PART 3

BLACK RADICALISM AND MARXIST THEORY

CHAPTER

THE FORMATION OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

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It is not surprising that the appearance of a world revolutionary Black intelligentsia in the twentieth century, rather than the issue of a longer process, might be presumed by most observers to be a phenomenon unique and specific to this century. Several quite easily identified reasons have contributed to this presumption. For one, as we have seen, the history of Black peoples has been recast consistently in both naive and perverse ways. Most particularly the memory of Black rebelliousness to slavery and other forms of oppression was systematically distorted and suppressed in the service of racialist, Eurocentric, and ruling-class historiographies. The sum total was the dehumanizing of Blacks. The native responsiveness of the species was denied to African peoples. This distortion might have been a simpler matter if it had been merely a question of a gap occurring in the record, but the space had been filled with nonsense that was made credible by the conventions of racist thinking. For the unaware, nothing was amiss. It was this tangle to which the preceding chapters were addressed, and an attempt made toward the achievement of a greater consciousness of the past of African peoples.

A second basis for the misapprehension of the grounds upon which Black revolutionists had developed, however, was a different set of conventions in Western historiography. Certain habits respecting the framing of events, especially among scholars and ideologues accustomed to assuming the existence of qualitatively distinct stages of human development, tended to trivialize or diminish the significance of precedents

of too longstanding account. Enmeshed as they were in historical traditions boasting of, say, Elizabethan and Edwardian eras, Jeffersonian or Jacksonian structures, and so on, rather singular and often superficial benchmarks had become the rule for establishing the setting of human activity. Divisions of historical time seemed particularly easy things to recognize, attribute, distribute, and declare. To such intellects, then, the twentieth century would seem a text in its own right. In a moment, we shall investigate how poor a preparation this would be for the proper placement of Black revolutionary thinkers.

Finally, of course, there was the overpowering spectacle of European radicalism and revolution apparently launched by the First World War. No matter their ideological or theoretical legacy, liberal or otherwise, it seemed to some that these events were bound to the immediate forces that overtook the older capitalist order in the twentieth century. Moreover, the names of twentieth-century revolutionists—Zapata, Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi, Mao, Fidel, Lumumba, Ho Chi Minh, Cabral (and many others)—represented at the same time, more than Marx and Engels had anticipated in the nineteenth century, and much less. In any case, it was eminently obvious to them that Black revolutionary thought found its beginnings here. There was little cause to look elsewhere. In 1966, Eugene Genovese, the radical historian, neatly asserted all three propositions in an attack on the idea of a Black radical tradition in America:

> American radicals have long been imprisoned by the pernicious notion that the masses are necessarily both good and revolutionary. . . . This viewpoint now dominates the black liberation movement, which has been fed for decades by white radical historians who in this one respect have set the ideological pace for their liberal colleagues. It has become virtually sacrilege—or at least white chauvinism—to suggest that slavery was a social system within which whites and blacks lived in harmony as well as antagonism, that there is little evidence of massive, organized opposition to the regime, that the blacks did not establish a revolutionary tradition of much significance, and that our main problem is to discover the reasons for the widespread accommodation and, perhaps more important, the long-term effects both of the accommodation and of that resistance which did occur.[1]

Thus opposition to slavery was minimal; in "the absence or extreme weakness of such a tradition," Black nationalism *as a movement* was a twentieth-century phenomenon; and the regard accorded to the revolutionary politics of the Black masses has its source in "white" radicalism. In the present chapter we will explore in detail this final thesis: the presumed relationship between Black radicalism and the European radical movement. It is by far the more important of the three propositions associated with the misconception of Black radicalism. Nevertheless, some attention to the habits of historical construction is warranted. It will prove a useful preliminary step, I believe, in our effort to recognize the continuity that exists between the Black rebellions of the previous centuries and the first articulations of a world revolutionary Black theory in the present century.

Capitalism, Imperialism, and
the Black Middle Classes

In chapter 6, because we were rehearsing events that assumed their shapes not less than one hundred years or so ago, our historical narrative worked, with the Western convention of centuries as terms of periodization, as a convenient scaffold. However, social processes, that is historical developments, are neither the products of nor meaningfully framed by such evenly measured periodicities. The French historian Fernand Braudel, for one important instance, made this point by extending the sixteenth century—the historical moment of the dawning of the modern capitalist world in the West—much beyond its formal claim of one hundred years.[2] In a different manner, the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, just as apposite a figure for our subject here, had earlier confronted such facile assumptions by calling them out as forms of foreshortened chiliasm or millenarianism.[3] Braudel understood that one hundred years was sometimes too short a period to encompass historical processes; Trotsky was amused by the suggestion that human activity might end or begin with the endings and beginnings of centuries. The point is that the construction of periods of time is only a sort of catchment for events. Their limited utility, though, is often abused when we turn from the *ordering* of things, that is chronological sequencings, to the *order* of things, that is the arrangement of their significances, meanings, and relations. Increments of time contoured to abstract measure rarely match the rhythms of human action. It is important to bear this in mind as we seek to come to terms with the Black theorists whose writings and thoughts have appeared primarily in the twentieth century. Their era began with the endings of slavery. They were, it might be said, the children of the slaves. The phenomenology of slavery formed and informed them. And in the vortex of its ending, more particularly in the wake of the social forces that compelled new and different situatings of Blacks and others destined to serve as labor forces, these theorists discovered their shared social and intellectual location. The twentieth century was for the most part their biographical station, but merely one site in the zone of their interrogation.

Still, in the post-slavery world order that was their setting, the Black ideologues who were to work in the twentieth century could not be other than strangers. This was to be their lot in whatever part of the Black world they were formed. C. L. R. James might have spoken for all of them when he wrote of the end of his school days: "There was no world for which I was fitted least of all the one I was now to enter."[4] In Africa and the West Indies, European empires and colonies were either being dramatically reshaped by the dictates of state and commerce or spawned at points formerly less accessible to capitalist expansion.[5] In the United States and the Caribbean again, Black peoples were no longer conveniently lodged in or organized by slave systems. The Blacks of the New World could no longer be casually pinioned by the curious as slaves or—at the margins of such systems—as freemen. And, inevitably, their societies and subcultures upon which the intelligentsia drew were steadily becoming less au-

tochthonous. The social patterns, the habits of thought, language, and custom that had congealed in the laborers' communities of the Western hemisphere's slave systems, though in many senses fundamentally conservative, were no longer as impervious to the penetrations of Western cultures as they had been in their "native" circumstance. The masses of Black peoples in the New World and in their ancestral homelands—as peasants, farmers, peons, agrarian workers, migrant and immigrant workers, domestics, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled industrial laborers, and as labor reserves—now assumed more diverse and diffuse positions in the economic order. Black labor's new mobility, organization, and adaptability also meant that the subcultures within which it had been historically enveloped were subject more often to the intrusions of material and ideographic elements from the agents of the economically determinative social order. Though it might be correctly argued that much of this penetration was at first incidental, some of it clearly was not. Language, that is the languages and consciousness of rule and the ruling classes, was an instance of the latter. These accretions would have profound effects on the ideologues of the Black world.

