A study of social dynamics

Race, Class, Caste

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is the social definition of the term "race." To call that which a group has been pleased to designate a race by some other name does not affect the nature of the social problem to be investigated.  

We may think of race relations, therefore, as that behavior which develops among peoples who are aware of each other's actual or imputed physical differences. Moreover, by race relations we do not mean all social contacts between persons of different "races," but only those contacts the social characteristics of which are determined by a consciousness of "racial" difference. If, for example, two persons of different racial strains were to meet and deal with each other on their own devices—that is to say, without preoccupation with a social definition of each other's race—then it might be said that race here is of no sociological significance. But if their behavior tended to be fashioned by ethnic attitudes toward each other's actual or purported physical differences, then the situation may be called a social contact between ethnicities, and it may be also referred to as race relations. However, these ethnic attitudes are based upon other and more fundamental social phenomena.

Cf. William Oscar Brown, "Race Prejudice," Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1930, pp. 4-5. It should be made patent clear that the laboratory classification of races, which began among anthropologists about a hundred years ago, has no necessary relationship with the problem of race relations as sociological phenomena. Race relations developed independently of anthropological tests and measurements.

16. Race Relations—Its Meaning, Beginning, and Progress

A Definition

In a discussion of "the origin" of race relations it should be well to determine at the outset exactly what we are looking for. We shall proceed, therefore, by first eliminating certain concepts that are commonly confused with that of race relations. These are: ethnocentrism, intolerance, and "racism."

Ethnocentrism, as the sociologists conceive of it, is a social attitude which expresses a community of feeling in any group—the "we" feeling as over against the "others." This attitude seems to be a function of group solidarity, which is not necessarily a racial phenomenon. Neither is social intolerance (which we shall consider in more detail in a subsequent chapter) racial antagonism, for social intolerance is social displeasure or resentment against that group which refuses to conform to the established practices and beliefs of the society. Finally, the term "racism" as it has been recently employed in the literature seems to refer to a philosophy of racial antipathy. Studies on the origin of racism involve the study of the development of an ideology, an approach which usually results in the substitution of the history of a system of rationalization for that of a material social fact. Indeed, it is likely to be an accumulation of an erratic pattern of verbalizations cut free from any on-going social system.

What then is the phenomenon, the beginnings of which we seek to determine? It is the phenomenon of the capitalist exploitation of peoples and its complementary social attitude. Again, one should miss the point entirely if one were to think of racial antagonism as having

its genesis in some "social instinct" of antipathy between peoples. Such an approach ordinarily leads to no end of confusion.\footnote{Consider, for instance, the following definitive statement by Professor Robert E. Park: "This [prejudice against the Japanese] is due to the existence in the human mind of a mechanism by which we inevitably and automatically classify every individual human being we meet. When a race bears an external mark by which every individual member of it can infallibly be identified, that race is by that fact set apart and segregated. Japanese, Chinese, and Negroes cannot move among us with the same freedom as members of other races because they bear marks which identify them as members of their race. This fact isolates them. . . . Isolation is at once a cause and an effect of race prejudice. It is a vicious circle—intolerance, prejudice, isolation." In Jesse F. Steiner, The Japanese Invasion, p. 190. Since, however, we may assume that all races "bear marks which identify them as members of their race," it must follow, according to Park, that a certain human capacity for classification makes it impossible for races to come together without racial antagonism and prejudice. We shall attempt to show that this is a mistaken hypothesis is too simple. Cf. Ina Corrine Brown, National Survey of the Higher Education of Negroes, U.S. Office of Education, Misc. No. 6, Vol. I, pp. 4-8.}\n
The Beginning of Racial Antagonism

Probably a realization of no single fact is of such crucial significance for an understanding of racial antagonism as that the phenomenon had its rise only in modern times.\footnote{Professor G. A. Borgees makes an observation pertinent to this remark: "The English-speaking mind is not fully alive to the gravity of this issue. Unlike their German cousins and foes, the Anglo-Saxon stocks did not strive to become the master race or Herrerook holding sway over the world and mankind. . . . Yet, unlike their German cousins and rivals, they have succeeded in bring a Herrerook, a race of masters." "Europe Wants Freedom from Shame," Life, March 19, 1944, pp. 41-43. (Italics Borgees')} In a previous chapter on "the origin of caste" we have attempted to show that race conflict did not exist among the early Aryans in India, and we do not find it in other ancient civilizations. Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced to the policies and attitudes of the leading capitalistic people, the white people of Europe and North America.

By way of demonstrating this hypothesis we shall review briefly some well-known historical situations. In tracing the rise of the Anglo-Saxons to their position as the master race of the world\footnote{In describing the composition of Alexander's army invading India, E. R. Bevan says: "... mingled with Europeans were men of many nations. Here were troops of horsemen, representing the chivalry of Iran, which had followed Alexander from Bactria and beyond, Pashius and men of the Hindu Kush with their highland-bred horses, Central-Asiaics who ride and shoot at the same time; and among the camp-followers one could find groups representing the older civilizations of the world, Phoenicians inheriting an immemorial tradition of shipcraft and trade, bronze Egyptians able to confront the Indians with an antiquity still longer than their own." The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 331.} we shall omit consideration of the great Eastern civilizations from which Greece took a significant cultural heritage. There seems to be no basis for imputing racial antagonism to the Egyptians, Babylonians, or Persians. At any rate, the Greeks were the first European people to enter the stream of eastern Mediterranean civilization, and the possibility of racial exploitation did not really occur until the Macedonian conquest. Our point here is, however, that we do not find race prejudice even in the great Hellenistic empires which extended deeper into the territories of colored people than any other European empire up to the end of the fifteenth century.

The Hellenic Greeks had a cultural, not a racial, standard of belonging, so that their basic division of the peoples of the world were Greeks and barbarians—the barbarians having been all those persons who did not possess the Greek culture, especially its language. This is not surprising, for the culture of peoples is always a matter of great moment to them. But the people of the Greek city-states, who founded colonies among the barbarians on the shores of the Black Sea and of the Mediterranean, welcomed those barbarians to the extent that they were able to participate in Greek culture, and intermarried freely with them. The Greeks knew that they had a superior culture to those of the barbarians, but they included Europeans, Africans, and Asians in the concept Hellas as these peoples acquired a working knowledge of the Greek culture.

The experience of the later Hellenistic empire of Alexander tended to be the direct contrary of modern racial antagonism. The narrow patriotism of the city-states was given up for a new cosmopolitanism. Every effort was made to assimilate the barbarians to Greek culture, and in the process a new Greco-Oriental culture with a Greco-Oriental ruling class came into being. Alexander himself took a Persian princess for his wife and encouraged his men to intermarry with the native population.\footnote{In this empire there was an estate, not a racial, distinction between the rulers and the un-Hellenized natives.} Moreover, the inclination of Alexander to disregard even cultural differences in his policy toward the peoples of his empire seemed to have stimulated one of the most remarkable philosophies of all time: that of the fundamental equality of all human beings. In Athens, in about 300 B.C., Zeno developed a system of thought called stoicism

which held in part that "all men should be fellow citizens; and there should be one life and order, as of a flock pasturing together, which feeds together by a common law." This doctrine was not a reaction to race prejudice but rather to certain invidious cultural distinctions among the peoples of the time; and the idea has come down to us by way of the Roman law, the preaching of St. Paul, and the writings of the philosophers of the Enlightenment. It has been given a democratic emphasis in the American Declaration of Independence and in amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

The next great organization of peoples about the Mediterranean Sea—and in so far as European civilization is concerned this may be thought of as constituting the whole world—was the Roman Empire. In this civilization also we do not find racial antagonism, for the norm of superiority in the Roman system remained a cultural-class attribute. The basic distinction was Roman citizenship, and gradually this was extended to all freeborn persons in the municipalities of the empire. Slaves came from every province, and there was no racial distinction among them. Sometimes the slaves, especially the Greeks, were the teachers of their masters; indeed, very much of the cultural enlightenment of the Romans came through slaves from the East. Because slavery was not a racial stigma, educated freedmen, who were granted citizenship upon emancipation, might rise to high positions in government or industry. There were no interracial laws governing the relationship of the great mass of obscure common people of different origin. Moreover, the aristocracy of the empire, the senators and equites, was constituted largely from responsible provincials in the imperial administration.

