordinated to quasi-feudal and capitalist modes or they dissolved into peasant production for the market. Until 1870, then, the rhythm of development was set by the dominant forces of merchant capital sensitive to the requirements of British capitalism, organizing the export of agricultural produce and the import of goods manufactured in the metropolis.

The development of mining and the eventual domination of foreign monopoly capitalism cannot be simply attributed to the historically contingent discovery of diamonds and then gold. Although this was a necessary condition, the real impetus came from the dynamics of the British metropolitan economy: the use of gold as a medium of international exchange and the changing needs of capital accumulation in the era of imperialism, particularly the search for cheap raw materials (Mandel, 1975, chapters 2 and 6). Instigated as it was by the changing needs of metropolitan capital accumulation, the ascendancy of mining capital in South Africa did not occasion too much resistance from existing merchant capital. Nor, initially, was there too much resistance from the dominant classes of other modes of production, since mining provided new sources of income, new markets for agriculture, and spurred local manufacturing.

Within the African peasant mode of production, between the discovery of diamonds in 1870 and of gold in 1886, there was land accumulation for some and landlessness and proletarianization for others (Bundy, 1972, pp. 376–80). In the Ciskei, there were African farmers with tenants and wage laborers working the land while in the Transvaal, Africans were buying the land that had been appropriated from them. Afrikaner farmers responded to the new markets by extending and where possible intensifying the quasi-feudal modes of expropriation.

The expansion of gold mining and in particular the decision to develop low grade ores led to new demands for cheap labor power as well as cheap food (Bundy, 1972; Jeeves, 1975). The satisfaction of these contradictory requirements led to class struggles between mining capital and the landed classes organized by the Afrikaner state in the Transvaal. Simply put, Kruger's government was unwilling to legislate and largely unable to enforce the regulation of African labor as demanded by the mine owners, for this would have resulted in Afrikaner farmers losing access to their own supplies of cheap labor power. Instigated by Rhodes, representing imperial mining interests, the Jameson Raid of 1895 intimidated the Afrikaner government into making certain concessions to the Randlords, in particular the introduction of pass laws for Africans. But this only became the basis for further conflict between farmers and mine owners, finally breaking out in the Boer War, whose conclusion asserted the supremacy of the capitalist mode of production over the quasi-feudal agriculture and the African peasant production.

But the dominance of capitalism by no means spelt the downfall of precapitalist modes of production. To the contrary, the uniqueness of the period after the Boer War lies first in the restricted dissolution of the peasant mode and the supply of cheap African labor this afforded for capital (Legassick, 1973; Wolpe, 1972) and second in what this made possible, viz. the reproduction of a quasi-feudal agriculture. The existence of the system of labor tenancy on Afrikaner farms had been threatened on the one hand by African peasant production for the market and on the other hand by the drain of African tenants to the mines. The particular form of semiproletarianization of the African peasantry, as reflected in the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and Land Act of 1913, along with the complete proletarianization of Afrikaner peasants and squatters established the conditions for the reproduction of precapitalist agriculture alongside capitalist industry.

The emergence of the unique social formation which laid the basis for subsequent economic and political development of South Africa can only be understood as the outcome of class struggles objectified in and organized by the state. That is, the combined and uneven development of the three major modes of production is the product of political class struggles.

However, we must postpone the examination of the state until we have looked more carefully at the imperatives of capital accumulation in the mining industry. For once it gained supremacy over other modes of production, the history of South Africa has to be viewed from the standpoint of the expansion of capitalism, albeit an expansion shaped by the requirements of metropolitan capitalism on the one hand and precapitalist modes of production within South Africa on the other.

3. The Mining Industry

Part of Bonacich's argument rests on a conventional interpretation of a specific event in a single industry: the Rand Revolt of 1922, instigated by the mine owners' decision to revoke the status quo agreement regarding job reservation—an agreement it had made with white mine workers during the war in a period of expansion and shortage of skilled labor. Without doubt, in 1922 white labor entered into a violent confrontation with mining capital or rather its protective agent, the state, over the threatened use of African laborers to displace white laborers. Bonacich writes:

Capital's position in the conflict was unambiguous. They wanted to abolish the color bar (p. 254) At this stage, it is fairly clear where the impetus for restriction on full African participation in the capitalist sector was coming from. It was not, as Wolpe and Burawoy contend, an effort by capital to keep African labor cheap, but an effort by white labor to keep capital from displacing them with African cheap labor. Capital wanted to do away with the color bar; white labor fought to maintain it. (1981, p. 255)

In this section, I propose to show first that to generalize from this single event misses those periods in the history of the mining industry when it was "capital" that attempted to enforce the color bar against "white labor." Second, at no point has mining capital attempted to "abolish" the color bar, not even in 1922. Finally, the attempt to enlarge the scope of the color bar is by no means incompatible, as Bonacich implies, with the attempt to "keep African labor cheap." Indeed, the latter can only proceed on the assumption of the former. In the next section, I will show how, in fact, the enforcement of the color bar can only be understood through an examination of the changing relations of mining capital to other fractions of the dominant class and to the state.

The development of the gold mines was organized on the basis of a colonial labor process in which Africans were recruited into gangs supervised by a white boss. The expansion of the industry and the opening of deep level mines with large amounts of fixed capital did not upset this form of labor organization, although increasing numbers of skilled white workers were imported from Cornwall and Australia. Steeped in craft

traditions, these workers soon formed a union to protect themselves against competition, *not* from Africans but from the importation of cheap English labor (Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 53).

As indicated in the previous section, between 1895 and 1904 the mines faced a shortage of African labor at the same time that unskilled white workers were available in increasing numbers due to the war, rinderpest and proletarianization in the rural areas, the discharge of soldiers from the British army, and people who had come with the early gold rush (Davies, 1976a, p. 47). These unskilled white workers were not able to obtain permanent employment on the mines because their labor was too expensive and because they would disrupt the colonial labor process. But the higher price of white labor was not due to their greater militance or their access to political resources. For in these respects, at that time they differed little from African workers. Rather, as management well understood, the costs of reproduction of labor power and therefore minimum wages were far greater for white workers than for Africans with access to subsistence production in the rural areas (Davies, 1976a, pp. 45–56). Against considerable opposition from unskilled white workers who sought a white labor policy, the mines successfully imported indentured labor from China and enforced a color bar which gave Africans and Chinese a monopoly over unskilled jobs (Davies, 1976a, p. 58; Simons and Simons, 1969, pp. 79–83).

We can draw two conclusions from this period. First, skilled and supervisory white labor were satisfied with a caste solution, whereas unskilled white laborers were intent on promoting an exclusionary solution. Second, the enforcement of the color bar was a victory for the mine owners over the exclusionary policies of unskilled white labor. How it was accomplished will be briefly examined in the next section. Moreover, subsequently, mine management made every effort to maintain the color bar. However, unskilled whites were eventually employed to produce indigenous skilled white workers and supervisors and thereby avoid costly importation from abroad. But these unskilled workers “in training” were segregated from black workers and paid higher wages. Eventually a separate training center—the Wolhutter mine school—was established (Davies, 1976a, p. 64). In other words, mine management made no attempt to upset the organizing principle of the colonial labor process—the principle of the color bar, according to which no white worker is ever subjected to the authority of a black worker.

But if the mine owners were so intent on the retention of the color bar, what was behind the Rand Revolt? It was a struggle not over the abolition of the color bar but over its precise location, that is, over the scope of jobs that should be restricted to white and black respectively. Confirmation of this can be found in the action taken by mine management after their

defeat of white workers in 1922. To be sure, wages were cut and some white workers were replaced with black workers, but at no point was there an attempt to abolish the color bar, even after it was declared illegal in the Hildick-Smith judgement of 1923 (Johnstone, 1976, pp. 145–50).

Bonacich fails to appreciate management's interest in the color bar because she only sees the latter as a demarcation between expensive and cheap labor power and not as an organizing principle of the colonial labor process. Uncertainty and danger inherent in mining underground have given rise to two distinct ways of organizing work: either through a self-regulating, self-selecting work group or through a strict bureaucratic hierarchy deploying coercive sanctions. The first form of organization has been the most common and reflects in part an effectively organized working class. However, where there exists a colonized population stripped of formal power and subject to the arbitrary authority of colonizers, a militaristic pattern can be enforced. As Bozzoli (1977) has argued, the particular form of labor organization adopted in the South African gold mines was well adapted to the exigencies of a migrant labor force housed in the totalitarian conditions of the compound (see, also, van Onselen, 1976).

The efficiency of colonial despotism is in large part due to the few precautions taken to protect the lives of African miners. Since compensation for death or injury to Africans has been so insignificant, they become as “cheap in death as in life” and therefore poor training, coercive supervision, speed up, and so on can all proceed without being constrained by requirements of safety (Simons, 1961).