Marx and Engels, if we recall, had once conceived the notion that the bourgeoisie of Western Europe would succeed in transforming the whole of the world's nations into bourgeois societies—loci reduced to social orders of ruling and proletarian classes, as Marx declared in one of his prefaces to the first volume of *Capital*. Historically, however, capitalist expansion had had as its result only the most approximate relation to Marx's projected social divisions. In those parts of the world where resourceful indigenous ruling classes were encountered by the empire builders, collisions were inevitable. Not as inevitable were the results: some native elites were vanquished and destroyed, others not. Some, having led formidable anti-imperialist defenses, preserved much of their independent cultures, whittling down foreign influences to the mundane exchanges required by colonial administration. Many, however (and it is within the British Empire that one finds the best examples), became part of the apparatus of "indirect rule," a system whose rationale could be so concisely put forth by one of its mechanics, the British anthropologist, Margery Perham:

> The basic difficulty [in carrying out "indirect rule"] is one that will appear in its different aspects—education, land-tenure, economic production, law—in all our coming discussions. It is (and here I speak especially of Africa) the great gap between the culture of rulers and ruled. In administration, reduced to its simplest terms, it means that for the most part the people do not understand what we want them to do, or, if they understand, do not want to do it. . . . [W]e endeavor to instruct the leaders of the people in the objects of our policy, in the hope that they will, by their natural authority, at once diffuse the instruction and exact the necessary obedience.[6]

For a time the collaboration of native elites was sufficient for the imperialist and colonial authorities. At the peripheries of the world system where forms of coerced labor had obtained, peasantries existed in proximity to agrarian workers, unskilled

workers to semi-skilled workers; labor reserves were directly and indirectly connected with those absorbed by the political instruments of authority: armies, militias, native police. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, social forces set loose by imperialist invasions, wars, occupations, administrations, and co-optations, were maturing.

In the middle tier of these societies rested the native petit bourgeoisie, wedged between the laboring classes beneath them and the foreign and native operatives of capital and the officials of the state above. Their social origins were complex and intertwined. One of their bases was the "mulatto" populations of the former slave societies and the colonies. This "brown" stratum was frequently the natural issue of racial systems where privilege of position and education was sometimes bestowed by white fathers (or mothers). In other instances it was the result of deliberate political policy. In his massive study, *Caste, Class and Race*, Oliver Cox stated the general rule:

> Where whites are mainly sojourning rulers, their numbers are usually relatively small. Ordinarily "home" is in Europe or America, and they seldom set their roots in the area. Here there is little hope of developing a significant white population. The white man's principal need is not a home but a satisfied and exploitable people to develop the resources of the country. This ruling class adopts a policy of "co-operation"; and, other things being equal, favors are distributed to the mixed-bloods on the basis of their apparent degrees of whiteness among the people of color. Degrees of color tend to become a determinant of status in a continuous social-class gradient, with whites at its upper reaches . . . the lighter the complexion, the greater the economic and social opportunities.[7]

Another basis of the petit bourgeoisie was property. Some Blacks, but certainly with less frequency than occurred with what French colonialists termed the *petit blancs*, had translated particular skills, traditional positions and knowledge into property (including slaves during the slave era). With slavery abolished, some of this Black-controlled capital was reconverted into professional skills in succeeding generations.[8] Frequently, however, the native middle classes had been directly formed as functionaries of the state—civil servants, minor as well as middling—and as agents of landed, mercantile, or manufacturing capital (often absentee).[9] And for sure, there were other paths leading to the privileges of this stratum, some less "legitimate" or conventional.[10]

For colonial administrators, however, the most problematic origins for the native petit bourgeoisie were the mission schools. From the fifteenth century and before, the missions had all along served as a part of the rationale for European colonialist and imperialist aspirations. Still, the correspondence between the ends of missionary work and the goals of imperialism had never been entirely true. For one, the missionaries themselves, in the case of English imperialism, were often recruited from colonized peoples: that is, Scots, Irish, and Welsh.[11] Such soldiers for Christ could be often quite ambivalent about the colonial power. Just as troubling were the potential conflicts between faith and imperial interests. During the construction of slave systems

and afterward, the teaching of the tenets of Christian beliefs had taken as one of its presumptions the fact of the savage and the savage's or pagan's need. It was thus axiomatic that the proof of the missionary's success was the creation of civilized Christians—natives whose familiarity with European (or Euro-American) cultures and habits were as intimate as their experience with Christ.[12] This meant, though, that Christian missionaries in some instances felt some ambivalence toward such colonial policies as "indirect rule," especially "when it [was] held to involve the strengthening of animism or Islam," as A. Victor Murray put it.[13] Most significant, however, were the attitudes colonial administrators developed toward the activities of the missions. The construction of Black Europeans was overly ambitious in their eyes. In 1938, Arthur Mayhew would advise an Oxford University summer session for colonial administrators that "Before the Great War education was undoubtedly too 'literary.'" And he then reported, with satisfaction, that "[f]rom 1925 onwards great emphasis was laid on vocational training."[14] Forty years later, Penelope Hetherington would penetrate Mayhew's objections:

> In the past missionaries had counted themselves successful if their work in the field of education had produced black Englishmen, Africans who seemed to have assimilated Western culture. But these missionary-educated Africans were anathema to many administrators and others. They were "cheeky" and demanded social equality and political rights.[15]

It had become necessary to rationalize colonial policy and mission education. The formation of native elites was to be more deliberate. In the beginning there would be an appropriate contingent of clerks and a limited number of professionals, not nationalistic intellectuals; in the West Indies, such was the educational policy laid down generally at the end of the nineteenth century. In Africa, where populations were large and mission schools relatively few, the same policy was inaugurated in the years following World War I,[16] and a common place by the 1930s. In 1933, the *Report on African Affairs* read in part:

> Two especially important objects have been kept in view in framing the educational policy of Nigeria. The first to spread a sound education as widely as possible among the masses in order to produce, in course of time, a literate population able to participate intelligently in the economic, social and political development of the country. The second ideal is to train up as soon as may be a body of men and women who can perform some of the tasks in Government work and private enterprise for which at the first impact of western civilization it is necessary to import Europeans.[17]

It soon became clear, however, that the colonial governments had moved too late. "Elite nationalism," one of the first political expressions of the Black petit bourgeoisie, was already propelling complements of the class into the older, more profound tradition of radicalism. Elliot Skinner would recall:

By the 1920s and 1930s, conflict and incoherence had spread into almost all aspects of life in colonial Africa. There appeared a group of Africans who had acquired the cultures of the colonizers and considered themselves to be British, French, and Portuguese. They had learned to consider Europe as home and had adopted European clothing, speech, and mannerisms.[18]

Such was also the case in the Caribbean and in America (where the emergence of a middle class among Blacks could easily be traced back to the eighteenth century).[19] Even in independent Haiti, where the Black and mulatto revolutionary armies had, by the beginnings of the nineteenth century, broken down into racial and class factions, a petit bourgeois nationalism found expression. The sugar-export sector of the Haitian economy had been destroyed during the revolutionary wars and subsequently was unable to compete with Cuban and Indian exports in the world system. And though a series of political eruptions from below had divided the land between large land-owners (Black and mulatto) and peasants, the majority of the peasants were landless and frequently rebellious. Commercial pursuits and control of the administration of the state had increasingly become the arenas contended for by the Black and mulatto groups within the ruling class. But in this conflict, Alex Dupuy asserts, "the largely landowning black faction and its allies, frustrated by the mulattoes in their attempt to control the state, had recourse to a *noiriste* or black nationalist ideology, claiming to be the sole representatives of the people because of their common skin colour."[20] Inevitably, during the second half of the century, a radical Black ideology was articulated by renegades among the Black petit bourgeois intelligentsia. Eventually it was to mature in the work of Jean Price-Mars, Georges Sylvain, and Carlos Deambrosis Martins.[21] In every sector of the Black world, the dialectic of exploitation would shake an increasing number to their very roots. And in time, as the fractures and contradictions of Western domination became more compelling, their presence and their purpose would become electrifyingly clear.