One should not mistake the social relationship among the various social estates of the Greek and Roman world for race relations. The Spartiates, Perioikoi, and Helots of Laconia, for instance, were not races but social estates; neither did the Metics, the alien residents of Periclean Athens, constitute a race. In early republican Rome intermarriage was forbidden between the privileged patrician class and the plebeian mass, but this was a social-estate partition rather than a racial accommodation.

"If we have not discovered interracial antagonism in ancient Greece and Rome, the chances of discovering it in the system which succeeded the fall of the Roman Empire are even more remote. With the rise of the politico-religious system of Christianity, Western culture may be thought of as having entered its long period of gestation. Its first signs of parturition were the Crusades. But during all this time and even after the Renaissance the nature of the movement and of the social contact of peoples in this area precluded the possibility of the development of race prejudice.

The general pattern of barbarian invasions was that of a succession of peoples of increasing cultural inferiority moving into areas of higher culture. Thus, the German nations which invaded the Roman Empire had a smaller capacity for maintaining a complex culture than the Romans had when they conquered the Greeks; and probably the Celtic people of Britain had still fewer resources to continue their Roman cultural heritage. In the movement of barbarian peoples from the East and North toward the general area of the Mediterranean no nationalistic sentiments stood in the way to limit their amalgamation with the native populations.

One aspect of this era of barbarian invasion, the movement of Asians into Europe, is of especial significance. The Asians were better warriors than rulers. We may say rather conclusively that the white man's rise to superiority over the colored peoples of the other continents is based primarily on his superiority as a fighter. This is, however, a rather recent achievement. In the Middle Ages the Asians outfought him. The Huns, Saracens, Moors, Seljuk Turks, Ottoman Turks, Tartars—all went deep into Europe, subjugated and sometimes enslaved white peoples who today are highly race-prejudiced. At any rate, we shall not find racial antagonism among these invaders. The most powerful of them were Moslems, and both the economic base and religious sanctions of Mohammedanism are opposed to race prejudice. Under Mohammedanism—at least in so far as it has not been recently corrupted by capitalist ideals—the criterion of belonging is a cultural one; furthermore, Islam is a proselyting culture.

In Europe itself the policies of the Roman Catholic Church presented a bar to the development of racial antagonism. The Church, which gradually attained more or less religious, economic, and ideological dominance, had a folk and personal—not a territorial or racial—norm of belonging. The fundamental division of human beings was Christian and non-Christian. Among the non-Christians the heathen, the infidel, and the heretic were recognized by differential negative attitudes; however, as a means of entering the Christian community, conversion or
recantation was freely allowed and even sought after. There was in medieval Europe—indeed in the Christian world—an effective basis for the brotherhood of peoples. Although a man's economic, contractual relationship in his community determined his livelihood, to be excommunicated by the Church almost had the effect of putting him beyond the purview of society itself. In the Middle Ages, then, we find no racial antagonism in Europe; in fact, Europeans were, at this time, more isolated and ignorant about foreign peoples and world geography than the Romans and Greeks were.

But gradually, under a commercial and religious impulse, Europe began to awaken and to journey toward strange lands. The First Crusade may be taken as the starting point which finally led to world dominance by Europeans. When after their travels in the last quarter of the thirteenth century the Polos returned from the court of the great Kublai Khan in China to tell Europeans a story of fabulous wealth and luxury, the astonished people could hardly believe what they heard. Yet Marco Polo's memoirs were a great stimulant to traders. It was not until the discovery of America and the circumnavigation of the globe, however, that the movement assumed a decided irreversible trend. The period between the First Crusade and the discovery of America continued to be characterized by the religious view of world order; but it set a pattern of dealing with non-Christian peoples which was to be continued, minus only its religious characteristics, to this day. To the extent that the religious controls remained effective, racial antagonism did not develop; what really developed was a Jew-heathen-infidel antagonistic complex which was to color European thought for some centuries.

Up to the eleventh century Christian Europe was hemmed in from the North, East, and South by heathens and infidels; the Mediterranean was almost encircled by the Arabian Mohammedans, a people whose culture was superior to that of the northern Europeans. In the eleventh century, however, under the organizing influence of the popes, the holy warriors of Christendom began to carry conquering crusades into the territory of the heathen Slavic and infidel Asiatic peoples. As a general rule the Church made the lands and even the peoples of the non-Christian world the property of the Crusaders, and the trader ordinarily followed the cross.

In fact, it was this need for trade with the East, especially by the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese merchants, and its obstruction by the Mohammedans whose country lay across their path in the Near East, which induced the Portuguese, in the fifteenth century, to feel their way down the African coast in the hope of sailing around this continent to the East Indies. Here began the great drama that was, in a few hundred years, to turn over the destiny of the world to the decisions of businessmen. But our concern at this point is to indicate that racial antagonism had not yet developed among the Europeans.

In the first place, the geography of the world was still a mystery, and some of the most fantastic tales about its peoples were believed. Stories of the splendor, luxury, and wisdom of the peoples of the East held all Europe in constant wonderment. No one would have been surprised if some traveler had returned from the heart of Africa to break the news that he had found a black monarch ruling a kingdom surpassing in grandeur and power any that had then existed in Europe. In short, the white man had no conception of himself as a being capable of developing the superior culture of the world—the concept "white man" had not yet its significant social definition—the Anglo-Saxon, the modern master race, was then not even in the picture.

But when the Portuguese began to inch their way down the African coast they knew that the Moors and heathens whom they encountered were inferior to them both as fighters and as culture builders.1 This, however, led to no conclusions about racial superiority. Henry the Navigator, himself, sought in those parts a Christian prince, Prester John, with whom he planned to form an alliance "against the enemies of the faith." All through the latter half of the fifteenth century the Portuguese sailors and explorers kept up this search for the kingdom of the lost black prince.

Of more significance still is the fact that there was as yet no belief in any cultural incapacity of these colored people. Their conversion to Christianity was sought with enthusiasm, and this transformation was supposed to make the Africans the human equals of all other Christians. The Portuguese historian, Gomes Eannes de Azurara, writing in the middle of the fifteenth century, gives us some idea of the religious motives for Prince Henry's exploits among the peoples on the West African coast. One reason for the Navigator's slave raids:

"... was his great desire to make increase in the faith of our lord Jesus Christ and to bring to him all souls that should be saved,—understanding

1"It should be noted that the Portuguese felt they were superior because they were Christians, not because they were white. In an address to his men just before they attacked an unsuspecting west-coast community, the captain of a caravel declared:
"... although they are more in number than we by a third yet they are but Moors, and we are Christians one of whom ought to suffice for two of them. For God is He in whose power lieth victory, and He knoweth our good wills in His holy service."
that all the mystery of the Incarnation, Death, and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ was for this sole end—namely the salvation of lost souls, whom the said Lord Infant [Henry] by his travail and spending would fain bring into the true faith. For he perceived that no better offering could be made unto the Lord than this. For if God promised to return one hundred goods for one, we may justly believe that for such great benefits, that is to say, for so many souls as were saved by the efforts of this Lord, he will have so many hundreds of guerdons in the Kingdom of God, by which his spirit may be glorified after this life in the celestial realm. For I that wrote this history saw so many men and women of those parts turned to the holy faith, that even if the Infant had been a heathen, their prayers would have been enough to have obtained his salvation. And not only did I see the first captives, but their children and grandchildren as true Christians as if the Divine grace breathed in them and imparted to them a clear knowledge of itself.*

This matter of cultural conversion is crucial for our understanding of the development of racial antagonism. For the full profitable exploitation of a people, the dominant group must devise ways and means of limiting that people's cultural assimilation. So long as the Portuguese and Spaniards continued to accept the religious definition of human equality, so long also the development of racial prejudice was inhibited. Although it is true that the forays on the African coast were exceedingly ruthless, the Portuguese did not rationalize the fact with a racial argument. To kill or to take into slavery the heathen or infidel was to serve the highest purpose of God. As Azurara pointed out: "...though their bodies were now brought into subjection, that was a small matter in comparison to their souls, which would now possess true freedom for evermore." In granting to Prince Henry a "plenary indulgence," Pope Eugenius IV gave "to each and all those who shall be engaged in the said war [slave raids], complete forgiveness of all their sins."**

The Portuguese people themselves had developed no racial hatred for the captives. Azurara relates how the townspeople at Lagos wept in sympathy for the suffering of the Moors as families were broken to be distributed among different masters. And, it seems, the captives were quite readily assimilated into the population.