Mr. Fergusson, the exceptionally outspoken Inspector of Mines for Boksburg, made a revealing comparison between the division of labour on the gold mines and in English mines. Mining was something of a hereditary occupation in England, where a miner's son would help his father by doing work of a kind allocated to Africans on the Rand. The English took great care to secure and make safe the places where a lad was set to work, and at the same time to point out dangers to him. But in the gold mines, “the death of a Native is not looked upon by miners here as a very serious affair.” (Simons, 1961, p. 47)

Fergusson also suggests that the particularly cavalier attitude of the mining companies toward deaths as opposed to accidents may lie in the old adage that “dead men tell no tales.” “Certainly a live Kaffir who has been assaulted is in a position to do a great deal of harm on his return home by persuading his friends not to allow themselves to be recruited” (cited in Simons, 1961, p. 47). Finally, the adoption of a particular organizational pattern shapes the excavation of the mine and the technology used, with the result that it is difficult to transform the organization of work once it has been introduced (see Burawoy, 1982, part IV). There-

fore, after establishing the colonial labor process, the mining companies developed a vested interest not only in the preservation of the particular labor process but also the system of migrant labor and compounds, out of which colonial despotism emerged and upon which it now depended.

The color bar principle places constraints on the way the labor process can be changed to increase productivity. It is not possible to simply replace white workers with black workers, since virtually all white workers have some supervisory role as well as exercising some skill. The displacement of white workers must be preceded by a process of deskilling. Job dilution must precede job substitution. Both in an earlier strike by white mineworkers in 1907 (Davies, 1976a, p. 63) and in the Rand Revolt, the struggle was first over deskilling. After the Rand Revolt, management successfully expropriated skill through mechanization. Only with the introduction of the jack hammer, drill sharpening machines, and the corduroy process were white workers displaced by Africans (Johnstone, 1976, pp. 136-45).⁹

If deskilling generally brings to management both increased control over the labor process and a lower wage bill, in South Africa this was doubly so, because the unskilled are particularly powerless at the point of production and their labor power particularly cheap because of the system of migrant labor. However, powerlessness and cheapness cannot be taken as given but have to be reproduced. This is precisely why Johnstone (1976) insists on distinguishing between exploitation color bars, which are a form of domination of capital over black labor, and job color bars, which secure the domination of white labor power over black labor power. Exploitation color bars are those mechanisms which guarantee the particular powerlessness and cheapness of African labor. They include the Master and Servant Laws and the Pass Laws, which serve to enforce labor contracts, check desertions, and regulate the flow of black labor; a racially discriminatory franchise and nonrecognition of African trade unions; and such institutions as the compound, which coercively monitor the totality of a worker's life in the interests of capital. Job color bars, on the other hand, are mechanisms to prevent Africans from holding jobs "reserved" for whites. Thus, there emerged statutory job reservation, which barred Africans from skilled positions in many industries, and the "civilized" labor policies, which gave preferential treatment to unskilled white workers seeking employment in the public sector.

In focusing on job color bars and white class struggle, Bonacich all but ignores exploitation color bars and black class struggles. The resources devoted first to pushing an African peasantry off their land and into the reserves and second to the regulation of the flow of African labor between the reserves and the towns reflect the resistance to such state intervention, just as the totalitarianism of the mine compound is an expression of

the virulent struggles against colonial despotism. Sparked by a strike of white miners in 1913, Africans began to adopt an increasingly militant stance toward the companies, culminating in February 1920 in a strike by 71,000 which paralyzed the industry, only to be brutally repressed by the state (Johnstone, 1976, pp. 168-84). Moreover, Africans were struggling against working conditions, low wages, and the panoply of regulations that constitute exploitation color bars. As demonstrated by their passive role in the Rand Revolt and their submissions to the Native Grievances Inquiry, the vast majority of African workers were not concerned with job color bars (Johnstone, 1976, pp. 184-200). Finally, as must now be clear, job color bars, far from being opposed to exploitation color bars, as Bonacich's false opposition of split labor market theory and "neo-Marxism" would imply, are dependent on the existence of exploitation color bars.

Even when looked at by themselves, the struggles in the mining industry cannot be reduced to Bonacich's simplistic dynamics of a split labor market. In any event, no understanding of the organization and outcome of those struggles, let alone the emergence of South Africa's racial order, can be reached either through isolating mining capital from the state and the broader class structure or through pretending that South African society is just the mining industry writ large. We can postpone these issues no longer.

4. Race, Class, and the State: 1903-1923

The Boer War (1899-1902) ended with the installation of a British administration under Milner in the Transvaal. It actively supported the interests of mining capital, particularly in the recruitment of African labor (Jeeves, 1975). In 1903, however, new color bar legislation was introduced: "The discriminations were imposed by an all-powerful British administration, without public pressure, stated reason, or comment by trade unions, mine management and the legislative council" (Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 78). Although job color bars did protect the interests of white mineworkers, at this time they were in no position to enforce their interests against those of the mine owners. Under the circumstances, the impetus for job color bars could only have come from the mine owners. The new regulations bear eloquent testimony to the thesis that under the conditions created by a particular form of reproduction of *labor power*, namely the system of migrant labor, the most profitable form of *labor process* is based on the job color bar, which guarantees the arbitrary and uninhibited power of supervisor over supervisee.

In promoting the interests of mining capital, the Milner administration inevitably courted the opposition of Afrikaner landed classes, African

labor, and skilled and unskilled white labor. In the elections for "responsible government" in 1907, the party of the mine owners, the Progressive Party, was heavily defeated by the Het Volk, the party of the Afrikaner land owners who were also supported by white labor, and the Nationalist Party, which represented the interests of British manufacturers. The coalition of white labor and land owners was forged out of their common interest in a white labor policy: the one seeking to avoid competition with the mines for cheap African labor power and the other seeking to avoid competition with cheap African labor power for jobs in the mines. Why, then, did the Het Volk not begin to introduce a white labor policy when it took office? Davies writes:

Underlying these surface appearances [of bribery, flattery and all the other paraphernalia by which hegemonic fractions control reigning classes] however was a recognition by the mining capitalists that the realization of the class interests of the more backward agricultural and manufacturing fractions were to a large extent dependent upon the market created by the mining industry, and that they did not therefore wish to impair future inflows of capital. (Davies, 1976a, p. 60)

Indeed, it is a defining feature of a capitalist social formation that the satisfaction of the interests of subordinate classes, not least the working class, depends on the realization of profit, and therefore on the *prior* satisfaction of the interests of the capitalist class. Therefore, in protecting the general conditions of capitalist accumulation, the state can and does claim that it is protecting the interests of all other classes.¹⁰ This, indeed, is the material basis of a capitalist hegemonic ideology (Przeworski, 1979). In this particular instance, the armed might of imperialism, which had only recently vacated the battlefield, was an additional deterrent against upsetting the mine owners with threats of a white labor policy.

If white labor could not exclude cheap African labor, could it foist a policy of partial exclusion on the capitalist class, as Bonacich claims it did? The policy of incomplete proletarianization or segregation, as it is normally called, was largely shaped between the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the installation of the Pact Government in 1924. Although the Labour Party advocated "total segregation" (Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 130; Legassick, 1973, p. 6), it had little influence over the liberals who shaped the legislation.

Doubtless pressures from Labour and Nationalist Parties exerted some influence on the elaboration of South African Party policy during this time, but the policy had been formulated by South African Native Affairs Commission [1903-5] when neither Afrikaners nor Labour were a significant political force. (Legassick, 1973, p. 9)

In short, Legassick concludes that the policy of segregation was "a specific and self-conscious attempt to formulate a 'native policy'

appropriate to conditions of capitalist economic growth" (Legassick, 1973, p. 1).

If Bonacich wanted to demonstrate that it was the struggles of the white working class that "prevented the full absorption of the African population into the capitalist sector," then clearly she must carefully examine the period 1903 to 1923. For example, she would have to study the role of the white working class in the shaping of the critical 1913 Land Act, which confined African occupancy rights to 8 percent of the country's area. Not only does Bonacich offer no analysis of the period, but she does not make a single reference to the 1913 Land Act, the center piece of segregation legislation. Instead, but perhaps not surprisingly, she concentrates on the period after 1923, when the white working class appears to possess more power. Yet it is in this later period that Africans become fully proletarianized and absorbed into the "capitalist sector." Only by supreme confidence in clauseology can Bonacich link the exclusion of Africans to white working-class struggles. In the real world, the extent of economic exclusion of Africans was greatest when white workers were weakest, while exclusion broke down as white workers became stronger. The correlation of forces is precisely the opposite of the one postulated by Bonacich, as we shall see from the analysis of the period after 1923.