Western Civilization and the Renegade Black Intelligentsia

In the Anglophone, Francophone, and Latin territories of both hemispheres, the Black "middle classes" had become broadly identified by culture and language, that is, their abilities to absorb the cultures of their ruling classes and the reading and speaking of European tongues. Deracination, social, and cultural alienation had become the measures of their "civility," loyalty, and usefulness. And of course they shared with the mass of Blacks the knowledge that these veneers were the historical artifices of the structuring of authority, caste, race, and class, and that their particular adaptiveness was the mark of privilege and status. As intermediaries between Black labor and the world system in Africa, the Caribbean and North America, as mediators between Black workers and the social tapestry woven by capitalist-determined forms

of production, their skills were functional and the naturalness with which they obtained them only apparently so. In the West Indies as well as Africa, systems of colonial education tutored these complements of imperialism.[22] In North America in the decades following the Civil War, similar apparatuses were to be found in the southern states. Of his sector of the African diaspora, James has said:

> In every West Indian island, in those days from nineteen hundred for the first twenty or thirty years, there was always a secondary school. Always one. . . . In the school I went to there were nine masters, eight of them were either from Oxford or Cambridge, and the one who wasn't was a drawing master. Well, you needn't go to Oxford or Cambridge to be a drawing master.[23]

Still, for these Black middle strata just as it was the case for the vast majority of Blacks, the dominant class and whites in general were not intimates of any immediate sort. In the Caribbean and Africa for the most part, whites were of a relatively small number. In Latin and North America, where European populations were statistically dominant, for most Blacks the whites were existentially a distant, fearful, and oppressive presence. Whites marked the landscape, and in a way, the boundaries of Black life, their lives, their habits, their very appearance the testament and detail of a cruel and unyielding order of social and spiritual regulation. For the radical Black ideologues—almost entirely circumscribed by native petit bourgeoisies—it was not only inevitable but also imperative that they would first acquire the stance of internal aliens. Those of special interest to us here bear this out.

From Trinidad came George Padmore, C. L. R. James, Eric Williams, and Oliver C. Cox. Padmore (born Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse) and James were the sons of school headmasters.[24] Eric Williams, one of their most illustrious if prodigal students, was a product of the same Black petit bourgeoisie—at a somewhat lesser rank.[25] Oliver Cromwell Cox, as his name suggests, was the son of middle strata parents who it appears had taken the authority of their colonial "betters" at its word.[26] In North America, W. E. B. Du Bois was reared by the "black Burghardts" amidst the more affluent white children of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. As he recalled his childhood in one of his autobiographies, *Darkwater*, it was some time before he discovered that he was "colored," and by then he had already absorbed the rather disdainful attitudes of his peers toward the few southern European immigrant families that made their appearance in Great Barrington.[27] Only Richard Wright, among the radical Black thinkers upon whom we shall lay emphasis, came from the Black substratum. But even here, the son of a sometime itinerant Mississippi farmer and general laborer was also, on his mother's side, the heir of a family with middle strata pretensions.[28] Again, with the exception of Wright, they had all begun their adult lives destined for professional careers. Their childhoods had born the marks peculiar to the Black middle strata—the presumption that being Black was incidental to their expected social stations. They were launched into maturity, as Wright would declare for himself during one of his moments of acute alienation, as representatives of "the

West."[29] Eventually this would prove to be the source of their contradictory compulsions, their strengths, and their weaknesses.

Among the vitalizing tools of the radical intelligentsia, of course the most crucial was words. Words were their means of placement and signification, the implements for discovery and revelation. With words they might and did construct new meanings, new alternatives, new realities for themselves and others. But language, that is Western culture, was more than some recumbent artifact to be used or not as the intelligentsia saw fit. Its place in their lives had been established long before they found the means of mastering it. Indeed, they were themselves in part defined by those languages of rule and commerce. In Frantz Fanon's poetic description, they were Black skins under white masks. James has quite effectively captured this contradiction:

> [Aime] Cesaire and I were talking one day, and I asked him: "Where do you come from?" He said, "Well I grew up in Martinique [and went to] the Victor Schoelscher school." . . . So I said: "What did you do there?" He told me: "Latin and Greek and French literature." And I said: "What next?" He said, "I went to France, and I went to the Ecole Normale Superiore." I said, "Yes I know that school. It is famous for producing scholars and Communists." (Cesaire was one of the first in each department: he was one of the finest scholars and he was a notable Communist.) And I said: "What did you do there?" And he said: "Latin and Greek and French literature." And then I said: "Where did you go from there?" And he said: "I went to the Sorbonne." And I said, "I suppose you did there Latin and Greek and French Literature?" And he said: "Exactly." He said, "But there is one thing more." And I asked: "What is that?" He said, "I went back to teach in Martinique, and I went to the Victor Schoelscher school, and there I taught Latin and Greek and French literature." So when Cesaire wrote his tremendous attack upon Western civilization, *In Return to My Native Land*, and said that Negritude was a statement for some concepts of civilization which the Black people had and which would be important in any development of civilization away from capitalist society, he was able to make this ferocious attack upon Western civilization because he knew it inside out. . . . He had spent some twenty years studying it.[30]

As it had been for Cesaire, so it was for all of them. They would all pass through the prepossessing claims of bourgeois ideology for Western cultural superiority with their only modestly disguised racialism. But eventually they would emerge convinced that a larger and different achievement was required. At first they would believe that the answer lay in the vision of class struggle, the war between brothers, as Julius Nyerere would later characterize Marxist socialist theory.[31] That conception, too, would prove to be insufficient. As Cox would write in his own summary considerations of Marx and Engels, their conceptualization of capitalism was only a partial realization of the historical forces that had created the Black ideologues and that they sought to comprehend and defeat.[32] Ineluctably, as we shall see, the events that did most to shape their era—the crises of world capitalism, the destructive dialectic of

imperialism, and the historical and ideological revelations of the naivety of Western socialism—drove them into a deeper consciousness. Appropriately, what Padmore found it necessary to do in the mid-1930s, Wright in the early 1940s, and James at the end of that decade, was later echoed by Cesaire's declaration in 1956:

> What I demand of Marxism and Communism is that they serve the black peoples, not that the black peoples serve Marxism and Communism. Philosophies and movements must serve the people, not the people the doctrine and the movement. . . . A doctrine is of value only if it is conceived by us and for us, and revised through us. . . . We consider it our duty to make common cause with all who cherish truth and justice, in order to form organizations able to support effectively the black peoples in their present and future struggle—their struggle for justice, for culture, for dignity, for liberty. . . . Because of this, please accept my resignation from the Party.[33]

From such moments as these, each in his own time, turned his face to the historical tradition of Black liberation and became Black radicals. They began the realization of their history and their theoretical task. We shall now consider how this came about and what were its several theoretical and ideological significations. We shall proceed historically, adhering as closely as it is possible to the processes that encompassed scholarship, practice, and consciousness, and eventually spanned historiography and the development of a theory of Black struggle. As we shall discover, the contributions of these intellects are enormous, their productivity massive. For these reasons, necessarily we shall explore only a portion of their work. Hopefully our review will touch on the more important parts. Much, however, will remain still to be said, understood, and discussed. Theirs is a living legacy. But always we must keep in mind that their brilliance was also derivative. The truer genius was in the midst of the people of whom they wrote. There the struggle was more than words or ideas but life itself.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION

9

Any discussion that attempts to assay the beginnings of radical Black historiography and intends to assess the significance of that tradition must take into account two figures: W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James. Du Bois, being the older (he was born in 1868), will be accorded pride of place.