*Op. cit., p. 29. See also C. Raymond Beasley, Prince Henry the Navigator.
*ibid., p. 53.

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difference between them and their free [Portuguese] servants, born in our own country. But those whom they took [captured] while still young, they caused to be instructed in mechanical arts. And those whom they saw fitted for managing property, they set free and married to women who were natives of the land [of Portugal], making with them a division of their property as if it had been bestowed on those who married them by the will of their own fathers. . . . Yes, and some widows of good family who bought some of these female slaves, either adopted them or left them a portion of their estate by will, so that in the future they married right well, treating them as entirely free. Suffice it that I never saw one of these slaves put in iron like other captives, and scarcely any one who did not turn Christian and was not gently treated.

And I have been asked by their lords to the baptisms and marriages of such; at which they, whose slaves they were before, made no less solemnity than if they had been their children or relations.*

The Portuguese had no clear sense of racial antagonism, because its economic and rationalistic basis had not yet developed among them. Indeed the Portuguese and Spaniards never became fully freed of the crusading spirit, which constantly held in check their attainment of a clear appreciation of the values of competitive labor exploitation. The Church received its share of African servants; as yet, however, it had no idea of the economic uses of segregation and "cultural parallelism"—of the techniques for perpetuating the servile status of the black workers. It had developed no rationalizations of inborn human inferiority in support of a basic need for labor exploitation. On the contrary, its obsession with the spiritual values of conversion left the Negroes free to be integrated into the general population. It is reported that before the returning captains of one commission of caravels "did anything else in the distribution of captured Moors" they took an offering the best of those Moors to the Church of that place; and another little Moor, who afterwards became a friar of St. Francis, they sent to St. Vincent do Cabo, where he lived ever after as a Catholic Christian, without having understanding or perception of any other law than that true and holy law in which all the Christians hope for salvation.**

**Speaking of the activities of the Portuguese at Goa, India, soon after 1498, L. S. S. O'Malley says: "The Portuguese territories were intended to be outposts of their empire and their religion. . . . Colonization was effected not so much by immigration as by marriage with Indian women. There was no color bar, and the children of mixed marriages were under no stigma of inferiority. . . . Proselytization began soon after the capture of Goa. . . . At the same time the spread of Christianity was assisted by an appeal to material interests. Converts were to be provided with posts in the customs, exempted from impressment in the navy, and supported by the distribution of rice." Modern India and the West, pp. 44-45.
*Azurara, op. cit., p. 80.
The next era in the history of race relations commenced with the discovery of America. If we see that race prejudice is an attitudinal instrument of modern human, economic exploitation, the question as to whether race prejudice was found among the primitive peoples of the world will not arise. It would be, for instance, a ridiculous inversion of thought to expect the native peoples of America to have had race prejudice for the white invaders. But modern society—Western civilization—began to take on its characteristic attributes when Columbus turned the eyes and interests of the world away from the Mediterranean toward the Atlantic. The mysticism of the East soon lost its grip on human thought, and the bourgeois world got under way. The socioeconomic matrix of racial antagonism involved the commercialization of human labor in the West Indies, the East Indies, and in America, the intense competition among businessmen of different Western European cities for the capitalist exploitation of the resources of this area, the development of nationalism and the consolidation of European nations, and the decline of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church with its mystical inhibitions to the free exploitation of economic resources. Racial antagonism attained full maturity during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the sun no longer set on British soil and the great nationalistic powers of Europe began to justify their economic designs upon weaker European peoples with subtle theories of racial superiority and masterhood.

It should be observed that this view is not generally accepted upon. A popular belief among writers on modern race relations is that the phenomenon has always been known among most, if not all, peoples. This approach apparently tends to give theories of race relations a "scientific" aspect, but it contributes little to an understanding of the problem.

For instance, Jacques Barzun may be misleading in his saying that "if anyone deserves burning in effigy for starting the powerful race-dogma of Nordic superiority" it is Tacitus. This is supposed to be so

Although Columbus participated in the enslavement of the Indians of the West Indies, which finally led to their extermination, his first impression of them is well known: "They are a loving uncovetous people, so docile in all things that I do assure your Highness I believe in all the world there is not a better people or a better country; they love their neighbours as themselves, and they have the sweetest and gentlest way of speaking in the world and always with a smile." Again, "As they showed us such friendship and as I recognized they were people who would yield themselves better to the Christian faith and be converted more through love than by force, I gave them some coloured buttons and some glass beads... and they became so attached to us that it was a marvel to behold." See Francis A. MacNutt, Bartolomew De Las Casas, pp. 18, 19.

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because Tacitus, in his admiration of the primitive "Germans," made assertions "embodying the germ of present-day Nordicism." Yet it seems evident that neither Tacitus, St. Paul, nor the Rig-Vedic Aryans are responsible for the racial practices and ideologies developed among modern Europeans. Moreover, the use of the metaphor "germ" is likely to convey the idea that this excurus of Tacitus, his "noble-savage" description of the virtues of the tribal Germans, was continually built upon by them over the centuries, until at last it blossomed into nazism.

We might just as well rely upon that notable charge of Cicero to Atticus in the first century B.C., "Do not obtain your slaves from Britain because they are so stupid and so utterly incapable of being taught that they are not fit to form a part of the household of Athens," as a basis for the explanation of modern race prejudice against the British—the only difficulty being that there has never been any such prejudice.

When white scholars began their almost desperate search of the ancient archives for good reasons to explain the wonderful cultural accomplishments among the whites, European economic and military world dominance was already an actuality. Most of the discoveries which explain the racial superiority of the tall, long-headed blond may be called Hamite rationalizations; they are drawn from bits of isolated verbalizations or deductions from cultural situations which cannot be identified with those of modern race relations. Probably the most widely accepted of these has been the biblical story of the descendants of Ham as a people cursed forever to do the menial work of others.

When English, French, and German scholars discovered the Aryans in the Sanskrit literature of the Hindus, the Hindus themselves were unaware of the Aryans' racial potentialities. The concept "Aryan" meant practically nothing to them. It remained for the nationalistic Germans to recognize that the term "Aryan" designated Germans particularly and that, because of this, the right of Germans to exploit all other peoples of the world, not excluding the Hindus, was confirmed.

In the study of race relations it is of major importance to realize that their significant manifestations could not possibly have been known among the ancients. If we had to put our finger upon the year which marked the beginning of modern race relations we should select 1493-94. This is the time when total disregard for the human rights and physical power of the non-Christian peoples of the world, the colored peoples, was officially assumed by the first two great colonizing

*Race, A Study of Modern Superstition, pp. 11, 18.*
European nations. Pope Alexander VI's bull of demarcation issued under Spanish pressure on May 5, 1493, and its revision by the Treaty of Tordesillas (June 7, 1494), arrived at through diplomatic negotiations between Spain and Portugal, put all the heathen peoples and their resources—that is to say, especially the colored peoples of the world—at the disposal of Spain and Portugal.14

Sometimes, probably because of its very obviousness, it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America.15 This trade did not develop because Indians and Negroes were red and black, or because their cranial capacity averaged a certain number of cubic centimeters; but simply because they were the best workers to be found for the heavy labor in the mines and plantations across the Atlantic.16 If white workers were available in sufficient numbers they would have been substituted. As a matter of fact, part of the early demand for labor in the West Indies and on the mainland was filled by white servants, who were sometimes defined in exactly the same terms as those used to characterize the Africans. Although the recruitment of involuntary labor finally settled down to the African coasts, the earlier kidnappers did a brisk business in some of the most enlightened European cities. Moreover, in the process of exploiting the natural resources of the West Indies, the Spanish conquistadors literally consumed the native Indian population.

This, then, is the beginning of modern race relations. It was not an abstract, natural, immemorial feeling of mutual antipathy between groups, but rather a practical exploitative relationship with its sociocultural facilitation—at that time only nascent race prejudice. Although this peculiar kind of exploitation was then in its incipiency, it had already achieved its significant characteristics.17 As it developed and took definite capitalistic form, we could follow the white man around the world and see him repeat the process among practically every people of color. Earl Grey was directly in point when he described, in 1880, the motives and purpose of the British in one racial situation:

Throughout this part of the British Dominions the colored people are generally looked upon by the whites as an inferior race, whose interest ought to be systematically disregarded when they come into competition with their own, and who ought to be governed mainly with a view of the advantage of the superior race. And for this advantage two things are considered to be especially necessary: first, that facilities should be afforded to the white colonists for obtaining possession of land heretofore occupied by the native tribes; and secondly, that the Kaffir population should be made to furnish as large and as cheap a supply of labor as possible.18

But the fact of crucial significance is that racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict. The capitalist exploiter, being opportunistic and practical, will utilize any convenience to keep his labor and other resources freely exploitable. He will devise and employ race prejudice when that becomes convenient.19 As a matter of fact, the white proletariat of early capitalism had to endure burdens of exploitation quite similar to those which many colored peoples must bear today.