5. Race, Class, and the State: The Pact Government

The Het Volk Government in the pre-Union Transvaal prefigured the Pact Government that took office in 1924. Its electoral base lay in a coalition of white labor smarting from the defeat of the Rand Revolt and fearing the influx of African labor and Afrikaner landed interests struggling against the domination of mining capital. Bonacich follows the conventional view that the Pact Government used state power to benefit the white working class:

[They] passed a series of laws to protect white labor. They created a Department of Labour, which still exists, whose function was to "cater to the labour demands of whites and to protect them from 'unfair competition' with blacks." Pact government race enactments included a "civilized labor" policy which attempted to solve the poor white problem by substituting them for blacks in state-run enterprises, such as railroads, at "civilized rates of pay."¹¹ (1981, pp. 254-255)

Johnstone expresses a similar view:

The State, which in 1922 had served as the instrument for the repression of white workers, was now in the hands of their representatives, and implementing a protectionist policy for them, reinforcing and extending the employment colour bars, to protect skilled and unskilled white workers from the negative effects of the exploitation colour bars of the employers on their conditions and prospects of employment. (Johnstone, 1976, p. 167)

Behind these interpretations lies the assumption that the state is an instrument wielded by a government in accordance with the narrow interests of its electoral constituency. The crucial *constraints* under which a ruling party conducts the "affairs of state," its *capacity* to enact policies, and correlatively the autonomy of the state with respect to the ruling party and the classes it represents are therefore deemphasized and left unexamined. Undoubtedly, during this period, concessions were made to the white working class, but to focus on these alone would distort the character of a government which legislated the regulation of both white and black class struggle and which effectively dampened white class consciousness. As far as white workers were concerned, the Industrial Conciliation Act and the formation of Industrial Councils led to collective bargaining, compulsory arbitration, and statutory restrictions on strikes (Simons and Simons, 1969, pp. 328–32; Davies and Lewis, 1976). Under the Pact Government, white wages never reached their pre-1922 levels (Davies et al., 1976, pp. 10–12). With regard to white mine workers, the Pact Government "failed to enforce the favourable de Villiers wage award in 1926/7, and it failed to implement such fundamental aspects of Labour Party policy as their election pledge to prohibit the importation of *foreign* African labour for the mines" (Davies, 1976b, p. 130). Inevitably, the Labour Party split over its participation in a government which successfully undermined the independence of trade unions and introduced antilabor legislation. As Simons and Simons (1969, chapter 15) recount, the fate of the Labour Party was sealed. In the 1929 elections, it won only 8 seats to the South Africa Party's 61 and the Nationalist Party's 78 seats.

The civilized labor policy differed from the protectionism of craft unionism in that here the split labor market was explicitly created by the state. While it did provide jobs for white workers, it also *preempted* the intensification of class struggles. Less a product of the struggles of white labor to protect itself from being undercut by African labor, the civilized labor policy was a response to incipient tendencies toward working class solidarity across racial lines.

The urban poor white was nonetheless a potential recruit for a radical non-racial class movement. The Nationalists recognized the threat to white solidarity. Subsidized employment on public works would isolate him from the dark-skinned labourers and give him a stake in the perpetuation of colour-class discrimination. (Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 306)

There are at least two reasons why during this particular period struggles uniting black and white workers were more likely than before or indeed subsequently. In the first place, commercialization and capitalization of agriculture on the one hand and the erosion of the reserves on the other

forced white and black alike to join the ranks of the unemployed. Second, deskilling of the labor process, although fiercely resisted, nevertheless pushed white workers into positions already occupied by Africans. Their common position in the labor process encouraged them to seek common cause and combine against employers. (See, for example, Roux, 1964, pp. 257, 272–74; Simons and Simons, 1969, pp. 381–85, 400, 445, 456; Lewis, 1979a.)

The response of the state was shaped by its colonial structure: it combined the civilized labor policy with intensified repression. The Native Administration Act of 1927, which made it a crime "to act with intent to promote any feeling of hostility between Natives and Europeans" (cited in Simons and Simons, 1969, p. 346), was effectively deployed against Whites and Blacks alike who attempted or proposed inter-racial cooperation. The same act established the new role for the reserves; from the mainstay of the system of migrant labor, they became the basis for a system of indirect rule which recreated tribal institutions. In short, concessions, insofar as there were any, went hand in glove with intensified repression.

The Pact Government upheld the capitalist order and, in particular, the interests of mining capital as its first priority because it accepted the rules of that order, namely that the interests of subordinate classes can only be satisfied *after* the satisfaction of the interests of the capitalist class. However, the Pact Government not only protected the interests of the capitalist class but it did so more effectively than its predecessor, the South African Party. It was in a better position to organize the hegemony of capital, that is, present the interests of the capitalist class as the present and future interests of all, simply because it was not the party of capital.

All ruling parties, insofar as they do not directly dismantle the capitalist state, are prisoners of its logic which, among other things, operates to disorganize the working classes and constitute the unity of the dominant classes. At the same time, within definite constraints, a ruling party does choose the policies it legislates and implements. Moreover, these choices are not without significance. Thus a party of the capitalist class, or of a segment of that class, such as the South African Party or the Milner Administration, will jeopardize the hegemony of capital by a preoccupation with narrow economic interests, whereas a party of landowners and laborers, such as the Het Volk or the Pact Government, will extend certain limited concessions to subordinate classes without "touching the essential" interests of capital. By passing the color bar legislation in the face of opposition from the South African Party, the Pact Government entrenched the hegemony of capital, the view that a capitalist order is not incompatible with the realization of the "interests" of all white classes. Indeed, as Gramsci (1971, pp. 83, 115, 155–56) has argued, the very

absence of a party of capital from the political arena and not just from power gives the *appearance* of a state independent of the capitalist class, at the same time allowing that class to maintain political equilibrium by shifting its support from one party to another.

If the period of the Pact Government is a continuation of capitalist hegemony through more effective means, then it certainly does not constitute the break in South African history that liberal historians have attributed to it. Davies et al. (1976) have suggested that the period should be characterized by a shift of hegemony *within* the dominant classes, rather than the conventional interpretation of a shift in the balance of power between the dominant and subordinate classes. David Kaplan (1976) comes to the former conclusion after examining the struggles over industrial protection. Before 1924, the ruling South African Party, dominated by mining and mercantile interests, had opposed protection to local industry in the name of free trade. The Customs Tariff Act of 1925 provided a "rebate system whereby the capital goods and 'special requirements' of agriculture and industry bore either no duty at all or a very low revenue duty" (Kaplan, 1976, p. 76). Its passage through Parliament signalled a new era. It was opposed by the mining industry because it was bound to push up labor costs and by commercial capital because it tampered with imperial preference arrangements and upset "free trade." On the other side, agriculture was prepared to support the tariff if manufacturing industry would support protection for agricultural produce. As constituent segments of national capital, they were both in a position to gain at the expense of international capital.¹² In other words, the passing of protective legislation, starting with the 1925 Customs Tariff Act, marked a changed relationship between national and international capital within the power bloc formed by the dominant classes.

Kaplan does not explain why hegemony within the power bloc should have been transferred to national capital precisely during this period. Was it the election of the Pact Government to power? Clearly within certain limits that must have been important, but perhaps more crucial were changes in the class structure of South Africa and in the dynamics of international capitalism. The growth of local manufacture during World War One (Bozzoli, 1974); the transition to capitalist relations of production in agriculture (Morris, 1976); the continuing displacement of landless Afrikaners and the disintegration of the reserves; deskilling and mechanization within the labor process (Lewis, 1979a); and the changing requirements of imperial capital (Bozzoli, 1974, p. 209)—all these factors contributed to the installation of the Pact Government, to the enactment of certain policies and finally to changes in the structure of the state itself.

Kaplan's study also sheds new light on the civilized labor policy, which has usually been presented as the reason for protection. That is, liberal

historians and political leaders claimed that industrial protection was legislated to protect white workers, although the primary beneficiaries were agricultural and manufacturing capital. In theory, qualification for protection depended on the maintenance of "satisfactory labor conditions," but this stipulation was rarely enforced. The ratio of white to black workers in manufacturing industries barely changed between 1924 and 1938 (Kaplan, 1976, p. 89). Even in the state iron and steel industry, the government extensively employed cheap African labor: "Cost considerations, the obvious importance of cheap steel for industrial development, prevailed over the need to keep in employment so-called 'civilized labor'" (Kaplan, 1976, p. 90). Behind the civilized labor policy and the color bar act stood the stark realities of the Pact Government. It was during its term in office that the basis was laid for the development of a peripheral capitalism through the expansion of national capital and the repression, in differing degrees and ways, of all segments of the working class.

6. Sociology as Ideology

In the last section, the state emerged at the center of analysis and we examined the constraints preventing a ruling party from enacting the electoral demands of the majority of its constituency. Armed with this theoretical framework, we are now in a position to consider Bonacich's treatment of the post-1948 period. As before, she argues that apartheid is "... the product of class struggles within the white group, with capital urging the full absorption of Africans into the labor force, and white labor urging their exclusion" (p. 270). The retention of the (job) color bar and the policy of separate development, which proposes to make all Africans, with few exceptions, citizens of one or other of the Bantustans, indicate to Bonacich white labor's success in foisting the racial order of apartheid onto an unwilling capitalist class. What evidence does she bring to bear to support her theory?

Opposition to the color bar from capitalists is demonstrated by attitude surveys among the "power elite" (Bonacich, 1981, pp. 262–263); capital's support for opposition parties, in particular the United Party and the Progressive Party (while they existed) (pp. 263–264); complaints by capitalists that migrant labor is inefficient and efforts by international capital to upgrade its African employees (pp. 264–265); and finally, capital's perceptions of the instability of apartheid—"a powder keg that could explode at any moment" (pp. 265–266). Leaving aside her tendency to regard job color bars, exploitation color bars, etc., all of a piece and her arbitrary traversing back and forth across the last thirty years, Bonacich does offer considerable evidence of opposition to apartheid from members of the capitalist class. But, first, of what does this opposition consist?