Du Bois and the Myths of National History

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was one of the finest historians ever developed in the United States. The writing of history, though, was but one of his achievements. Though excruciatingly shy, he combined statesmanship and political activism with scholarship. In this way he managed to influence the lives and thoughts of legions. And notwithstanding the rigors of research he found the time to inaugurate the systematic development of Black Studies; to found and edit for more than twenty years, *The Crisis*, the most influential Black political journal of its time; to command the intellectual leadership of the American Black movement; to catalyze the development of Pan-Africanism; and at the end of his days, to assume a role of leadership in the post–World War II peace movement. These, however, were merely the outlines of a complex life that extended over more than ninety years.[1] He was not, though, an entirely benign figure nor was his work consistently accorded the respect it was due. One might conclude that it was the multitude of Du Bois's activities that obscured his significance as a historian. But, as we shall see, it was not his range that was at issue

with his detractors. The opposition to Du Bois was grounded on deeper reservations: the recognition that his work had origins independent of the impulses of Western liberal and radical thought. Thus, when his contribution to the American historical tradition should have been celebrated by its historians and scholars, the reaction of the academy was often vilification and neglect. And when he should have been recognized as one of the deans of radical historiography—in his seventh decade he became one of the two most sophisticated Marxist theorists in America[2]—the ortho- dox and "authorized" intellectuals accused him of Marxian heresies, racial chauvin- ism, and flawed conceptualization. There were, however, much more historic reasons for the intolerance found toward Du Bois's works. These reasons can only be identi- fied and understood by a review and analysis of the historical, intellectual, and ideological contexts from which they arose.

It is by now generally understood that the formation of nation-states and political reigns precipitate the development of founding myths—myths of origin, in the lan- guage of anthropologists.[3] Though the process may have been obscured by time in more distant eras, the emergences of the bourgeoisies of the eighteenth and nine- teenth centuries made it explicit. Their use of print and press, their appeals to and seductions of the classes they wished to dominate, made the fabrication of national myths quite evident. These myths were to be recognized in the official instruments of class hegemony: national creeds, social ideologies, philosophical tenets, constitutions, and the like, their function was to legitimate the social orders that had come into being. These myths made the new order a necessary one, an inevitable and benevolent event. They indicated to the national populace that the strains of historical novelty, the insecurities and anxieties accompanying the break with established forms were temporary, that change was natural, organic, and right. Founding myths were sub- stituted for history, providing the appearance of historical narrative to what was in actuality part fact and part class-serving rationales. Endlessly elaborated, these myths were produced by ideologues who identified with the dominant creed and depended upon those classes in the society that possessed power and the capacities to extend social privilege.[4]

The formation of the American state provided no exception. The American Con- stitution, the Declaration of Independence, the considerations raised in the Federalist Papers were all expressions of the interests and creed of the American bourgeoisie.[5] Soon they were to be augmented by the myths of Frontier, the paternal Plantation, the competitive capitalism of the Yankee, the courage of the Plainsman, and later supple- mented by the tragedy of the War between the States, the Rugged Individual, the excitement of the American Industrial Revolution, the generosity of the Melting Pot. Such were the romantic fictions that came to constitute the social ideology of the nation's bourgeoisie.[6] There was, though, an even older mythology, one that preceded the development of an American bourgeoisie with its nationalist sentiments and war of independence. Colonialism in America had required a different rationale: the Savage. Conveniently, as we have seen in the previous chapter, English colonialism had had available to it the savagery of the Irish to draw upon. The notion had traveled

well. When the need was for labor, the Irish, the poor of the metropole's cities, the African and the native American were comfortably herded together under the notion of savagery. When the issue had been the expropriation of the lands of the natives, there was little cause to respect the claims of savages or to comprehend their resistance as anything more than savagery.[7] Indeed, colonial thought expected quite the opposite. The colonists were the "advanced civilization." Such societies proved their historical significance by the destruction or domination of savage and backward peoples.

Eventually, of course, the ideologies of the pre-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie had fused. As the systems of manufacturing, plantation slavery, and farming had closed together into an integrated national economy sharing the exploitation of land, labor, and natural resources, the social ideology and historical consciousness of the ruling classes acquired two domestic enemies, the Indian and the Negro. In the early nineteenth century, the destruction of the native savage and the domination of the imported one became dual proofs of the superiority of the new nation. And once the native American peoples became incapable of resistance, they were further transformed and trivialized, becoming the romantic residue of an archaic past, living museum pieces.[8] For the Negro, however, it was a different story.

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the African remained a substantial labor force for the further development of the country. As a consequence, the political, social, and cultural significance of the African was more enduring. This meant, as Craven suggests in the following example from seventeenth-century Virginia, that the efforts taken to resolve the opposition of the Black in American thought were so often deliberate and constant that they remained obvious and conscious:

> The crude humor with which shipmasters or purchasers drew upon ancient history or mythology for the names of Caesar, Hannibal, Nero, Jupiter, Pluto, or Minerva; the Primus and Secundus who headed one list; and the use more than once of Ape or Monkey for a name records principally an all-too-prevalent attitude of the white toward the black.[9]

During the era that followed, when manufacturing became the most advanced form of production and democratic institutions the most significant political creed, the African was represented as chattel in their economic image, as slaves in their political and social image, as brutish and therefore inaccessible to further development, and finally as Negro, that is without history. And later, during the industrialization of the country's economy, when individuality and manipulative acumen were at a premium, the Black was a pathetic sharecropper, unskilled and unambitious—the "happy darkies" for whom the society possessed a paternalistic obligation. Finally, in our own time, with the development of corporate structures and the myth of the intensively rationalized and rational society, Blacks became the irrational, the violent, criminal, caged beast. The cage was civilization and Western culture, obviously available to Blacks but inexplicably beyond their grasp.[10]

Black historiography developed in opposition to this cloned thought and sen-

sibility in American consciousness. This was not the intention. Nor, in its beginnings, did it seem likely, since the first efforts at writing the history of the race had occurred some decades after the ending of the ennobling literature that had accompanied the abolition movement. With the Emancipation signed, there was no longer a demand for historical excursions into the Negro's African past to substantiate their humanity and its irresistible degradation by slavery. The noble savage had ceased to have a function. But reconstruction had rekindled the ideological attack on Black people. Sixty years after the assault had been renewed, Du Bois would unhesitantly designate its source:

> The real frontal attack on Reconstruction, as interpreted by the leaders of national thought in 1870 and for some time thereafter, came from the universities and particularly from Columbia and Johns Hopkins.
>   The movement began with Columbia University and with the advent of John W. Burgess of Tennessee and William A. Dunning of New Jersey as professors of political science and history.[11]

Their collective judgment of Black people, their "silence and contempt" as Du Bois characterized it, became American history. And since men such as these were also intimately involved in the construction of the nation's agenda for the academic study of its political processes and structures, their shared assessment of Blacks was also a prescription:

> In order to paint the South as a martyr to inescapable fate, to make the North the magnanimous emancipator, and to ridicule the Negro as the impossible joke in the whole development, we have in fifty years, by libel, innuendo and silence, so completely misstated and obliterated the history of the Negro in America and his relation to its work and government that today it is almost unknown. . . . It is not only part foundation of our present lawlessness and loss of democratic ideals it has, more than that, led the world to embrace and worship the color bar as social salvation and it is helping to range mankind in ranks of mutual hatred and contempt, at the summons of a cheap and false myth.[12]