However, the capitalist spirit, the profit-making motive, among the sixteenth-century Spaniards and Portuguese, was constantly inhibited by the philosophy and purpose of the Roman Catholic Church. A social

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14As early as 1455 Pope Nicholas V had granted the Portuguese exclusive right to their discoveries on the African coast, but the commercial purpose of the treaty was still very much involved with the crusading spirit.

15In a discussion of the arguments over slavery during the Constitutional Convention, Charles A. Beard observes: "South Carolina was particularly determined, and gave northern representatives to understand that if they wished to secure their commercial privileges, they must make concessions to the slave trade. And they were met half way. Ellsworth said: 'As slaves multiply so fast in Virginia and Maryland that it is cheaper to raise than import them, whilst in the sickly rice swamps foreign supplies are necessary, if we go no farther than is urged, we shall be unjust towards South Carolina and Georgia. Let us not intermediate. As population increases, poor laborers will be so plentiful as to render slaves useless.'" An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution, p. 177. Quote from Max Farrand, Records, Vol. II, p. 371.

16In a discussion of the labor situation among the early Spanish colonists in America, Professor Bailey W. Diffie observes: "One Negro was reckoned as worth two, four, or even more Indians at work production." Latin American Civilization, p. 208.

17Francis Augustus MacNutt describes the relationship in Hispaniola: "Columbus laid tributary upon the entire population of the island which required that each Indian above fourteen years of age who lived in the mining provinces was to pay a little bell filled with gold every three months; the natives of all other provinces were to pay one ounce of cotton. These amounts were so excessive that in 1496 it was found necessary to change the ratio of the tribute, and, instead of the gold and cotton required from the villages, labour was substituted, the Indians being required to lay out and work the plantations of the colonists in their vicinity." Bartholomew De Las Casas, p. 35.

18Quoted by E. D. Morel, The Black Man's Burden, p. 50.

19In our description of the uses of race prejudice in this essay we are likely to give the impression that race prejudice was always "manufactured" in full awareness by individuals or groups of entrepreneurs. This, however, is not quite the case. Race prejudice, from its inception, became part of the social heritage, and as such both exploiters and exploited for the past part are born heirs to it. It is possible that most of those who propagate and defend race prejudice are not conscious of its fundamental motivation. To paraphrase Adam Smith: They who teach and finance race prejudice are by no means such fools as the majority of those who believe and practice it.
theory supporting the capitalist drive for the impersonal exploitation of the workers never completely emerged. Conversion to Christianity and slavery among the Indians stood at cross-purposes; therefore, the vital problem presented to the exploiters of labor was that of circumventing the assimilative effects of conversion to Christianity. In the West Indies the celebrated priest, Las Casas, was touched by the destructive consequences of the ruthless enslavement of the Indians, and he opposed it on religious grounds. But work had to be done, and if not voluntarily, then some ideology had to be found to justify involuntary servitude. "The Indians were represented as lazy, filthy pagans, of bestial morals, no better than dogs, and fit only for slavery, in which state alone there might be some hope of instructing and converting them to Christianity." 10

The capitalist exploitation of the colored workers, it should be observed, consigns them to employments and treatment that is humanely degrading. In order to justify this treatment the exploiters must argue that the workers are innately degraded and degenerate, consequently they naturally merit their condition. It may be mentioned incidentally that the ruling-class conception of degradation will tend to be that of all persons in the society, even that of the exploited person himself; and the work done by degraded persons will tend to degrade superior persons who attempt to do it.

In 1550, finally, the great capitalist interests produced a champion, Gaines de Sepulveda, brilliant theologian and debater, to confront Las Casas in open debate at Valladolid on the right of Spaniards to wage wars of conquest against the Indians. Sepulveda held that it was lawful to make war against (enslave) the Indians:

1. Because of the gravity of their sins.
2. Because of the rudeness of their heathen and barbarous natures, which oblige them to serve those of more elevated natures, such as the Spaniards possess.
3. For the spread of the faith; for their subjection renders its preaching easier and more persuasive (and so on). 31

It is not surprising that Sepulveda won the debate. His approach was consistent with the exploitative rationalizations of the time. He con-

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trived a reasonably logical justification for the irresponsibly exploitative situation. This clearly was in answer to an urgent necessity for such an authoritative explanation; the whole world, so to speak, was calling for it. As a characteristic, it should be observed that no explanation at all need have been made to the exploited people themselves. The group sentiment and feeling of the exploited peoples were disregarded entirely.

Sepulveda, then, may be thought of as among the first great racists; his argument was, in effect, that the Indians were inferior to the Spaniards, therefore they should be exploited. Yet the powerful religious interest among the Spaniards limited the establishment of a clear philosophy of racial exploitation. Some years earlier an attempt was made to show "that the Indians were incapable of conversion," but this was finally squelched by a threat to bring the advocate before the tribunal of the Inquisition. It remained for later thinkers, mainly from northern European countries, to produce the evidence that "native peoples" have an inferior, animal-like capacity for culture. 32

In the years to follow there will be unnumbered sermons preached and "scientific" books written to prove the incapacity for cultural conversion of exploitable peoples, and always with the implied or expressed presumption that this incapacity should stand as a bar to movements for the cultural assimilation of such peoples. (The ultimate purpose of all theories of white superiority is not a demonstration that whites are in fact superior to all other human beings but rather to insist that whites must be supreme. It involves primarily a power rather than

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*Francis Augustus MacNutt, op. cit., p. 83.
*It should be kept clearly in view that this colonial movement was not a transference of the feudal manorial economy to America. It was the beginning of an entirely different economic enterprise—the dawn of colonial capitalism, the moving out of "white" capital into the lands of colored peoples who had to be exploited unemotionally and with any degree of ruthlessness in the interest of profit.

*MacNutt, op. cit., p. 288.

*Among the Spanish writers of the time (about 1555 onward) who were in rather complete accord with the drastic methods of human exploitation in the New World was Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, whose prolific works have been collected in the commentary, Historia General y Natural de las Indias, 4 vol. It was Oviedo's opinion, even after visiting America on a royal commission, that the Indians were not far removed from the state of wild animals, and that coercive measures were necessary if they were to be Christianized and taught the uses of systematic labor.

*Beasts of burden do not have rights which human beings are bound to respect; they may be exploited at will. The latter convenience is a desideratum in the capitalist exploitation of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. However, the fact of difference in color and culture makes available to the exploiters of colored workers a valuable means of securing their dehumanization in the eyes of a certain public, that is to say, the public of the exploiting class. When a philosophy for the dehumanizing of the exploited people has been developed with sufficient cogency, the ruling class is ready to make its grand statement, sometimes implicitly, and to act in accordance with it: The colored people have no rights which the master race is bound to respect. The exploiting class has an economic investment in this conviction and it will defend it with the same vigor as it would an attack upon private property in land and capital.
a social-status relationship.) Assimilation diminishes the exploitative possibilities. This social situation is not especially a derivative of human idiosyncrasy or wickedness, but rather it is a function of a peculiar type of economic order which, to repeat, has been developed in the West among Europeans. The exploitation of native peoples, imperialism, is not a sin, not essentially a problem of morals or of vice; it is a problem of production and of competition for markets. Here, then, are race relations; they are definitely not caste relations. They are labor-capital-profits relationships; therefore, race relations are proletarian bourgeois relations and hence political-class relations.

The commercial activities of the merchant adventurers from the northern European cities were much less involved with the universal interests of the Church. The Anglo-Saxon and Germanic merchants came later to the great area of capitalist opportunities, and their profit-making purpose was much more clearly defined. Here, too, the bitter economic competition between different groups of raiders and traders cradled the nationalism which was to become a characteristic political trait of modern peoples. Out of this early economic war of shifting national fortunes England soon emerged as the "great slave trader of the world" and at the head of the most powerful economic empire.