Are individual capitalists opposed to the principle of the "industrial color bar" or, as is more likely, do they merely wish to deploy it more flexibly, dividing black and white as they see fit? Second, methodological problems prevent her from understanding the interests of the capitalist *class* and therefore the role of the state. Class interests cannot be derived from mere statistical aggregation of the attitudes, complaints, and actions of anonymous individual capitalists. She does not even break down her sample of entrepreneurs by industrial sectors. Third, by presenting her results as though they were endowed with universal truth, Bonacich inevitably ignores the specificity of the social, economic, and political context which lends them partial validity. She presents the results as confirmation of her theory rather than the products of a particular historical conjuncture—the era of apartheid. In the next section, we will examine the distinctive features of the postwar period.

Even more problematical are the evidence and arguments Bonacich offers to substantiate the role of white labor in shaping the racial order. Briefly, she argues that through its representative, the ruling Nationalist Party, the struggles of white labor led to the policy of separate development, the entrenchment of the industrial color bar, and the reconsolidation of the system of migrant labor. The apartheid state becomes a workers' state, a means of "fostering the interests of poor whites in opposition to capital" (Bonacich, 1981, p. 257). "Apartheid is aimed not so much at the African population as at the capitalist *class* (my emphasis), whose power and 'natural' tendencies white labor fears most" (p. 262). Such a provocative conclusion can only be sustained by four sets of assumptions: first, that the Nationalist Party "represents, on the whole, the interests of the least affluent whites" (p. 256); second, that the least affluent whites are also "white labor"; third, that a governing party has the capacity and interest to turn the narrow concerns of its electoral constituency into policies of the state; fourth, that the state is only responsive to struggles between "white labor and capital." We shall consider each in turn.

Bonacich claims that the Nationalist Party represents the interests of the lower classes for two reasons: first, the overwhelming proportion of its voters come from these strata, and second, it receives greater support from these strata than any other party (p. 257). Presumably, then, any ruling party, by virtue of securing more than half the lower-class vote, represents the interests of the lower classes. Such a collection of parties would indeed contain some strange bed fellows. While its most numerous constituency may be the "least affluent whites," its most powerful constituencies are agricultural capital, Afrikaner manufacturing, and financial capital. What these miss in numbers they make up for in economic resources.

To say that the Nationalist Party represents the interests of the least affluent whites is one thing; to say that it represents "white labor" may be quite another. It depends on the meaning of "labor" or "class," about which Bonacich is particularly vague. Within the space of four pages, she switches between "wage earners" (p. 256), "skilled, unskilled, and service workers" (p. 257), "least affluent whites" (p. 256), "poorer whites" (p. 257), "lower class" (p. 257), "white working class" (p. 258), and "white labor" (p. 258). Are these different names for the same group? Does "working class" refer to all wage earners or does class identification also hinge on location in the labor process? (See, for example, Poulantzas, 1975; Wright, 1976; Carchedi, 1975.) If one excludes technicians, artisans, and foremen, then "white labor" constitutes less than 14 percent of white industrial employees in 1955, while "black labor" would then be over 95 percent of black industrial employees (Simson, 1974, p. 200). Wolpe (1976, p. 230) cites figures which show that the proportion of employed white workers defined as unskilled has declined from 21.8 percent in 1936 to 4.2 percent in 1960 and 3.3 percent in 1970. This suggests an increasing polarization of black and white employees based on class position within the labor process. In obfuscating the meaning of "white labor," Bonacich not only conceals the disparate and often contradictory interests within the Nationalist Party vote but also the potentiality, or absence thereof, for inter-racial class solidarity.¹³

Even granting that the "Nationalist Party has a strong working class, especially Afrikaner working class constituency," it is not entirely correct to continue, "whose interest it must heed to remain in office" (Bonacich, 1981, p. 258). Rather, it must *appear* to heed those interests better than any other party. Indeed, the Nationalist Party's leaders have accomplished this task so effectively that Bonacich herself is prepared to swallow their public proclamations. Citing such celebrated propagandists of separate development as Connie Mulder (Bonacich, 1981, 259), she mistakes the rhetoric of white exclusivism for the substance of government policy.¹⁴

The purpose [of Apartheid] is not simply a ruse to maintain white political control of the territory, nor an effort to keep African labor cheap by preserving the migrant labor system. The purpose is exclusion. (Bonacich, 1981, p. 259)

In turning the self-conception of the Nationalist Party leaders into an interpretation of South African society, Bonacich inevitably magnifies the autonomy of that party, in particular its capacity to wield the state on behalf of the working class against the capitalist class. Such a mechanistic view of policy making misses the constraints a capitalist state imposes on any ruling party. As I argued in the last section, short of dismantling the state apparatuses, a ruling party can influence policy outcomes only within

limits defined on the one side by the state's own internal logic and on the other by its dependence on the realization of profit.

Even within the arena of alternative strategies, Bonacich's scheme is fundamentally faulted by restricting the relevant actors to "capital" and "white labor." Nor can these economic actors be mechanically shunted into the political arena. I have already suggested the importance of distinguishing among different segments of capital, strata of the working class, and other white "classes" such as the petty bourgeoisie and semi-autonomous employees (Wright, 1976). But above all, the diverse array of African (not to mention Coloured and Indian) classes cannot be peremptorily dismissed.

This paper has ignored the role of African resistance movements, nor shall I deal with the topic here except to suggest that the African struggle for liberation in South Africa has been shaped by the white class struggle. (Bonacich, 1981, p. 269)

While members of the Nationalist Party, and indeed virtually all white South Africans and doubtless some Africans, would like to believe that Africans are powerless to shape the destiny of South Africa, every nook and cranny of daily life is a living refutation of such a thesis. The apartheid state, and perhaps this is missed because it is so obvious, is the tragic and terrifying monument to two centuries of African resistance. It is the cumulative effect of *both* white and black class struggles. To ignore one is to misunderstand the other.

What lies behind Bonacich's errors is as significant as the errors themselves. What is at stake is a particular conception of political power, which Bonacich elsewhere defines as "the benefits to a group of organizing" (1972, p. 550). Moreover, from her own usage, organizations have to be "official." Because Africans do not vote, do not have recognized trade unions or political parties, they cannot have any significant impact on policy making and the formation of a racial order. White workers, on the other hand, do have access to these means of organizing and therefore pose as a significant political force (1981, pp. 245, 247, 248-249). *By first distinguishing between those who do have "power," whites, and those who do not, Africans, she can then justifiably ignore the latter and concentrate on struggles within the former, between capital and labor.* This is the kernel within the husk of the split labor market theory. The fallacies revolve around her notion of power. First, it considers as "political" only struggles conducted on the parliamentary terrain or through trade unions. The uprising in Soweto and the labor strikes that followed were not led by "official" organizations, yet they have shaped the trajectory of the South African racial order. If African resistance is so unimportant, how is it that South Africa appears to be such a "powder keg" (1981,

p. 266)? Second, if political power rests on organization, from where does the "might of capital" (1981, pp. 247, 268) come, since the capitalist class has either a weak or no party at all and its various associations are rarely very strong?

The answer, of course, is to be found in Bonacich's absent concept, the state, which is the organized power of the capitalist class. But, under normal conditions, the function of the state is to ensure the reproduction of the relations between capital and labor. In a capitalist society, therefore, the essential meaning of power is the exclusion of workers from the means of production and the compulsion to sell their labor power for a wage. Accordingly, black and white "labor" find themselves in essentially the same powerless position, but they experience that powerlessness differently. Thus working-class struggles are mediated by the state, so that blacks tend to experience their consequences as intensified repression to guarantee cheap labor power, while whites might win certain material concessions and protectionist policies to assist the reproduction of the domination of capital in the labor process.

The untenable conclusions which Bonacich draws stem from her resource model of power, which first distinguishes between races and then examines class divisions within the dominant race. Adopting a more realistic approach to power involves taking class relations as a *point of departure* for the study of race relations. Of course, this does *not* mean that we ignore either, but it does mean that we study racial antagonism within the context of capitalist relations of production, or more specifically within the context of a particular social formation and the corresponding state.

7. The Rise of the Apartheid State

As "the executive committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," the capitalist state must be in a position to act against the narrow economic interests of individual capitals, segments of capital, and even the class as a whole. It must use this autonomy to present itself as a neutral arbiter among classes, to present the interests of the capitalist class as the interests of all by granting material concessions to some or all subordinate classes, and to guarantee the general economic conditions of accumulation that individual capitalists cannot provide.

It is one thing to refer to the necessity of autonomy, it is quite another to explain its existence and to locate its source. The *actual* autonomy resides in the institutions of the state, such as the legal system, which have a coherence and logic of their own that cannot be changed at will. The *apparent* autonomy of the state emerges from the social relations its apparatuses on the one hand conceal (relations of production) and on the

other hand create (relations between races, among citizens, etc.). But how are the actual and apparent autonomy tailored to the specific requirements of capitalism and its survival? The autonomy of the state is *restricted* by its dependence on the realization of profit before it can accomplish any of its other tasks. In short, autonomy in its structure and dependence on its resources combine to define the constraints within which a ruling party has room to maneuver without jeopardizing the capitalist order. This arena of maneuver contracts and expands according to the historical conjuncture.