The stakes had been high during the decades of the post bellum. As Thomas Rainboro had seen it in England's convulsive seventeenth century, the question posed in the years following the American Civil War was "Either poverty must use democracy to destroy the power of property, or property in fear of poverty will destroy democracy."[13] As ideologues for both victorious northern industrial capital and a now chastened southern agrarian capital, the white intelligentsia—academician and otherwise—rewove social and historical legends that accommodated the exploitative projects of those ruling classes. The political consciousness of Black labor, white labor, and immigrant labor were to be smothered by the social discipline implicit in the legends. Complemented by the terror of state militias, company police, and security agents, the persistent threats of immigration controls, the swelling ranks of reserve labor, racialism was reattired so that it might once again take its place among

the inventory of labor disciplines. Driven by the necessity to respond quickly to the rush of working-class mobilizations following the war, capital and its ideologues had not dallied:

> In the year 1877, the signals were given for the rest of the century: the black would be put back; the strikes of white workers would not be tolerated; the industrial and political elites of North and South would take hold of the country and organize the greatest march of economic growth in human history. They would do it with the aid of, and at the expense of, black labor, white labor, Chinese labor, European immigrant labor, female labor, rewarding them differently by race, sex, national origin, and social class, in such a way as to create separate levels of oppression—a skillfull terracing to stabilize the pyramid of wealth.[14]

This new repression of Black labor was the immediate cause and the circumstance of the profusion of protest materials produced by the Black intelligentsia in the last decades of the nineteenth century. And Black history was their desperate invention.

Stunned by the suddenness of the reversal of both their own fortunes and those of the Black masses, the most representative spokesmen of the Black petit bourgeoisie responded with the journalistic and literary eloquence that they believed had so well served them and the slaves in previous eras. While the Black masses organized— sometimes secretly but increasingly openly, to protect their political rights, and then when they were lost, in order to emigrate to the American hinterlands or to Liberia— the Black intelligentsia remained wedded to the tactics of supplication. These representative colored men, as Painter has characterized them,[15] insisted on the identity they presumed to share with their white, class counterparts. As the editor of a Black newspaper in San Francisco had declared in 1862, as far as he could see Black Americans were "moved by the same impulses, guided by the same motives, and [had] the same Yankee-like go-aheadativeness of the white Americans."[16] Like many others of his station, he begged his audience's indulgence for being Black and thus obscuring his truer colors. Still it was a most disheartening period for many of them. They worked hard in their newspapers, pamphlets, their public lectures and Congressional appearances at establishing their Americanism, only to be rebuffed out of hand by the nation's dominant ideologues.[17]

Inevitably, it had occurred to some members of the Black petit bourgeoisie that their disadvantage in the ideological fray lay in part with their failure to engage the American legend. In the midst of a country whose ideationists were desperately attempting to forge a historically grounded national identity, their lot was reduced to an identification with the horror with which slavery had been concluded. In an America that was now being reconstituted by its ideologues on the mantle of a Manifest Destiny presumably inherited from its European origins,[18] the Black intelligentsia had a historical basis that was too shallow to support their demand to be included in the nation's destinies. Legend as history denied to them that right and, as well, their capabilities.[19] The aspirations of the Black middle class required a history that would, at once, absolve their guilt by association with the catastrophic ending of

slavery; lend historical weight to the dignity they claimed as a class; and suggest their potential as participants in the country's future. They required a Black historiography that would challenge their exclusion from the nation's racial parochialisms while settling for those very values. When their historiography did begin, it was not so much a bold initiative against the certainties of nationalist and racialist histories as a plea for sympathy.

Black history thus began in the shadow of the national myths and as their dialectical negation. Consequently, it contained its own contradictions (e.g., the trivialization of social action) while enveloping those that occurred within the dominant American history. Generations later it would give rise to a more critical and truer opposition, but for the time being, it was to match American history in the coin of the realm; monument for monument, civilization for civilization, great man for great man. George Washington Williams, the first of the major Afro-American historians, left no doubt about these concerns.[20] In 1882, Williams had published his mammoth classic, *A History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880*; it consisted of two volumes totalling almost 1,100 pages. One may have already surmised that despite his titular boundaries, Williams had not confined himself to the events that began in the seventeenth century. Indeed, like many of his contemporary spokesmen,[21] he had found it appropriate to begin his search into the past by reviewing the role of Africans in the pre-Christian eras when "Western civilization," owing its immediate stimulus to Egyptian culture, had been centered around the Mediterranean. The contrast between these eras, the apogee in Williams's mind of African development, and the centuries of Negro enslavement that followed two millennia later, provided him with the opportunity to enunciate his beliefs:

> His [the Negro's] position, it is true, in all history up to the present day, has been accidental, incidental and collateral. . . . His brightest days were when history was an infant; and since he early turned from God, he has found the cold face of hate and the hurtful hand of the Caucasian against him. The Negro type is the result of degradation. It is nothing more than the lowest strata of the African race. . . . His blood infected with the poison of his low habitation, his body shrivelled by disease, his intellect veiled in pagan superstitions, the noblest yearnings of his soul strangled at birth by the savage passions of a nature abandoned to sensuality,—the poor Negro of Africa deserves more our pity than our contempt.[22]

The confusion in Williams's thought was real. He wrote from both a Puritanical perspective with its echoes of God's election, but was, as well, mindful of the racialist nature of his people's degradation and oppression. But in the latter, he was again perversely diverted since his resolve to write a "true history of the Black man" stemmed from his wish to "incite the latter to greater effort in the struggle of citizenship and manhood." While attacking the most extreme ideological forms that hatred of Blacks had assumed ("sons of Ham," the "curse of Canaan") and while denouncing the institution of slavery, he still demonstrated a certain ambivalence. Tacit but un-

spoken, of course, was the notion that only a Black elite could realize the task of Negro resurrection.[23]

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the ideological construction of the Black petit bourgeoisie had achieved its maturity. The tendency of the Black intelligentsia toward an elitist consciousness of race—a synthesis of Eurocentric racism and the preoccupation with imperial political forms—had achieved its broadest and most articulate expression. The social, and concomitant psychological and intellectual processes of the formation of a Black middle class begun in the eighteenth century had, by then, obtained an extensive and objective configuration.[24] No longer retarded by the political and economic structure of slavery and its hegemonic envelopments, freed from the moral compulsion of social identification with the Black peasantry and peons by the slaves' counterfeit freedom,[25] the ambitions of the Black *petit bourgeoisie* found realization in institutions consciously designed by themselves and sponsors for class's maintenance and augmentation.[26] With their position as a broker stratum seemingly secured from above by a ruling class that proffered them increments of privilege while ruthlessly repressing mass Black mobilization,[27] the ideological restraint that had been so much a part of the character of the class's earlier generations became less evident. The Black petit bourgeoisie could now indulge in the delusion of being capable of challenging the capitalist world system on what they took to be its own terms: race power.[28] The political ideology that emerged from their "Negro" universities and colleges, the pulpits above their denominationally stratified congregations, their professional associations, their creative literature, and their historiography was persistently mystically chauvinist,[29] authoritarian, and paternalistic. From the post-Reconstruction on into the next century, the logic of the formation of the Black petit bourgeoisie and its intelligentsia was building to these conclusions. As Jeremiah Moses argues:

> It was becoming apparent to the post-bellum generation of black leaders that individual accomplishments offered little protection from the threats and abuses of the caste-like American system. The middle class Negroes would remain victims of prejudice, so long as the masses remained untutored, impoverished, and demoralized. The goal of uplifting the freedmen was similar to the goal of uplifting Africa, and was to be carried on for the same purposes as the old antebellum African civilizationism. The building of an Afro-American culture would demonstrate to all the world that blacks were able and willing to make a contribution to American life, and were, therefore, fit to be United States citizens. As the masses were elevated, the bourgeoisie would rise correspondingly.[30]

These were the purposes that inspired Bishop David A. Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) to form the Bethel Literary and Historical Association in 1881,[31] which in 1897 was incorporated into the American Negro Academy by its founder, the Black Presbyterian Cambridge-trained missionary, Alexander Crummell;[32] which complemented the studied feminism of the National Association of

Colored Women (formerly the National Federation of Afro-American Women) cata-lyzed into being by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, Margaret Murray Washington and others in 1895;[33] and provided a specific martial character to some Negro colleges.[34] Inevitably, spokesmen were driven to cosmetic excess: William Ferris declared that he preferred "Negrosaxon" to Negro, while Boston's mulatto elite appropriated "Afro-American" to itself, and earlier, William C. Nell had employed "Black Saxons,"[35] but Crummell saw no need for equivocation. For him, the identity, function, and nature of their class were obvious:

> *Who* are to be the agents to raise and elevate this people to a higher plane of beings? The answer will at once flash upon your intelligence. It is to be affected (*sic*) by the scholars and philanthropists which come forth in these days from the schools. *They* are to be the scholars; for to transform, stimulate and uplift a people is a work of intelligence. It is a work which demands the clear induction of historic facts and their application to new circumstances,—a work which will require the most skill-ful resources and the wise practicality of superior men.[36]

According to W. J. Moses, it was Crummell who initiated the synthesis of his class's interests into a coherent ideology.[37] But it was others, I would suggest, like George W. Williams and Carter G. Woodson who codified it into a historiographic expression negating the national legend.[38] Still, what they achieved was but a fragile construc-tion, its integrity subject to challenge whenever capitalist indulgence, the foundation upon which it rested, might dissipate or be withdrawn. Mercifully, perhaps, it was also true that the possibility of this occurring was beyond the comprehension of most of them. Neither Social Darwinism nor their comfortable gospels suggested anything but the most temporary diversions as possible. When the crisis did come and Black people mobilized to struggle against it, the Black petit bourgeoisie was again largely unprepared to abandon their illusory partnership with power. Du Bois, like his predecessors and contemporaries, William Brown, Carter Woodson, Bishop Henry Turner, George Williams, and the West Indian–born Edward Wilmot Blyden,[39] had been deeply implicated in the "race uplift" historiographic tradition.

> Du Bois was among the forty black intellectuals enlisted in the American Negro Academy of which Crummell was the first president. In the Academy's *Occasional Papers*, Du Bois published his Crummellian essay, "The Conservation of Races," showing that he was hardly out of step with the conservative Crummell during his years with the American Negro Academy. . . . The classical black nationalist traits of mysticism, authoritarianism, civilizationism and collectivism were strong elements in "The Conservation of Races." Du Bois called upon the Academy to exercise a firm leadership and to become "the epitome and expression of the intellect of the black-blooded people of America." The black leaders were not to organize for such mundane purposes as the stealing of political spoils, nor "merely to protest and pass resolutions." Black leadership should be united in its efforts to improve the black masses, to fight against loafing, gambling, crime, and prostitution . . . to

strive for "the rearing of a race ideal in America and Africa, to the glory of God and the uplifting of the Negro people."[40]

In the earliest phase of his career, under the direct influence of Crummell, the Academy, and the omnipresent organizational politics of Booker T. Washington, Du Bois had found the notion of an elite, a Talented Tenth, appealing:

> The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.[41]

At the time he saw the difference between his design and that of Washington as quite significant. In time, he knew better. In his last autobiography, written in the "last decades of his 95 years," he made it clear that in the intervening years he had come to recognize that the differences between them were insignificant when compared to what they did not comprehend. Their dispute was not over ideology but power:

> I believed in the higher education of a Talented Tenth who through their knowledge of modern culture could guide the American Negro into a higher civilization. I knew that without this the Negro would have to accept white leadership, and that such leadership could not always be trusted. . . . Mr. Washington, on the other hand, believed that the Negro as an efficient worker could gain wealth and that eventually through his ownership of capital he would be able to achieve a recognized place in American culture. . . . [H]e proposed to put the emphasis at present upon training in the skilled trades and encouragement in industry and common labor.
>
>   These two theories of Negro progress were not absolutely contradictory. Neither I nor Booker Washington understood the nature of capitalistic exploitation of labor, and the necessity of a direct attack on the principle of exploitation as the beginning of labor uplift.[42]

What Du Bois did resent, more and more, was the power that enveloped Washington and circulated through his fingers:

> Not only did presidents of the United States consult Booker T. Washington, but governors and congressmen; philanthropists conferred with him, scholars wrote to him. Tuskegee became a vast information bureau and center of advice. . . . After a time almost no Negro institution could collect funds without the recommendation or acquiescence of Mr. Washington. Few political appointments of Negroes were made anywhere in the United States without his consent. Even the careers of rising young colored men were very often determined by his advice and certainly his opposition was fatal. . . .
>
>   Moreover, it must not be forgotten that his Tuskegee Machine was not solely the idea and activity of black folk at Tuskegee. It was largely encouraged and given

financial aid through certain white groups and individuals in the North. This Northern group had clear objectives. They were capitalists and employers of labor. . . . These Negroes were not to be encouraged as voters in the new democracy, nor were they to be left at the mercy of the reactionary South. They were good laborers and they could be made of tremendous profit to the North. They could become a strong labor force and properly guided they would restrain the unbridled demands of white labor, born of the Northern labor unions and now spreading to the South and encouraged by European socialism.[43]

It was not entirely the case, as Lawrence Reddick suggested in 1937,[44] that the "uplift" tradition from which Du Bois would eventually emerge possessed a deeply ingrained naivete. It would appear that the major part of its obtuseness resulted from the masks of deception behind which the struggle over power within the Black petit bourgeoisie was taking place. It was not merely an etiquette of intra-class divisions that made deception necessary.[45] The material stakes were high: in 1903, for example, Andrew Carnegie had extended a gift of $600,000 to Tuskegee.[46] Most significantly, however, the Black petit bourgeoisie was bound by a class strategy that narrowed their political range: the protests of the masses of Blacks could not be allowed to move beyond a diffuse state but at the same time must give the appearance of racial solidarity. The premium for which Du Bois challenged Washington was power not leadership. It was, however, the nature and setting of this struggle that propelled Du Bois beyond the accepted parameters of intra-class conflict.