It may be well to emphasize that the white people who went out from Europe to "civilize" and exploit the resources of the colored peoples were mainly capitalists, urban dwellers, business people from the beginning. Their way of life was basically antagonistic to the feudal and prefeudal agricultural systems which they encountered everywhere; therefore, the colored people had to be suppressed if the urgent purpose

Of course one should not be particularly disturbed about the fact that, although one never had the necessity or even the thought of exploiting colored people, yet an almost irresistible bitterness seems to well up as one finds himself in certain social situations with colored people. It is this very reaction which derogatory racial propaganda sets out to achieve and, knowing that even human nature itself is a social product, it would be surprising if the people did not hate whichever group the ruling class convinced them should be hated. Moreover, we naturally tend to dislike people who are degraded or brutalized. A degraded person is a contemptible person who should be despised and kept at a distance—the Christian Gospels notwithstanding.

Such ambivalent conclusions as the following by Dr. Louis Wirth may be misleading: "Ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences will continue to divide people, and the prejudices that go with them cannot suddenly be wiped out by fiat. But whereas personal prejudices and antipathies can probably be expected to yield only to the tedious process of education and assimilation, collective programs and policies can be altered considerably in advance of the time when they have unanimous group consent. Law and public policy can go far toward minimizing the adverse effect even of personal prejudices." In Ralph Linton, ed., The Science of Men in the World Crisis, p. 368.

of the white opportunists was not to go unanswered. In this connection Max Weber asserts:

A man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose. Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labor by increasing its intensity, it has encountered an immensely stubborn resistance of the ancient trait of pre-capitalistic labor. And today it encounters it the more, the more backward (from a capitalistic point of view) the laboring forces are with which it has to deal. 27

The system of chartered companies, adopted by the colonizing European countries, ordinarily put the welfare and destiny of whole peoples directly into the hands of profit makers. What E. D. Morey says of the British South African Company for the exploitation of Southern Rhodesia is characteristic of the system:

In such a fashion were the powers of government and administration, involving the establishment of a police force, the making of laws, the raising of revenue, the administration of justice, the construction of public works, the grant of mining and forestry concessions, and so on, in an African country three times the size of England, eventually conferred upon

Leonard Woolf makes a pertinent observation on this point: "The manufacturers, and the traders who were the harbingers of imperialism in the hills and plains of Asia and the forests of Africa went there with certain definite economic objects: they wanted to sell cotton or calico, to obtain tin or iron or rubber or tea or coffee. But to do this under the complicated economic system of Western Civilization, it was necessary that the whole economic system of the Asiatic and African should be adjusted to and assimilated with that of Europe. . . . In the process the lives of the subject peoples have been revolutionized and the bases of their own civilization often destroyed. . . . Nothing like this and upon this scale has ever happened in the world before. 28 Imperialism and Civilization, pp. 48-49.

See also James Mill, The History of British India, Vol. I, pp. 22-23, for an interesting account of a taboo against the employment of "gentlemen" by the early seventeenth-century "adventurers" in their East India trade; also Henry Stevens, The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies, or Recorded in the Court Minutes of the East India Company 1599-1603, p. 38.

Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 60. Concerning England itself, Paul Maukus writes about this process of the proletarianization of labor: "Once the problem of capital and plant had been solved, that of labour arose. How was it to be recruited and governed? Men used to working at home were generally not inclined to go to the factory. In the early days factory labour consisted of the most ill-assorted elements. . . . All these unskilled men, unused to collective work had to be taught, trained, and above all disciplined, by the manufacturer. He had, so to speak, to be turned into a human machine, as regular in its working, as accurate in its movements, and as exactly combined for a single purpose as the mechanism of work in a factory to which they became necessary. Hard-and-fast rules replaced the freedom of the small workshop. Work started, meals were eaten and work stopped, at fixed hours, notified by the ringing of a bell. . . . Everyone had to work steadily. . . . The vigilant eye of a foreman, who secured obedience by means of fines or dismissals, by threats or imprisonment by more brutal forms of coercion." The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century, p. 384. See also J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Town Labourer, 1760-1830, Chap. II.
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duction and as an impediment to the entrepreneur in his basic urge to undersell his competitors. The worker, then, was indispensable, but he should be paid only so much as would be sufficient to keep him alive and able to labor—a subsistence wage. Thus, as Eli F. Hecksher concludes: "With practically insignificant exceptions, all official wage-fixing... prescribed maximum wages. Out of every ten interferences with the relationship between employers and employed, at least nine were in the interest of the employers." And, says Rees, "The desideratum was a population as large as possible, as fully occupied as possible, and living as near as possible to the margin of subsistence." But low wages were supposed to have other values besides those of limiting cost of production. They tended to keep the worker in a constant state of necessity, which disposed him to labor. In this respect the mercantilists' characterization of the English workers is very much like that continually addressed to colored workers and native peoples. A man will not work seven days a week if he could live by the earnings of one; therefore, if the employer is to have a sufficient supply of labor, a man's wage should be no more than that which the worker must spend in that day. Edgar S. Furniss calls this "the doctrine of the utility of poverty." According to Arthur Young, writing in 1770, "[Great earnings] have a strong effect on all who remain the least inclined to idleness or other ill courses, by causing them to work but four or five days to maintain themselves the seven; this is a fact so well known in every manufacturing town that it would be idle to think of proving it by argument." There were riches, then, in the poverty and necessitous state of the masses: "in a free nation where slaves are not allowed of, the surest wealth consists in a multitude of laborious poor." If, however, low wages did not produce the desired results, it was felt that the law should compel idle workers to find employment. As one writer suggested in a series of questions:

Whether if human industry be the source of wealth, it doth not follow that idleness should of all things be discouraged in a wise state? Whether

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a corporation, whose interest in that country was to make money out of it."

Probably it is unnecessary for us to restate the history of the planter class in the West and its problems of exploitation, or the drama of white colonization in other parts of the world. Yet it may be in place to indicate further the relationship of race antagonism to the broader bourgeois-proletariat conflict. As we mentioned previously, the relationship of producers to white workers has been frequently such as to demonstrate the common status of workers as a factor of production, regardless of color. In some of the early experiments with labor in the West Indies both white and black workers were used in the field and their treatment and value were ordinarily determined by their relative economic productivity. But it is the early mercantilist labor theory and practice which show naively the fundamental exploitative drive; and we may illustrate this from the situation in England, the leading capitalist nation.

Mercantilism may be thought of as that system of economic philosophy, trading practice, and direction of production which has for its purpose the securing of advantages to a nation in international economic competition. It is the state capitalism which the postfeudal capitalists developed. Nationalism is the emotional matrix of this state economy and competition. Although mercantilism reached some sort of high point in overt expression in the late eighteenth century, its essential ideology continues in what has been sometimes called neomerchantilism. Roughly speaking, the early mercantilist defined the "wealth of the nation" in terms of the monetary payments which other nations were compelled to pay in order to offset their unfavorable balance of trade; today more emphasis is put upon the success of the heavy industries of a nation. The worker's place in the system has been primarily related to production, and he has been regarded as an item of cost—that is to say, as both a necessary and important factor of pro-

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"See Frank Wesley Pitman, Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763, p. 45; Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, pp. 3-29; and Lowell Joseph Regas, The Fall of the Planter Class, parasim.

"Gustav Schmoller gives a significant definition: "...in its innermost kernel [mercantilism] is nothing but state making—not state making in a narrow sense, but state making and national economy making at the same time; state making in the modern sense, which creates out of the political community an economic community, and so gives it a heightened meaning. The essence of the system lies not in some doctrine of money, or the balance of trade; but in something far greater:—namely, in the total transformation of society and its organization, as well as of the state and its institutions, in replacing of a local (town) and territorial economic policy by that of the national state." The Mercantile System, pp. 50-51. Cf. Carl Bucher, Industrial Evolution, p. 156.


"J. F. Rees, "Mercantilism and the Colonies," Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. I, p. 563. To the same effect Hecksher observes: "By forcing down wages... the export of such products as contained relatively more human labor could be increased; and such a policy could at the same time restrict the import of the same group of products... The corollary was that efforts had to be made to maintain an abundant supply of labour as possible at as low a price as possible." Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 153.


temporary servitude would not be the best cure for idleness and begging? Whether the public hath not the right to employ those who cannot or will not find employment for themselves? Whether sturdy beggars may not be seized and made slaves to the public for a certain term of years?  