Since the fall of the Pact Government, the dynamics of the South African state had been leading in contradictory directions: the intensification and relaxation of the differential political incorporation of races. The ambiguity inscribed in the state was compounded by a corresponding ambiguity over the economic imperatives of capitalist development to intensify or relax job and exploitation color bars. Therefore, this period is particularly significant for the mobilization of class forces within an expanded arena of political maneuver. I propose to show that both the origin and eventual resolution of the indeterminacy were profoundly influenced by the struggles of an alliance of African classes.

The 1946 strike by 76,000 African mine workers (not even mentioned by Bonacich) was the biggest strike in South Africa's history, paralyzing more mines than the Rand Revolt. The militance it reflected was a major impetus behind the transition from segregation to apartheid. Following an important study by O'Meara (1975), I shall use the strike to throw into relief the changing class forces at work in South Africa, since the defeat of the white mine workers in the Rand Revolt. During this period between the two major strikes, the social formation had undergone a transformation. The capitalist mode of production, dominant over precapitalist modes in 1922, had all but dissolved them by 1946. Within the capitalist mode of production, rapid economic expansion was led by manufacturing industry and subsidized by gold mining (Trapido, 1971, pp. 315-16). By 1946, manufacturing had overtaken both mining and agriculture in its contribution to national income. The urban black population tripled as the demand for unskilled and semiskilled labor increased and as reserves became incapable of providing for its population. Impoverishment in the reserves was compounded by near stagnancy in African wages, prompting the emerging African trade unions to take increasingly militant action. During the Second World War, strikes by Africans did in fact win wage increases in private industry averaging over 50 percent. O'Meara (1975, p. 153) calculates that by 1946, despite repressive measures, over 40 percent of Africans employed in commerce or private industry were unionized.

Conditions in the mining industry, however, were different. There, short term contracts and subjugation to the totalitarian compound control

obstructed the organization of trade unions until 1942, and then only under extremely adverse circumstances. Yet precisely because the labor force was entirely migrant, and therefore particularly sensitive to the deterioration of the reserves, its militancy was less easily contained. It erupted in the 1946 strike which followed the failure of the mining companies to implement the modest wage increases recommended by the Lansdowne Commission.

For O'Meara, the strike expresses an emerging alliance between the African proletariat and a number of other groups, which he hastily categorizes as petty bourgeois, including chiefs and other traditional authorities, teachers and other professionals, skilled workers, clerks, ministers of religion, foremen, traders, and small businessmen.¹⁵ What had previously distinguished the political activities of the "petty bourgeois" elements and their organizational expression, the African National Congress, was their objective: breaching the job color bar and making their way into the preserves of white society. Their struggles revolved around appeals to the South African and British governments for concessions in the name of justice and democracy. According to O'Meara, the year 1936, when the nonracial franchise in the Cape was finally abolished, it marked a decisive turning point, after which the ANC fought against the root cause of their oppression—the exploitation color bars that made black labor power cheap labor power. The emerging alliance was reflected in the indispensable role played by the Native Mines Clerk Association in the organization of the 1946 strike.

The divisions within the white population reflected interests in different strategies to contain and disrupt the growing strength of the African nationalist alliance. It is possible to abstract out of the struggles that were taking place on an ideological terrain two distinct positions. The one proposed a movement towards stabilization of an African urban population, while the other proposed to treat Africans as merely temporary sojourners with labor power to sell but whose true homes were in the reserves. (For a more extensive and careful treatment of the two positions, see Legassick, 1974b.)

Apart from Africans themselves, the major force behind stabilization, trade union recognition and, if necessary, wage increases came from manufacturing capital and its liberal exponents. The interests of manufacture were shaped by the need to realize profits through expanding the domestic market, the difficulty in obtaining African labor in the absence of a monopsonistic recruitment agency, and the mechanization and deskilling of the labor process. Ranged against them, according to O'Meara, was the mining industry, which relied exclusively on migrant labor drawn increasingly from outside South Africa. Its entire organizational structure was based on compound control over single workers and the job color

bar.¹⁶ The United Party was caught between the interests of these two fractions of capital and split.

By contrast, the Afrikaner Nationalist Party had built a strong class alliance behind the extension of the job and exploitation color bars. As the manufacturing sector expanded and its labor process underwent deskilling and mechanization, so Afrikaners, who had entered the labor force on the wave of secondary industrialization, were particularly threatened by cheap African labor now organized into trade unions, while at the same time they were denied access to the protectionism of the established British-led craft unions. They were a captive constituency for Afrikaner nationalism, which played on fear of black labor and foreign exploiters (O'Meara, 1978; Simons and Simons, 1969, chapter 22).

The platform of a white labor policy dovetailed well with the interests of agriculture. Morris (1976) shows how capitalist relations of production had penetrated most of South African agriculture by the 1920s, although it was still largely based on a system of labor tenancy. African families would enter into a labor service agreement with farmers in return for possession of plots of land which they could cultivate and graze their cattle on. They frequently also received wages in kind. Such a backward form of capitalist agriculture could not compete in world markets. During the 1930s and '40s, farmers attempted to avert profitability crises by reducing wages and the amount of land held by tenants, who in turn responded by sending males to town in search of supplementary wages. Not only did this produce a labor shortage in the rural areas but farmers complained that they were subsidizing industry, in particular the mining industry, by allowing the migrant laborer's family to fend for itself. If agriculture was to become more efficient, the system of labor tenancy would have to be replaced by wage labor and this depended on access to cheap African labor power. Through its proposal for labor bureaus in the rural areas, which would grant farmers priority in drawing from the stream of labor migrating from the reserves, the Nationalist Party managed to combine the protection of white labor with the satisfaction of the needs of agriculture.

But the driving force and architects behind Afrikaner nationalism were what O'Meara (1977; 1978) refers to as the petty bourgeoisie: professionals, civil servants, self-employed, and small capitalists. By organizing Afrikaner workers into nationalist trade unions which would eschew class struggle and finance Afrikaner capital, the petty bourgeois elements aimed to break the domination of English capital and the monopoly of English craft unionism. Moreover, as Bozzoli (1977) intriguingly suggests, a policy of cheap African labor power was crucial to the survival and expansion of Afrikaner capital: "To allow the proposed 'liberal' policies (of dominant English manufacturing capital) to be implemented would be to

guarantee that Afrikaner capital never got off the ground" (Bozzoli, 1977, p. 45).

It was, of course, this Afrikaner nationalist alliance which managed to achieve sufficient popular support from white South Africans to place the Nationalist Party in power in 1948. However, this victory was not simply the outcome of "class struggle within the white group, with capital urging the full absorption of Africans into the labor force and white labor urging their exclusion" (Bonacich, 1981, p. 270). As we have seen, this is much too simple a view. First, for all intents and purposes, Africans were already fully absorbed into the labor force by 1948. Second, "capital" and "white labor" were each internally divided over the appropriate strategies to adopt toward African labor. It is, therefore, necessary to consider at least the different interests of the agricultural, manufacturing, and mining segments of the capitalist class and of skilled and unskilled workers. Third, other white groups were crucially involved in forging the rise of apartheid, in particular the "true" petty bourgeoisie (self-employed) and those in contradictory class locations (Wright, 1976): the small capitalists, the semi-autonomous employees (professionals, civil servants, etc.), and supervisory and managerial personnel. Fourth, the material basis for the emerging Afrikaner nationalist alliance lay in the changes of the social formation as a whole, in particular changes in the balance of forces between the different fractions of capital and in the labor process. Fifth, these economic changes were at the source of intensified African class struggles. These in turn defined the ideological terrain of white political struggles and alliances within and between classes. Finally, we have seen how political struggles are no mechanical reflex of economic changes but are decisively shaped by the state. The structure of the state increasingly organized class struggles as struggles between races over exploitation color bars, in ways that guaranteed the political interests of the capitalist class, that is, its interests in the survival of capitalism. Yet, in shaping struggles, the state is also the object of struggles and as such changes its form, as will be anticipated in the next part.

III

The political history of South Africa betrays a curious pattern. A ruling party, which presents itself as the representative of the capitalist class or a segment thereof, threatens the hegemony of that class and is pushed out of office by a white nationalist alliance rooted in the common interests of landed and laboring classes. On taking power the nationalist alliance—Het Volk or Pact Government—finds itself not merely protecting but advancing the interests of the capitalist class through the regulation of the economy (the regulation of relations among capitalists) and the organiza-

tion of class struggles by a combination of repression and concession. The nationalist alliance then gives way to the return of the party of capital and the cycle repeats itself. Presumably, if our theory of the autonomy of the state and its dependence on profit is anything to go by, then this pattern must repeat itself for the Nationalist Party which took office in 1948.

1. The Fragmentation of the White Nationalist Alliance

Like the Het Volk and Pact Governments, the Nationalist government has indeed carried out policies which have guaranteed the interests of the different fractions of the capitalist class through a combination of intensified repression and minimal concession. Indeed, the very success of this policy has led to the erosion of the material basis of the Nationalist alliance.