The radicalization of Du Bois took place during a historical period characterized by a reintensification of the suppression of Blacks in the United States and the subsequent massive Black response. In the South and the Midwest, the Populist movement of the 1880s and 1890s, spurred by the conversion crisis of world capitalism and with its third-party aspirations built around an alliance between white and Black farmers/peasants and organized labor, had once again mobilized the Black masses.[47] Legal and illegal violence, election corruption, and a renewed emphasis on white supremacy were the combined responses of the ruling classes, industrial and planter, which orchestrated state and federal power and the instruments of propaganda.[48] Electoral restrictions stripping poor Blacks and whites from the vote were enacted in several states; lynchings accelerated (with the number of Black victims surpassing that of whites in 1889); and the Populist movement was transformed into a shambles by the unleashing of racial maneuvers.[49] The most dramatic response of the Black masses was migration. And when the cycle of drought, then heavy rains and the boll weevil vermin decimated cotton production in the years of 1915 and 1916 was combined with war industry and the cessation of European immigration, the migration of the Black masses became the Great Migration:

[E]arly migrations were dwarfed by the surge of black people northward after 1900, and especially after 1910. According to various contemporaneous estimates, between 1890 and 1910 around 200,000 black Southerners fled to the North; and between 1910 and 1920 another 300,000 to 1,000,000 followed. The Department of

Labor reported that in eighteen months of 1916–17 the migration was variously estimated at 200,000 to 700,000.[50]

A Black presence in the northern industrial sectors of the country became a new fact of the American experience.[51]

The most important consequence of these mass mobilizations, that is both the short-lived alliance with the agrarian rebellion of Populism and the urban migration, was that they amounted to a visible renunciation of the Black petit bourgeoisie's "leadership" by the Black peasantry. Hundreds of thousands of Blacks demonstrated that they were no longer willing to tolerate the social and economic insecurities of living in the rural South, to work in semi-slavery as the nation's cheapest labor, and to perish under the dual oppressions of the racist patronage of the white southern ruling class and the class opportunism of an ambitious and presumptuous Black petit bourgeoisie. It is not surprising, then, that in these circumstances some members of the Black middle class should discover in this an occasion for renouncing those among them who dominated their class's political and historical vision. In the same act, these renegades were drawn into the orbit of the masses of Blacks and the radical tradition. William Monroe Trotter, Du Bois's Harvard classmate, preceded him in this realization, and within the nexus of the Niagara Movement, begun in 1905, certainly disciplined Du Bois in this new militancy. Trotter, more than any other single individual, was responsible for transforming Du Bois from a cautious critic to a militant activist.[52] It was Du Bois, however, who by temperament, training, and experience would be capable of bringing this revolt to fruition; as his work certifies, it was to build in his intellect slowly, ineluctably. The evidence of his development was to be apparent from his evocation of the militancy of *John Browns*[53] published in 1909; through his short assay with the socialist movement,[54] his analysis of the imperialist basis of the Great War;[55] his reactions to Bolshevik Russia;[56] and the frustrations and compromises suffered as a race advocate operating in the national and international arenas of "bourgeois democratic politics" responsive to only one racial consciousness: white superiority.[57] By the time the most profound crisis in the history of world capitalism occurred, Du Bois was consciously divorced from the legend as well as its permutations.

Du Bois and the Reconstruction of History and American Political Thought

In 1935, Du Bois published his third historical work on the economic forces and ideological dynamics that gave nineteenth-century America its character. Unlike the two previous studies, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade* and *John Brown*, which were more conventional in narrative and analysis, *Black Reconstruction in America* possessed a theory of history—a theory based on a foundation of economic analysis and class struggle.[58] It was not simply a historical work, but history subjected to theory. The emphasis was on the relations of things.

Du Bois, however, had not neglected the play of history, its scenario. He had intended to—and did—trace the critical phenomenology of the American Civil War and its aftermath, the Reconstruction. From his research there emerged a fundamentally revised construction of those periods that stood as a critique of American historiography with its racial biases, domineering regionalisms, and distorting philosophical commitments. Methodologically, moreover, *Black Reconstruction* possessed a rigor consciously designed to match and supersede Ulrich B. Phillips's earlier "classic" work on slavery, *American Negro Slavery*. Du Bois, in his attempt to authoritatively identify what he took to be the truer character of the Reconstruction era, seems to have realized the necessity of returning to the experience and training in historical research and writing he had gathered at Harvard University and the University of Berlin in the late nineteenth century but had eschewed in *John Brown*. His radical, and radically different interpretation of the war and its aftermath would conform formally to the methodological canons of historiography so that he might subvert the substance of that tradition.

Black Reconstruction, however, was more the result of another purpose, a concern that was quite different from the task of historical revision. Du Bois committed himself to the development of a theory of history, which by its emphasis on mass action was both a critique of the ideologies of American socialist movements and a revision of Marx's theory of revolution and class struggle. From the integument of America's Civil War and the Reconstruction, Du Bois attempted to identify the unique character of mass praxis, class consciousness, ideology, and contradiction as they had occurred in the dialectics of American social and historical developments. In so doing, he was going beyond the argument of American "exceptionalism" that had persisted in the ideology of the American Marxist Left.[59] He was seeking to identify historically and analytically the processes that during the Depression years had given American social dynamics their character and potentialities.

Ultimately, *Black Reconstruction* was a political work. In the confrontation with the nationalist and reactionary American intelligentsia at the level of historiography, in the confrontation with the political Left in terms of the theory of capitalism and the ideology of emergent socialism, Du Bois presumed to alert and instruct revolutionary Black leadership.

With regard to these several concerns, he had made his position quite clear in 1933—a period coincident with the writing of *Black Reconstruction*—in a remarkable lecture delivered before the participants of a Rosenwald Fund–sponsored conference at Howard University. Addressing himself to the role played by the American intellectual elite, Du Bois had argued:

> If we give Mr. Roosevelt the right to meddle with the dollar, if we give Herr Hitler the right to expel the Jew, if we give to Mussolini the right to think for Italians, we do this because we know nothing ourselves. We are as a nation ignorant of the function and meaning of money, and we are looking around helplessly to see if anybody else knows.

> This is not, as some assume, the failure of democracy—it is the failure of educa-
> tion, of justice and of truth. We have lied so long about money and business, we do
> not know now where truth is.[60]

Unequivocally, Du Bois was associating the failure of the American nation to achieve
an effective policy in the midst of the Depression with "the fact that it has no
intelligent democracy. . . ." This, he believed, was a consequence of the ideological
deceptions and misconceptions that characterized liberal American thought. Turning
to the American Left, Du Bois was no less critical. Of the American Communist Party
(CPUSA), Du Bois declared:

> The task that I have recently been setting myself is to blunt the wedge the Commu-
> nist party is driving into our group . . . and I do this, not because of any enmity or
> fear or essential disagreement with the Communists. If I were in Russia, I should be
> an enthusiastic Communist. If the Communist party in the United States had the
> leadership and knowledge which our situation calls for, I certainly should join it;
> but it is today ignorant of fact and history and the American scene and is trying to
> over-emphasize the truth that the natural leaders of the colored people, the edu-
> cated and trained classes have had goals and interests different from the mass of
> Negroes.
>   There is a partial truth in this, and a partial falsehood. . . . American race
> prejudice has so pounded the mass of Negroes together that they have not sepa-
> rated into such economic classes; but on the other hand they undoubtedly have had
> the ideology and if they had been free we would have had within our race the same
> exploiting set-up that we see around about us.[61]

Immersed in research into post–Civil War "labor history," Du Bois was conscious of
the problems that had beset mass movements bringing together whites and Blacks—
problems that he felt spokesmen for Communism ignored.[62] Though now clearly
ambivalent toward the Black petit bourgeoisie, he was still relying on the notion of
racial solidarity (imposed from without) to defend his class from attacks from the
Left. But by now Du Bois had begun to temper his own "Talented Tenth" program of
social mobilization. At the conference he seemed mildly distressed with the "van-
guardism" with which he had been earlier identified. In point of fact he had appeared
to reverse his position. The Black elite of which he had been so optimistic in its
"natural" function of leadership of the Black masses was now understood to be
ideologically reactionary, a lesson he was learning within the National Association for
the Advancement of Colored People.[63] This question of ideology and its impact on
human motives and social relations would become a dominant theme of *Black Recon-
struction*. But here, its immediate significance was its toll on Du Bois's thinking. It had
forced him to reassess the Black masses and their revolutionary significance. He had
at last begun to form a committed response to the indictment of the Black middle
class and its intelligentsia, which the recent events of the late 1920s and early 1930s rep-
resented: the emergence of the mass movement, the Universal Negro Improvement

Association; the formation of the militant nationalists into the African Blood Brotherhood; and the Scottsboro debacle, which pitted the conservative NAACP against the Communist Party's International Labor Defense.[64] In accord with his criticisms of the American Communist Party, Du Bois was addressing himself directly to the problem of the alienation of the Black elite from the Black masses. He did this in part by reminding that elite, subtly, of its dependence upon the masses.[65] Yet he still had not himself reached the level of historical comprehension that he would demonstrate in *Black Reconstruction*. There he would come to a realization of the historical forces emergent from the people, specifically the capacities of the Black masses to take steps decisive to their own liberation.