To be sure, no producer will express himself so bluntly in England today, but this attitude and practice of forced labor is still common among Europeans in their dealings with native peoples. Vagrancy laws are still posted in courthouses and city halls in the Southern states of the United States. The technique of "keeping books" and making commodity advances to workers also tends to secure the planter's labor supply. Moreover, the mercantilist feared the prospects of the laborer's getting out of his place. It was felt that some class of people should be dependent upon to do the common work, and that the status of this class as common workers should remain permanent. It was some tendency in the working class to be independent which called forth reactions akin to racial antagonism. Says William Temple in 1770: "Our manufacturing populace have adopted a notion that as Englishmen they enjoy a birth right privilege of being more free and independent than any country in Europe. . . the less the manufacturing poor have of it, the better for themselves and for the estate. The laboring people should never think of themselves independent of their superiors for, if a proper subordination is not kept up, riot and confusion will take the place of sobriety and good order." This is, let us interpose, precisely the idea of "the Negroes' place" in the United States.

Undoubtedly the most persistent menace to the peace and good order of the classes was the rise of popular education. For, as Mandeville said in 1723: "To make the society happy and people easy under the meanest circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be ignorant as well as poor." Therefore, it became the immediate business of the ruling class to obstruct or at least to direct the education of the common people. If the workers had to be educated, they should receive vocational and industrial education; they should be turned back to their natural duty and not away from it, since "few that have once learnt to write and read, but either their parents or themselves are apt to think that they are fit for some pretenment, and in order to it, despise all laboring employments." And Thomas Ruggles made the typical statement: "There must be in society hewers of wood and drawers of water. If all are good penmen, where are those who will contentedly live through a life of toil?" Thus, the training advocated for the workhouse children, the children of the poor, was intended to keep them within the occupational level of their parents; and intellectual pursuits were ruled out. Professor Furniss describes the position of the eighteenth-century white workers in England as a class, which is virtually a description of the position of colored people in certain modern racial situations:

The proponents of the workhouse in both of its forms evidently conceived of the laboring population as a class united to the social body by bonds of duty and drawing from their connection with the nation certain rights. The fact that the laboring population was viewed as a class and dealt with as a class shows that individualistic concepts of society did not embrace them. As a class they were to be patronized by the government; as a class, coerced, disciplined, punished, when patronage failed to awaken the expected response. Much was said of their duties and their station in life, little or nothing of their opportunities for advancement in the social scale; few were the proposals to throw them upon their own resources as individuals, many those which advocated comprehensive government action to control their conduct as a group.  

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*George Berkeley (1750), quoted by Edgar S. Furniss, op. cit., p. 50. Furniss also cites an anonymous author on the duties of the laboring classes: "Such journeymen, day laborers, or others, who shall refuse to work the usual hours, for the price hereby stipulated, shall immediately, by the peace officers of the parish, be carried before a neighboring Justice of the Peace, and be by him committed to Bridewell, there to be kept to hard labor till they shall think proper to obey the laws of their country."  

*Ibid., p. 56.  

*See Heckscher, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 167. And in 1763 an anonymous author of Considerations of the Fatal Effects of a Trading Nation of the Excess of Public Charity declared: "The charity school is another universal nursery of idleness; nor is it easy to conceive or invent anything more destructive to the interest and very foundation principles of a nation entirely dependent on its trade and manufactures than education to the children of the lowest class of her people that will make them contempt those drudgeries for which they were born." Quoted by Furniss, op. cit., p. 148.

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*Ibid., pp. 56-67. Although Ruggles was making a plea for the just treatment of the common people, he did not go beyond the following demand: "But by pressing [the claims of the poor on society] no abstract ideas of a claim to equality, either in legislation or property, have been canvassed; but simply that claim to a fair retribution for their strength and ability to labor, which is their only birthright."  


*It is to this characteristic of capitalist society Harold Laski refers when he says: "There is a vested interest in the perpetuation of ignorance which is endemic in our civilization. We cannot get rid of ignorance save as we are willing to attack that vested interest; and the signs are clear that it will bitterly defend itself if we move to the attack." Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, p. 3. See also J. A. Hobson, op. cit., pp. 105-96.  

*Op. cit., p. 87. The Hammonds quote the president of the Royal Society, Giddy (1767-1839), as developing the following logic: "(Giving education to the laboring class would teach them) to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them factious and refractory . . . . it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets,
The white common people, after continual struggle along the way to democracy, have gained more or less right to be educated freely. But colored people, in South Africa and the Southern United States typically, are still suffering from the crude pressures of exploitation. The argument still holds that the Negro should be taught "labor, not learning." The desperate resistance to the giving of Negroes an equal opportunity for education is well known. It is necessary, so to speak, that their educable potentialities remain as nearly as possible undiscovered.

Sometimes, in studies of education in the South, the backward state of the system is attributed to the economic poverty of the region. This, however, does not seem to be the primary reason. The South does not want its poor white people and its Negroes particularly to be educated away from "those drudgeries for which they were born." If, for instance, some jinnee were to appear before the assembled governors, senators, and bankers of the South and present them a little hill of gold bricks to be used for educational purposes, they would probably begin to discuss among themselves what effect it might have on the stability of the social system; but if the jinnee interrupts with the condition that every time a gold brick is taken for the education of a white child another should also be taken for that of a Negro child, then we should expect the council to say without hesitation, "Gather up your bricks as fast as you can and betake yourself to Hades." Today it is almost as easy to get Federal funds for education in the South, but little general enthusiasm and certain possibilities of Negroes participating equally result in rejection of the aid.

It is, moreover, on this principle of vocational and industrial education—"teaching black workers to work"—that Booker T. Washington felt sure of himself. He knew that on this ground the ruling class had to listen to him; and, indeed, it accepted him as leader of the Negroes and watched carefully the program of the school which he established. However exalted his motives might have been, yet he enunciated one of the deepest intents of the exploiters of labor—of black labor especially—when in giving utterance to an essentially mercantilist labor philosophy he declared: "We shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life. . . . No race can prosper till it learns

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that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." And, turning to the white exploiting class, he said confidently: "You are in debt to the black man for furnishing you with labor that is almost a stranger to strikes, lock-outs, and labor wars; labor that is law-abiding, peaceful, teachable . . . labor that has never been tempted to follow the red flag of anarchy, but always the safe flag of his country and the spotless banner of the Cross."12

Thus the white ruling class tended to agree with Washington when he advocated dignity in common labor—the doing of manual occupations efficiently and dignifiedly; that is to say, in essence, the doing of menial occupations contentedly. This very class would have brought him to his knees had he advocated superior education on the grounds of its enhanced productivity and inevitably inherent dignity. A superior education tends to make the individual superior, because it puts him in a position to accept occupations that the society has defined as superior; whereas there is no assurance that the ordinary, efficient worker would be able to arrogate to himself an artificial dignity that the social system itself does not generally recognize. One reason why there is in fact little dignity in manual labor is that the laborer himself is ordinarily not dignified.13 To dignify a person is to refine and educate him far beyond

12Selected Speeches of Booker T. Washington, E. D. Washington, ed., pp. 33, 80. In Washington's own book of opinions in the South, he had listed faith in the efficacy of the 'higher' or any other kind of education for the Negro, . . . While the education which we proposed to give at the Tuskegee Institute was not spontaneously welcomed by the white South, it was this training of the hands that furnished the first basis for anything like united and sympathetic interest and action between the two races.

13Many white people of the South saw in the movement to teach young Negroes the necessity and honour of work with the hands a means of leading them gradually and sensibly into their new life of freedom. . . . They perceived, too, that the Negroes (the skilled, who were master carpenters and contractors under the guidance of their owners could greatly further the development of the South if their children were not too suddenly removed from the atmosphere and occupation of their fathers . . . The individual and community interest of the white people was directly appealed to by industrial education. . . . Almost every white man in the South was directly interested in agricultural, mechanical, or other manual labor; in cooking and serving of food, laundering and dairying, poultry raising, and everything related to housekeeping in general. . . .

Therefore there came to be a growing appreciation of the fact that industrial education of the black people had a practical and vital bearing on the life of every white family in the South. There was little opportunity for such appreciation of the results of mere literary education." Working with the Hands, pp. 13-14.