In a world order dominated by the uneven development of capitalism, the driving force behind nationalism has been an emergent bourgeoisie mobilizing what was often the only resource at its disposal—the people—in a struggle against metropolitan bourgeoisies (Nairn, 1977). Afrikaner nationalism fits this pattern well. Since 1948, the Nationalist Party has used its electoral support to consolidate its position of political power. It has thereby assisted the liberation of Afrikaner capital from the domination of British capital in three ways. First, a panoply of import controls, financial inducements, and direct investment in parastatal organizations has established a firm foundation for Afrikaner capital (Seidman and Seidman, 1977, chapter 4; Trapido, 1970; Weiss, 1975). Second, particularly after the Sharpsville killings of 1960, the government systematically set about intensifying exploitation color bars while at the same time conniving in the relaxation of job color bars (what became known as the “floating color bar”), in order to facilitate the accumulation of domestic capital (First et al., 1972, chapters 3 and 4). Third, as both a cause and consequence of the rapid economic growth of the South African economy in the 1960s, massive inflows of foreign investment increasingly interpenetrated with Afrikaner capital (First et al., 1972; Innes, 1975).

Once established, however, the Afrikaner bourgeoisie found itself pursuing policies in opposition to the Afrikaner workers, petty bourgeoisie, civil servants, and so on. During the late 1960s, the emergent class conflict within Afrikanerdom found its expression in the “verligte” and “verkrampste” tendencies. The latter represented the interests of Whites threatened directly by competition from Africans and determined to consolidate their position through racial exclusion, while the verligtes were attempting to adopt a more flexible approach to apartheid in tune with the interests of capital. Not concerned to make any fundamental change, the verligte faction sought to polish the image of South Africa in order to

attract more foreign investment and expand markets for goods manufactured in South Africa. The outward-looking policy of first dialogue and then detente with Black Africa was pursued by the Vorster regime to construct an economic basis for the expansion of South African capitalism.

The verligte tendency could be held in abeyance only so long as the economy was buoyant. The effects of the worldwide recession that began in 1974 were only partly mitigated by the price of gold. The inflow of foreign investment slackened. Capital's assault on the strictures of apartheid developed both on an individual or economic basis and on a class or political basis. The assault on job reservation was no longer confined to tinkering with the position of the color bar but involved the reorganization of the labor process through mechanization, destruction of skills, and the creation of operative jobs that could be filled by Africans (Davies, 1978). For long a powerful voice against certain aspects of apartheid, Anglo American claims to be forging ahead with new capital-intensive technology which would involve the employment of increasing numbers of nonmigrant African labor. At their new mine in the West Transvaal—Elandsrand—they are creating villages which could potentially house African laborers and their families and also replacing the “induna” system of tribal representatives with a “modern” system of industrial relations (de Beer, 1977; Heever, 1977).¹⁷ Of course, this is Anglo American's show piece; at the old mines, things remain much the same as before.

As significant as the changes in the labor process and industrial relations is the shifting balance of forces in the political arena. As we have noted in previous periods of South African history, the breakup of the nationalist alliance of landed classes and white labor gave way to the return of the party of capital. In the 1970s, the merging of Afrikaner and British capital and the effectiveness with which the Nationalist Party had protected the interests of the capitalist class made the United Party redundant. In 1977 it dissolved, and those who did not join the Nationalist Party formed the Progressive Federal Party. This restructuring of political parties reflected and compounded divisions within the Nationalist Party, already exacerbated by the economic recession.

We can see this in three events that took place in the first half of 1979. First, in March, the white mine workers' union struck in protest against the use of African and Coloured labor in jobs reserved for whites. The strike was decisively defeated after only one week. Significantly, the government made no attempts to intercede on behalf of the striking workers. The strike was thought to be in anticipation of the imminent publication of the Wiehahn Commission of Inquiry into labor legislation. The second event was the government's speedy acceptance of the principles of the Wiehahn report, which recommended the recognition of Afri-

can trade unions and the removal of statutory job reservation. However, the government has decided to deny recognition to trade unions formed by migrant workers and it is probable that even those unions that will be recognized will be directly subordinated to parallel white trade unions. Nor will the removal of statutory job reservation have much effect so long as white trade unions are able to exclude Africans through closed shops (Lewis, 1979b). Nevertheless, the government's immediate endorsement does reflect a changing balance of power in favor of capital concerned to deploy its labor more flexibly and to develop organizations which might effectively contain the upsurge in African strike activity begun in 1973.

However, in the 1970s, the capitalist class, particularly its manufacturing branches, has been increasingly concerned to insure an adequate flow of foreign investment, upon which the continued expansion of the economy depends (Suckling, 1975; Innes, 1975). This has involved setting up elaborate propaganda and public relations networks around the world through such institutions as the South Africa Foundation (First et al., 1972). The government itself has been actively involved in nefarious deals in foreign countries designed to project a favorable image of South Africa. The third episode of 1979—the Muldergate scandal—broke out precisely over this issue. Before Vorster resigned as Prime Minister in 1978, a faction within the cabinet including himself, Connie Mulder, Eschel Rhoodie, and possibly others had been responsible for such international propaganda operations. When these illicit dealings were revealed in the press, they became the focus of a bitter battle within the Nationalist Party, causing Rhoodie to flee the country with threats that he would divulge the practices of his previous Ministry of Information, leading to the expulsion of Mulder from the party, forcing Vorster to resign his new post of State President and nearly forcing the Botha government to resign. While the idiom of the struggle was the misuse of public funds, this was merely a convenient issue around which the mass of Afrikaner farmers, petty bourgeois elements, and white workers could voice their common opposition to large-scale domestic as well as foreign capital. Although Vorster, Mulder, and Rhoodie are no longer in the Cabinet, nonetheless there is every indication that the present government will continue to depend on international capital and one can anticipate a growing division between the rank and file members of the Nationalist Party and the government in office.

What prevents the open fragmentation of the nationalist alliance of white classes? The ideology of separate development which took hold of Afrikanerdom under the inspiration of Verwoerd was given a new lease on life in the 1960s by the creation of the Bantustans and the launching of the outward-looking policy. By the middle 1970s, the first looked insignificant beside the events in Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, and Zim-

babwe, while the second was a pronounced failure due to the growing hostility toward South Africa throughout Africa. The justification of white supremacy is now being refashioned around a pan-Southern Africanism, in which South African hegemony is preserved through the support and, where possible, the shaping of surrounding black governments. Only such an ideology can cement and give the necessary self-confidence to the South African ruling class encircled by liberation movements conscious that their own countries can never achieve independence before the "liberation" of South Africa.

2. The Strength of the Black Nationalist Alliance

It may be possible for South Africa to assist in erecting "internal settlements" in neighboring white settler regimes, such as Namibia and Zimbabwe, so as to polarize the African population along class lines. But such polarization has proven more difficult to engineer in South Africa. Indeed, one might say that the most powerful factor holding the white nationalist alliance together is the government's inability to break up the black nationalist alliance, which increasingly has the support of the critical two million Coloureds. Nor is this for want of trying. Foremost among the attempts to divide the African population has been the creation of administrative apparatuses in the Bantustans to provide an institutional buffer between Pretoria and capital's labor reservoirs. The government has also been juggling with job color bars, but it is around the exploitation color bars, which if anything have been intensified, that the African nationalist alliance maintains its strength.

The Soweto uprising of 1976 illustrates the class forces at work within the black population of South Africa. The courage and determination of school children to risk life and limb reflects the bleak outlook for Africans, particularly in the face of growing unemployment (Simkins and Clarke, 1978). A potential petty bourgeois stratum is being forced into an even stronger and now consciously articulated alliance with a more militant black working class. The successful student appeals to workers to strike is testimony to the sacrifices African labor is prepared to make for the alliance, and to the new fund of self-confidence inspired by the liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia and articulated in the Black Consciousness Movement. At the same time, divisions did emerge between rural and urban-based workers, that is, between the migrant and nonmigrant workers, reflected in the different outlooks of Buthelezi's *Inkatha* movement, prepared to work within the confines of separate development on the one hand and the various banned resistance movements, such as the African National Congress and the Black People's Convention, on the other. The recognition of trade unions

for nonmigrants and not for migrant workers can only exacerbate the differences.

These divisions notwithstanding, all Africans are subject to the strictures of the apartheid state. Daily survival *depends* on their breaking the law—on violating some pass law, some residence regulation, etc. Every African is a criminal; that is the nature of totalitarianism. Moreover, these individual struggles inscribed in everyday life erupt into collective struggles which are subsequently crushed. But because they do not achieve their immediate goals is not to say they are without significant effect. They make necessary the expanded reproduction of the apartheid state, which then becomes dependent on syphoning off profits. In South Africa, the fiscal crisis of the state does not emerge so much from the contradictory requirements of accumulation and legitimation as from the contradictory requirements of accumulation and repression.

Moreover, once erected, the apartheid state shaped the economic order of South Africa, in particular the labor process and the patterns of the reproduction of labor power, which then depend on the whole range of exploitation and job color bars. The survival of South African capitalism rests on the survival of South African racism. So implicated is the state in all facets of life that struggles by Africans, individual or collective, conducted in any arena of society are immediate struggles against the state. Whereas advanced capitalist nations survive through the insulation of struggles, for example the economic from the political, in South Africa no such insulation is possible. The struggle for national liberation, for the end of racism, or even the mitigation of racism is a struggle against capitalism.