As a matter of fact, the white planters were accustomed to see their skilled black workers as slaves. On this point Richard B. Morris observes: "Failing to maintain an adequate number of white artisans, the Southern colonies then trained Negro slaves for the skilled trades. The files of the South Carolina Gazette revealed that the Negroes were trained and practicing virtually all the crafts needed for maintaining the plantation economy. In addition to those engaged in husbandry, the well-organized plantation employed carpenters, coopers, stone-masons, a miller, a blacksmith, shoemakers, spinners, and weavers. The wealthier planters often car-

vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and in a few years the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power toward them, and to furnish the executive magistrate with much more vigorous laws than were now in force." Op. cit., p. 57.
the training necessary for the successful performance of a manual skill; and when this is done in a capitalist society, manual labor usually loses such a person.

This, of course, is not a criticism of Washington; it may be indeed a commendation of his intuition in sensing the basis of race relations. It makes no reference to his widely recognized contribution to the advancement of Negroes among skilled workers. Yet, so long as Washington accepted the morality of capitalism, he had to conceive of the labor power of colored people in this fashion. "Washington was in some respects a greater leader of white opinion than he was of Negro opinion,"44 and "white opinion" was inevitably against the best interest of Negroes, as it still is to this day. There are many sincere Southern white people who believe that the success of the Negroes depends upon their adopting the industrial philosophy of the English eighteenth-century workhouses.

Although both race relations and the struggle of the white proletariat with the bourgeoisie are parts of a single social phenomenon, race relations involve a significant variation. In the case of race relations the tendency of the bourgeoisie is to proletarianize a whole people—that is to say, the whole people is looked upon as a class—whereas white proletarianization involves only a section of the white people. The concept "bourgeois" and "white people" sometimes seems to mean the same thing for, with respect to the colored peoples of the world, it is almost always through a white bourgeoisie that capitalism has been introduced. The early capitalist settlers among the colored peoples were disposed to look upon the latter and their natural resources as factors of production to be manipulated impersonally with "white capital" in the interest of profits. It is this need to impersonalize whole peoples which introduces into the class struggle the complicating factors known as race problems. If the colored people themselves are able to develop a significant bourgeoisie, as among the Japanese and East Indians, race relations are further complicated by the rise of conscious nationalism. As we shall attempt to show in a later chapter, situations of race relations may be distinguished according to the exploitative convenience of the white bourgeoisie.

The Progress of Racial Antagonism

This, then, is the nature of racial antagonism; developing in Europe, it has been carried to all parts of the world. In almost fateful terms Kipling's celebrated poem written in 1899 describes a desperate conflict, "the white man's burden," a like obligation, incidentally, never assumed by any other race in all the history of the world:

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half-child."

The Europeans have overthrown more or less completely the social system among every colored people with whom they have come into contact. The dynamism and efficiency of capitalistic culture concluded this. The stability of color and inertness of culture, together with effective control over firearms, subsequently made it possible for whites to achieve a more or less separate and dominant position even in the homeland of colored peoples. "The white man's conception of himself as the aristocrat of the earth came gradually through the discovery, as surprising to himself as to anyone else, that he had weapons and organization which made opposition to his ambition futile."45

It should be made clear that we do not mean to say that the white race is the only one capable of race prejudice. It is probable that without capitalism, a cultural chance occurrence among whites, the world might never have experienced race prejudice. Indeed, we should expect that under another form of economic organization, say socialism,

"Rudyard Kipling's Verse, 1885-1926, p. 320.

44Josef W. Hall (Upton Close), The Revolt of Asia, p. 4. In this early period there was a more or less conscious development of the exploitative system. In later years, however, the infants that were born into the developed society had, of course, to take it as they found it. The social system determined their behavior naturally; that is to say, the racial exploitation and racial antagonisms seemed natural and the conscious element frequently did not exist. In other words, the racial fate of the individual was determined before he was born.
the relationship between whites and peoples of color would be significantly modified.  

The depreciated of the white man's color as a social gift goes hand in hand with the westernization of the conquered peoples of color. The Hindus, for example, are the same color today as they were in 1750, but now the white man no longer appears to them to be the cultural magician of other days. His secret of domination has been exposed, and the Hindus are now able to distinguish between his white skin and that secret. Therefore, he is now left with only his nationalism and superior might, for should he pull a cultural rabbit out of his hat, some Hindu would promptly pull another, which might even match the first. Krishnalal Shridharani puts it thus: "[The Saxon] has been accustomed to regarding himself as a supreme being for centuries. Now he faces a world which refuses to recognize him as such. With all his civilized values, he will have to go on the role of military tyrant." There is no assumption, then, that race prejudice is a biological heritage of the white race.

But we should not lose sight of the fact that whites have pre-empted this attitude. Since the belief in white superiority—that is to say, white nationalism—began to move over the world, no people of color has been able to develop race prejudice independent of whites. It may be, however, that the Japanese have now reached that stage of industrial development, nationalistic ambition, and military power sufficient to question their assignment to inferior racial rank; no other colored race has ever dared to do this. Indeed, since 1905 the Japanese have known how it felt to overcome the white man and make him like it.

Furthermore, the Japanese are culturally ripe for a belief of their own in yellow superiority. But the problem now confronting them is not similar to that which lay before the Europeans when they began to take on the burden of exploiting the colored peoples of the world. The white opportunists had then come upon no race able to fathom their cultural superiority and power. Today, however, the Japanese are not only blocked at every point by powerfully entrenched whites but also relatively limited in their possible area of dominance.

A still more crucial question is whether this world is large enough to accommodate more than one superior race. Barring the apparent illogic of the superlative, we should bear in mind that color prejudice is more than ethnocentrism; race prejudice must be actually backed up by a show of racial excellence, secured finally by military might. No race


"Warning to the West," pp. 274.

"Pearl S. Buck likes to repeat the fact that "we differ in one important regard from the peoples of Asia. Race has never been a cause for any division among those people. But race prejudice divides us deeply." "The Spirit Behind the Weapon," Survey Graphic, Vol. XXXI, No. 11, November 1942, p. 540.

In a broad historical description of this process Leonard Woolf says: "In no other period of world's history has there been such a vast revolution as the conquest of Asia and Africa by Europe. ... Until very nearly the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans themselves regarded that with complacent pride as one of the chief blessings and glories of Western Civilization. The white race of Europe, they held, was physically, mentally, and morally superior to all other races; and even, with infinite wisdom and goodness, had created it and developed it so that it might be ready, during the reign of Queen Victoria in England, to take over and manage the affairs of all other people on earth and teach them to be, in so far as that was possible for natives and heathens, good Europeans and good Christians. Indeed, until the very end of the century, the natives and heathens themselves seemed to acquiesce in this view of the designs of providence and the blessings of being ruled by Europeans. It is true that in almost every case originally a considerable number of Africans and Asians had to be killed before the survivors were prepared to accept the domination or the domination, as it was called, protection of the European State; but once the domination was established there were few revolts against European rule which could not be met with a punitive expedition." Op. cit., pp. 15-16.

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"And we should expect that all peoples of color will be gratified and inspired by this kind of accomplishment. It tends to restore their self-respect as nothing else can. When the white man began his series of retreats before the yellow hordes," Shridharani writes, "it was soothing balm to the ancient wounds of Asia. More than any Japanese words the Japanese deeds made propaganda. The white man, the most hated creature in Asia, was put to flight in Asia, Hong Kong, in Malaya, in Burma, and above all at Singapore." Op. cit., p. 196.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen finds inspiration for all the colored peoples in Asia in the exploits of Japan. "Japan," he says, "is a good model for us, if we wish for prosperity of China. ... Formerly it was thought that of all the people in the world only the whites were intelligent and gifted"; but today Japan has shown all this to be false and hope has returned to the peoples of Asia. Le Triple Démime, French trans. by Pascal M. D'elia, pp. 20-21.

One hardly need read East Indian, F. S. Joshi, puts it in this way: "The white man - an image in every continent in the world. There are in Asia only a handful of whites. ... So they have, by reason of their political might, introduced the colour bar in India, China, the Philippines, and other countries. Had not Japan been triumphant over Russia, had not white prestige suffered a severe blow, the same colour bar would have spread throughout the continent of Asia." The Tyranny of Colour, p. 4.

"Raymond Kennedy emphasises the point that in the belief of racial superiority the confidence in superior might is elemental. Thus he writes: "The European peoples were enabled, some four hundred years ago, to extend conquest over the entire 'native' world. The 'natives,' who were just as good, man for man, as the Europeans, lacked the superior material equipment of the latter, and were either slaughtered or subjugated. The possessors of guns came to believe that they were also possessors of superior racial endowments, and attributed their success not to material advantages, but to innate mental and physical superiority. They were white and the beaten peoples mostly black, brown, yellow, and red; consequently inferiority must be linked before the color and race."

"The Aggressors, pp. 55-56. To the same effect see Leonard Woolf, op. cit., p. 12.

Lin Yutang puts the idea in his own way: "How did nineteenth century imperialism get started, and how did the white man go about conquering the world, and what made him think he was superior to other peoples? Because the white
can develop color prejudice merely by wishing to do so. It would be ridiculous for the Chinese to say that they are prejudiced against whites when Europeans segregate the Chinese even in China.  

Of course one should not mistake reactionary racial attitudes for prime movers. One has only to imagine a situation developing in Asia in which whites come to recognize themselves as inferior to, say, Japanese—in which whites come to look upon Japanese as a master race in the same sense in which Europeans have been looked upon—to realize what a tremendous revolution in nationalistic feeling and power relationship must transpire. It would involve an exchange in the exploitative position of the races, which could not be fully established until the yellow and brown people actually subdued the Europeans in their homes and there, in Europe, directed the economy in the interest of great capitalists living in the East. Josef W. Hall (Upton Cline) states graphically the nature of white superiority in the East:

The white man walked as a god, above the law . . . secure in exploitation. In his "sacred cities" there were parks, into which no native was allowed to come. His clubs excluded the native, however high born or well educated. His person was sacrosanct. . . . He could pass through contending armies—carrying any information he might wish. He could shelter any native political criminal and assist in any plot and remain inviolate. He could exert himself as will to tear down native custom, religion and industry, and still be protected according to treaty stipulations.

Then, too, it is even more difficult to conceive of a race becoming superior in the East without being so also in the West.

Still another primary consideration serves to indicate the insuperable difficulties in the way of any other race aspiring either to duplicate the racial record of Europeans or to dominate them. Today communication is so far advanced that no people of color, however ingenious, could hope to put a cultural distance between them and whites comparable to that which the Europeans of the commercial and industrial revolution attained in practical isolation over the colored peoples of the world. And such a relationship is crucial for the development of that complex belief in biological superiority and consequent color prejudice which Europeans have been able to attain. Therefore, we must conclude that race prejudice is not only a cultural trait developed among Europeans, but also that no other race could reasonably hope to duplicate the phenomenon. Like the discovery of the world, it seems evident that this racial achievement could occur only once.

The color prejudice of whites has other potentialities; it functions as a regulator of minor racial prejudices. Whenever there are two or more races in the same racial situation with whites, the whites will explicitly or implicitly influence the relationship between these subordinate races. In other words, the whole racial atmosphere tends to be determined by the superior race. This is a consideration of highest significance in understanding race relations. In the more or less tacit admission of white superiority and in competition among subordinate races for white favor, the situation is set for channelization.

The race against whom the whites are least prejudiced tends to become second in rank, while the race that they despise most will ordinarily be at the bottom. Thus more or less directly the superior race controls the pattern of all dependent race prejudices. However, the

"It should be borne in mind that race prejudice is not simply dislike for the physical appearance or the attitudes of one person by another; it rests basically upon a calculated and concerted determination of a white ruling class to keep some people or peoples of color and their resources exploitable. If we think of race prejudice as merely an expression of dislike by whites for some people of color, our conception of the attitude will be voided of its substance.

"The noted Southern writer, David L. Cohn, gives an illustration of this process. "The Anglo-Saxon," he writes, "bitterly hates and prevents wherever possible, the marriage of his kind with black or yellow peoples. There are separate schools for Chinese in Mississippi, because by statute they are not permitted to attend white schools. . . . There are many Chinese in the [Mississippi] Delta. They are successful merchants. Some of them live with their Chinese wives; others have Negro mistresses and families of half-breed children. To the casual eye these children are often indistinguishable from full-blooded Chinese. The fear arose in the white community that if Chinese children were permitted to attend the public schools, these Chinese-Negro half-breeds would go along. The result was that separate schools for the Chinese, at the expense of the community, were provided for by law. Theoretically, these schools are of the same quality as the white schools. Actually, it is impossible to make them of the same quality without prohibitive expense. Chinese children, therefore, do not enjoy the same facilities for education that are open to white children."

"The leaders of the Chinese, knowing the real reason for the exclusion of their children from the public schools, hope, one day, to have the barriers removed. To this end, they are working, hoping that their men shall refrain from having Negro mistresses, and no half-breed children. When they feel that they can prove to the satisfaction of the white community that the children whom they present for ad-
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insistent attitude of white superiority and dominance and an accommodating reaction of persons of color. It is a cultural trait of Western society which took form during the era of explorations.

To achieve a simple understanding of the concept, it may be well for us to observe the problem from the point of view of the initiating factor; that is to say, the white factor in the relationship. As stated above, in the contact of color groups, whites have set the stage for the pattern which the racial adjustment will assume. It varies according to their needs and aspirations, while the colored groups attempt to meet the aggressor on whatever seem to them the most favorable grounds. Therefore, an understanding of modern race relations will be achieved only if we look at the situation from the point of view of the desires and methods of Europeans in their dealings with peoples of color. The caste hypothesis of race relations will hardly help us to understand why the white ruling classes in the West Indies contend with most exacting logic that the contact of East Indians and Negroes there is socially advantageous, while in Kenya they reason with equal verve that the contact of Indians and Negroes is socially insalubrious. It would hardly give us a hint to the reason for the Portuguese’s remarkable freedom from race prejudice in Brazil as compared with their scrupulousness about color in Hawaii. We should have no clue at all concerning the irreconcilable ways of the Dutch—their anti-color attitudes in South Africa as against their comparative liberality in Java.

What the white dominant group will do depends upon the nature of the color situation—the exploitative situation. The Australians are

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Warren S. Thompson comments upon the situation in Africa: "When all is said that can truly be said about the nefarious practices of the Indians in their dealings with the Negroes in East Africa, it seems more probable that the chief objection to their economic relations with the natives is to be found in the fact that they renders the white man’s exploitation of the Negro more difficult and less profitable than it would otherwise be. Naturally this is asserted, and it certainly sounds better to object to the nefarious exploitation of the Negro by the Indian than to say that the Indian is not wanted because he makes white people work harder to maintain their profits, and renders their lives less pleasant than they would be if they did not have to compete with him. This is too stark an avowal of their own exploitative purposes."


In 1919 the Kenya Economic Commission reported: ‘Physically the Indian is not a wholesome influence because of his resistance to sanitation and hygiene. In this respect the African is more civilized than the Indian, being naturally cleanly in his ways. . . . The moral depravity of the Indian is equally damaging to the African race. The presence of the Indian in the country is obviously iminimal to the moral and physical welfare and the economic advancement of the native.’ Quoted by Raymond Leslie Buell, The Native Problem in Africa, Vol. 1, p. 291.

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too white-conscious to permit "olive-skinned" Italian immigration;\(^*\) and recently white Americans who risked very much to introduce Africans into the United States and who mixed their blood rather freely with them have become too white-conscious to allow southern Europeans and Levantines to immigrate to the United States. In the following chapter we shall discuss some typical racial situations.


17. Situations of Race Relations

Let us now examine some modern situations of free relationship between whites and persons of color; situations, to repeat, in which the aggressive whites have sought most conveniently and efficiently to exploit the human and natural resources of the colored peoples.

1. Situations in which the colored person is a stranger in a white society, such as a Hindu in the United States or a Negro in many parts of Canada and in Argentina—we shall call this the stranger situation.

2. Situations of original white contact where the culture of the colored group is very simple, such as the conquistadors and Indians in the West Indies, and the Dutch and Hottentots in South Africa—the original-contact situation.

3. Situations of colored enslavement in which a small aristocracy of whites exploits large quantities of natural resources, mainly agricultural, with forced colored labor, raised or purchased like capital in a slave market, such as that in the pre-Civil War South and in Jamaica before 1834—the slavery situation.

4. Situations in which a small minority of whites in a colored society is bent upon maintaining a ruling-class status, such as the British in the West Indies or the Dutch in the East Indies—the ruling-class situation.

5. Situations in which there are large proportions of both colored and white persons seeking to live in the same area, with whites insisting that the society is a "white man's country," as in the United States and South Africa—the bipartite situation.

6. Situations in which colored-and-white amalgamation is far advanced and in which a white ruling class is not established, as in Brazil—the amalgamative situation.

7. Situations in which a minority of whites has been subdued by a