3. The Specificity of the South African Revolution

One cannot talk about the future of South Africa without an analysis of the international forces at work (Johnson, 1977). Nevertheless, the South African social formation and state have an integrity of their own which shapes the impact of external interventions. What then can we say about the character of contemporary South Africa and its history which might offer some clues as to its destiny? Where institutionalized racism invades every corner of social life, class struggles can only be fought out on the terrain of racism. However, precisely how that struggle will be fought and with what consequences depends upon the balance of class forces within each racial group and the form of the apartheid state. We can illuminate the distinctiveness of these features in South Africa by comparison with the liberation struggles that have taken place elsewhere in Africa.

First and most obviously, there exists a large white settler community of over four million, about one-sixth of the total population. This has led some commentators to argue that South Africa represents a special type

of colonialism, in which the metropolis and colony coexist within a unitary state (Simons and Simons, 1969, chapter 26; Slovo, 1976, pp. 132–49). Such analyses of “internal colonialism” tend to regard the South African state as “archaic” or an “anachronism” which has to be transformed into a bourgeois democratic state by the national liberation movement before the final assault on capitalism. Whereas the colonial analogy and its corollary, the two-stage revolution, may have been applicable to a period in which there was a viable precapitalist mode of production, the destruction of the latter requires an alternative theoretical framework for understanding the transformation of South Africa. Such a framework must, however, retain the kernel of truth in the colonial analogy, namely that a successful national liberation movement, on attaining power, will have to dismantle the apartheid state which inscribes the differential incorporation of races in its very structure. The new form of state to which it gives rise will be critically shaped by the balance of class forces and the social formation upon which these rest.

Just as the colonial analogy fails to fit the South African political structure, it also fails to do justice to its economic development. Although South Africa does represent a form of peripheral capitalism, nonetheless the nature of its dependency on metropolitan capital is quite different from that of a colony. Its burgeoning manufacturing industry and state-sponsored basic industry make South Africa almost self-sufficient in consumer goods, although to retain its present level of capital accumulation, it continues to depend on foreign investment and the importation of oil and of sophisticated capital goods. The development of the forces of production and the potential for autonomous growth are incomparably greater than in any other ex-colony in Africa. One might note in passing that a successful liberation movement will also lead to the transformation of the colonial labor process, based as it is on untrammelled racial domination.

If the economic development of South Africa presents opportunities for the transition to socialism, the liberation movement has to have the capacity and commitment to realize them. This will be determined in part by the class composition of the nationalist alliance and in part by the cumulative effect of the history of black struggles on consciousness. We have already observed the preponderance of the proletariat in the African nationalist alliance and the relative weakness, manufactured by job color bars, of those petty bourgeois elements which dominated other colonial liberation movements. For this reason, if for no other, a “neocolonial” solution is extremely unlikely to eventuate from the South African revolution. To be sure, the Black Consciousness Movement with its appeals to African Socialism is reminiscent of the strategy and ideology of liberation movements to the north. Undoubtedly it has galvanized large sections of

the population, but it has not achieved the support commanded earlier by the banned African National Congress, whose roots were much closer to the African working class.

The strength of the repressive apparatuses of the apartheid state contrasts markedly with the weakness of colonial states elsewhere in Africa. This necessarily drives struggle into two major directions: guerrilla warfare and political strikes. As independent movements, the South African state will probably be able to contain any threat they may pose. The preparation of the South African armed forces for armed struggle makes the situation fundamentally different from Zimbabwe and the ex-colonies of Portugal. The military balance could only be turned against the state if armed struggle is combined with industrial strikes. The long history of proletarian struggles has given African workers a consciousness of their own collective power as workers. If working-class struggles of the 1970s indicate anything, it is that Africans are well prepared to take on capital and the state through political strikes when the time is ripe.

By virtue of its history of struggles, its powerful state, its developed forces of production, the immiseration of its proletariat, the increasing insecurity of its white intermediate classes, and the merging of race and class, South Africa could become the arena of the prototypical Marxian revolution. But, of course, in a capitalist world, a revolution dominated and led by a proletariat is by no means a revolution that inaugurates socialism.

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I should like to thank Maurice Zeitlin for his criticisms and encouragement. This essay does not deal with events subsequent to May, 1979.

NOTES

1. For an elaboration on some of the problems of the "power conflict" models and other conceptual schemes for understanding race relations, such as "internal colonialism" and "pluralism," prevalent in the 1960s, see Burawoy (1974). The shift in sociological studies of race between the 1960s and 1970s is well exemplified by two books of William Wilson (1973; 1978).

2. I have decided to regard as an aberration Bonacich's identification of slave owners as "capitalists," with the apparent implication that any dominant class is "capitalist," in her application of the split labor market theory to the antebellum South (Bonacich, 1975). Her subsequent demarcation of the dominant classes by region is no palliative for her determination to force the heterogeneous class structures of disparate historical situations into the three "class" dynamics of the split labor market.

3. Bonacich (1975) uses "labor" to refer to anyone who "works" and thereby deprives it of the specific connotation of "wage labor," which she seems to adopt elsewhere. "Throughout this paper the 'working class' is defined as including persons who use and

exchange the products of their labor for the purposes of consumption rather than the accumulation of capital (Marx [1867] 1906, pp. 163-73). By this definition, subsistence farmers, independent artisans, and small businessmen are all working-class people, even if they hire a few helpers" (Bonacich, 1975, p. 606). She might have added that by this definition wage laborers, because they neither use nor exchange the products of their labor, are not working-class people. Why Bonacich should adopt Marx's definition of small commodity producers as her definition of working class is not immediately apparent. Later on, she relents and includes wage labor alongside subsistence farmers, independent artisans, and small businessmen as part of "labor" with the effect of so homogenizing the social structure as to make her analysis largely meaningless, even if it does conform to the split labor market framework.

4. In a suggestive note, Gramsci (1971, p. 243) writes: "The massive structures of modern democracies, both as state organizations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the 'trenches' and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely 'partial' the element of movement which before used to be 'the whole' of war, etc." Besides Gramsci, my theoretical formulations on the capitalist state have been especially influenced by Poulantzas (1973), Holloway and Picciotto (1978), Therborn (1979), and Offe and Ronge (1975).

5. In her paper in this volume, Bonacich (1981, p. 270) does recognize two forms of racial oppression, the one generated by "capital" and the other generated by the "exclusion" movements of white labor. But this is a point of conclusion and not a point of departure. As we shall see, it does not inform her analysis of South Africa.

6. Distortion may be a legitimate mode of exposition when setting up a problem, but perhaps Bonacich has taken this strategy too far in creating a fictitious literature she calls "neo-Marxism" out of recent Marxist historiography of South Africa. While it is true that Marxists, including those she brands as "neo-Marxists," regard the capitalist state as ultimately upholding the interests of the capitalist class in the survival of capitalism, she is quite wrong to suggest they do not recognize, as an empirical fact and logical corollary, that this entails conflict between the state and individual capitalists and segments of the dominant class. In this, they follow Marx, whose theory and anticipations fit South Africa probably better than any other country.

The bourgeois state is nothing but the mutual insurance of the bourgeoisie against its own individual members and the class of the exploited—an insurance that must become ever more costly and, in appearance, independent of bourgeois society, which finds it increasingly hard to keep the exploited in a state of subservience. (Marx, 1850. Cited in Kolakowski, 1978, p. 359)

Therefore, Bonacich is quite wrong in suggesting that the distinction between liberals and Marxists lies simply in the former highlighting conflict and the latter emphasizing cooperation between state and economy. Rather, the difference lies in the fact that the liberals take capitalism as given and eternal and are therefore interested in the capacity of the state to hinder or advance the immediate economic interests of individual capitalists and segments of capital, whereas Marxists view the future of capitalism as problematical and therefore regard the state's primary role as reproducing capitalist relations of production. Bonacich does not take her erroneous contrast of liberal and Marxist theory very far, but its false premises infuse her work, as we shall see.

Indeed, she does not deal with the state but asserts the superiority of her own treatment over the other two because it stresses both the role of the white working-class struggle and capital's attempt to *introduce* (rather than reproduce) cheap black labor power. In reality, none of her "neo-Marxists" dismiss white class struggle as of no importance. Burawoy

(1974), if anything, attaches too much importance to it and in this he was heavily influenced by Simons and Simons (1969), who devoted at least 13 of their 26 chapters almost entirely to white class struggle. Moreover, the debate among Wolpe (1976), Simson (1974), Legassick (1974a), and Davies (1973) was precisely over the nature and consequences of white class struggle. The debate among Marxists has not been as to whether white class struggle is to be included or excluded but as to its precise relationship to other struggles in different historical periods and in different sectors of the economy.

Therefore, the only basis for Bonacich to regard her theory as different from Marxist theory (as opposed to her neo-Marxism) cannot be that the latter excludes white class struggle but because it does not reduce all other major features of the South African racial order to white class struggle. Accordingly, in order to show her own theory to be superior to Marxist theory, she adopts two strategies. The first is to show how these "other features" are derivative of white class struggle; in subsequent sections, I will show how she fails in this task. The second strategy is to fabricate a monocausal theory out of the Marxist literature called neo-Marxism, which sees the motor force of South African history as capital's search for cheap black labor power and then asserts that it is incompatible with her own monocausal split labor market theory. She then only has to show that the history of South Africa is compatible with her own theory to invalidate neo-Marxism. Even after these intellectual gymnastics, she is far from successful in demonstrating the compatibility of split labor market theory with South African history. Moreover, as we shall see, capital's search for cheap labor power is not only compatible with white class struggle but is in fact the very basis for white class struggle. Without cheap black labor power, there would be no white class struggle over displacement. As I hope to show, what the Marxist historiography of the last decade lacks in parsimony, it makes up for in insight.

7. Where colonial governments have not had the capacity to reproduce a system of migrant labor, then of course capital has had to adopt alternative strategies. This is the major reason why Union Minière decided at one point to stabilize African workers and their families. It was not, as Bonacich asserts, the absence of "restrictive white labor policies" (1981, p. 265). The importance of a multiplicity of factors shaping the policy of capital with respect to African labor becomes clear in the history of Zambia (Northern Rhodesia). There, different mines adopted different policies concerning the stabilization of African labor according to struggles among white settler farmers, African peasantry, the colonial administration, and also the competing recruitment agencies for mining industries elsewhere in Southern Africa. Settler farmers had a common interest with the mining companies in squeezing African peasants off certain tracts of land to provide a source of labor and preempt competition in the production of agricultural products. These were the two major forces behind the creation of the Native Reserves in 1929. Subsequently, the settler farmers did not want to lose access to the pool of cheap labor power and so opposed stabilization of Africans in the towns. Yet, at the same time, white farmers were often unable to meet the demands of the mines for food, and since they had a monopoly over marketing facilities, they effectively prevented African peasants from making up the deficit. This led some mines, such as Broken Hill, to lease out small plots of land which African workers and their families could cultivate. Such efforts by the mines to stabilize its labor force were usually opposed by the colonial administration for two reasons. First, a stable urban African population would pose all sorts of social control problems, which would have stretched the colonial government beyond its capacity. Second, the *raison d'être* of the colonial administration lay in its indirect rule, which depended on the collection of taxes in the rural areas. A system of migrant labor was necessary for money to circulate back from the towns to the rural areas. In short, although white workers were the critical force behind the defence of the job color bar in the mining industry, in comparison with the settler farmers, the colonial administration and the mining companies themselves, they were relatively unimportant in the maintenance

or dissolution of the system of migrant labor. (See Berger, 1974; Burawoy, 1972; Muntemba, 1977; and for Southern Rhodesia, Arrighi, 1973.)

8. The analyses of social formations are enormously complex and involve an array of theoretical problems that are only now beginning to be posed. One of the most complete of such analyses is still Lenin's *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. For more recent attempts, see Colin Leys (1975), Mamdani (1976), and Rey (1973). For an overview of some of the issues involved, see Laclau (1971) and Foster-Carter (1978). In the context of South Africa, Wolpe (1972) and Morris (1976) have made a beginning.

9. Few writers have resisted the temptation to draw attention to the racism behind the white workers' adherence to socialism, epitomized in a slogan of the Rand Revolt: "workers of the world unite and fight for a white South Africa" (see Bonacich, 1981, p. 254). But racism was the particular idiom through which workers became conscious and expressed the universal implications of deskilling, namely the substitution of cheap unskilled labor power for skilled labor power. Capital's assault on skill in other countries called forth as militant a defence of craft privileges behind the banner of socialism as it did in South Africa (Hinton, 1973; Scott, 1974; Montgomery, 1974).

10. While this is clearly the case for the state's relation to white classes, it may be less true for black classes. But even here, once Africans had been dispossessed of a livelihood from the land, they too became dependent on wage employment and to this extent had an "interest" in the expansion of South African capitalism. As used in this paper, the notion of interest is tied to the particular mode of production in which it emerges, rather than transcending a mode of production (see Heller, 1976).

11. As an authority, Bonacich here cites Davies (1973). He has since changed his mind. (See Davies, 1976b, 1977; Davies and Lewis, 1976).

12. Innes (1977) offers an important corrective to Kaplan's argument by suggesting that mining capital did have an interest in the expansion of local capital. In particular, the mining group that was eventually consolidated under the management of Anglo American in 1922 had its investments entirely based in Southern Africa and was increasingly involved in and dependent on local manufacturing capital. Innes maintains that there was not the major restructuring of the power block that Kaplan indicates and that mining capital did in fact retain its powerful position, even after the Pact Government came to power. His analysis of mining capital involves rejecting the conventional distinction between international and national capital based on the geographical location of shareholders. Instead, Innes defines international capital by production of goods for an international market, whereas national capital is identified by production for a domestic market. (See also Bienefeld and Innes, 1976.) These discussions also highlight the problems of coming to a satisfactory understanding of the meaning of a "dominant" or "hegemonic" fraction of the capitalist class.

13. According to Bonacich, four factors account for the majority of white workers adopting a protectionist policy toward cheap black labor power rather than forging a united working class movement: size of reserve army of black labor power; easy access of capital to cheap black labor power; the might of the capitalist class; and finally, the accession to power of the Nationalist Party (1981, pp. 268-269). Two comments are in order. First, the relationship among these factors and their relative importance cannot be understood outside an analysis of the state. Second, these factors only serve to reproduce a division in the working class once it has been defined by relations to the means of production, that is, on the basis of the labor process being organized according to the color bar principle.

14. Compelling evidence leads Legassick to conclude: "Indeed from the time of their election Nationalist government ministers repeatedly emphasized that they had no intention of depriving industry of its necessary supply of black labor" (Legassick, 1974b, p. 15). See also Carter (1959, chapter 10, particularly pp. 269, 278).

15. When dealing with both white and black groups, O'Meara and others distinguish three

classes: capital, labor, and a large residual category—the petty bourgeoisie. The diversity of groups branded as petty bourgeois requires finer analytical distinctions. For example, Wright (1976) distinguishes three major classes: capital, labor, and a true petty bourgeoisie, defined in traditional terms as the self-employed. He then constructs three further intermediate categories, each of which combines the properties of two of the major classes. Small employers, semi-autonomous employees, and supervisors or managers are said to occupy “contradictory class locations” because of the presumed indeterminacy of their political allegiance. Studying the role of these intermediary groups in specific class struggles, such as those described by O'Meara, could shed light on the political dynamics of South African society, as well as on the usefulness of Wright's scheme for historical analysis.

16. The position of the mining companies is not quite as straightforward as O'Meara presents it. Although the Chamber of Mines Annual Report devoted only six lines to the 1946 strike, it appears to have prompted Oppenheimer to proclaim himself in favor of housing African labor in villages with married quarters at the new Free State mines (Legassick, 1974b, p. 18). Bonacich herself points to a speech Oppenheimer made in May 1974, where he declares his opposition to the system of migrant labor. She remarks, “What is bizarre about the fact is that if any segment of the capitalist class has an interest in preserving migrant labor, it ought to be the mines, with their classic ‘colonial’ extractive industry” (1981, p. 264), and then accepts Oppenheimer's stated reason for changing the policy towards African labor: “. . . 1970 was a turning point, when the economic growth rate began to fall. In other words, he is worried about declining profits” (1981, p. 264). Poor man. In the last quarters of 1971, 1972, 1973, and the third quarter of 1974, gold profits were R100 million, R150 million, R300 million and R410 million (Roger Leys, 1975, p. 197).

True, 1970 was a turning point, but not the one Oppenheimer and Bonacich suggest. It was the year in which the United States decided to abandon the fixed price of gold of \$35 an ounce, and since then it has fluctuated between \$100 and \$200 an ounce (Johnson, 1977, chapters 4–6). If it was not declining profits, what had provoked Oppenheimer to make such an outspoken plea for the end of migrant labor and the statutory color bar in May 1974? In his speech, Oppenheimer made no reference to three factors that must have been uppermost in his mind: first, the strikes and killings that had taken place at some of the gold mines in the previous year; second, the wage increases granted to black mine workers, who now earned three times as much as they did in 1970; and third, the shortage of black labor made particularly acute by Hastings Banda's decision to halt the recruitment of mine labor from Malawi and the possibility of a restricted flow from the newly independent Mozambique. All three factors would have prompted an interest in stabilizing Africans in mine villages, but the last one was probably the most important. The shortage of unskilled black labor power and skilled white labor power made it imperative for the mines to gain greater access to African labor pools within South Africa. Despite growing black unemployment, such access was barred not by white workers but by other fractions of capital, who had managed to secure a monopoly over the various labor reserves within the country through the system of labor bureaus. It is also likely that other mining companies represented in the Chamber of Mines were less enthusiastic about such a drastic reversal in policy.

17. Any innovations introduced by Anglo American do not seem to have taken hold. African workers rioted at Elandsrand when Oppenheimer opened the new mine in April 1979. As usual, the mining companies have maintained a discreet silence as to the circumstances of the uprising.

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