Finally, in the Rosenwald Conference lecture, we find that Du Bois's analysis of the Depression, which international capitalism was experiencing in the 1930s, parallels his analysis of the crisis brought on by slavery in the earlier stage of American capitalist development. Both economically and politically, the Depression and the crisis of slavery would fundamentally transform the mode of capitalist relations. Furthermore, both had precipitated revolutionary movements and revolutionary social change.[66]

> [T]he matter of greatest import is that instead of our facing today a stable world, moving at a uniform rate of progress toward well-defined goals, we are facing revolution. I trust you will not be as scared by this word as you were Thursday [Du Bois was referring to the audience's reaction to a speech by Dr. Broadus Mitchell of Johns Hopkins University]. I am not discussing a coming revolution, I am trying to impress the fact upon you that you are already in the midst of a revolution; you are already in the midst of war; that there has been no war of modern times that has taken so great a sacrifice of human life and human spirit as the extraordinary period through which we are passing today.
>
> Some people envisage revolution chiefly as a matter of blood and guns and the more visible methods of force. But that, after all, is merely the temporary and outward manifestation. Real revolution is within. That comes before or after the explosion—is a matter of long suffering and deprivation, the death of courage and the bitter triumph of despair. This is the inevitable prelude to decisive and enormous change, and that is the thing that is on us now.
>
> We are not called upon then to discuss whether we want revolution or not. We have got it. Our problem is how we are coming out of it.[67]

On review, then, Du Bois had remarked on the weakness of American culture and its political institutions in the face of a deep crisis in its economic structure. He was concerned about the inability of the American Left as represented by the CPUSA— recall he had already tried the American Socialist Party and found it wanting 21 years before this lecture was given—to clearly identify the material force of racism as it related to the Left's struggle to destroy capitalism and replace it with socialism. He had exposed the ahistorical and materialistic ideology that dominated the Black elite and Black leadership. And, finally, he had indicated the failure of American revolu-

tionists to recognize that one of the objective conditions for revolution, one which goes beyond the onslaught of economic crisis and emiseration, is a consciousness of the social processes of revolution.

Du Bois, however, was concerned for why these things had become true for American society in the 1930s. He was interested in determining how it was possible that American culture and its institutions had become so estranged from the democratic ideal with which they had so long been structurally and ideologically identified. Moreover, how was it possible that American socialists could be so ill-equipped to deal with the Black worker, the Black community, and the social relations of Black people? How had the Black elite become wedded ideologically to capitalism and grown alienated and contemptuous of the Black masses? Why was twentieth-century American revolutionary theory so ill-conceived, the revolutionary movement unrecognizable, and revolutionary change and transformation a matter of contingency rather than praxis? He believed the answers to these questions resided in the history of the Republic. More specifically, he pursued them in the contradictions of that history.

Slavery and Capitalism

In the beginning of *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois identified the fundamental contradiction in American history; the contradiction that would subvert America's founding ideology, distort its institutions, traumatize its social relations and class formations, and, in the twentieth century, confuse its rebels and revolutionists:

> From the day of its birth, the anomaly of slavery plagued a nation which asserted the equality of all men, and sought to derive powers of government from the consent of the governed. Within sound of the voices of those who said this lived more than half a million black slaves, forming nearly one-fifth of the population of a new nation. (p. 3)[68]

> It was thus the black worker, as founding stone of a new economic system in the nineteenth century and for the modern world, who brought civil war in America. He was its underlying cause, in spite of every effort to base the strife upon union and national power. (p. 15)

Now let us pay close attention to what Du Bois was saying: slavery was the specific historical institution through which the Black *worker* had been introduced into the modern world system. However, it was not as *slaves* that one could come to an understanding of the significance that these Black men, women, and children had for American development. It was as *labor*. He had entitled the first chapter to *Black Reconstruction*, "The Black Worker."

The terms of his analysis were quite important to Du Bois. They were a part of his beginning of the transformation of the historiography of American civilization—the naming of things. In the changing of the names of things, he sought to provide the basis for a new conceptualization of their relationship. In the first three chapters of his

work, Du Bois established the rules of his analysis. The institution of American slave labor could not be effectively conceptualized as a thing in and of itself. Rather, it was a particular historical development for world capitalism that expropriated the labor of African workers as primitive accumulation. American slavery was a *subsystem* of world capitalism.

> Black labor became the foundation stone not only of the Southern social structure, but of Northern manufacture and commerce, of the English factory system, of European commerce, of buying and selling on a world-wide scale; new cities were built on the results of black labor, and a new labor problem involving all white labor, arose both in Europe and America. (p. 5)

And American slavery would also consist of social relations given their character by the ideology of white racial superiority.

> [T]here was in 1863 a real meaning to slavery different from that we may apply to the laborer today. It was in part psychological, the enforced personal feeling of inferiority, the calling of another Master; the standing with hat in hand. It was the helplessness. It was the defenselessness of family life. It was the submergence below the arbitrary will of any sort of individual. (p. 9)

> [The South's] subservient religious leaders reverted to the "curse of Canaan"; [its] pseudo-scientists gathered and supplemented all available doctrines of racial inferiority; [its] scattered schools and pedantic periodicals repeated these legends . . . a basis in reason, philanthropy and science was built up for Negro slavery. (p. 39)

All of this was necessary for the persistence of slavery through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and for its meteoric development in the early nineteenth century. The tissue of the nation would develop, coded by its slave past.

Labor, Capitalism, and Slavery

Du Bois was arguing that once slavery was addressed in comprehensive terms, in world-historical terms, its true nature was revealed. Beneath its appearance as a "feudal agrarianism" lay the real relation of slavery to the emergence of modern capitalism. As America was a critical subsector of this developing system, the conflicts between American creed and reality, the contradictions of American society, the distortions of its social structures and political institutions ensued from its dependence on slavery and would resound throughout the system into the twentieth century.[69] Slavery, then, was not a historical aberration, it was not a "mistake" in an otherwise bourgeois democratic age. It was, and its imprints continued to be, *systemic*.

> Here is the real modern labor problem. Here is the kernel of the problem of Religion and Democracy, of Humanity. Words and futile gestures avail nothing. Out of the exploitation of the dark proletariat comes the Surplus Value filched from human breasts which, in cultured lands, the Machine and harnessed Power

veil and conceal. The emancipation of man is the emancipation of labor and the emancipation of labor is the freeing of that basic majority of workers who are yellow, brown and black. (p. 16)[70]

In America, "free labor"—the vast majority of it supplied by immigrant Europeans from Ireland, England, Italy, and Germany—was also profoundly affected:

The new labor that came to the United States, while it was poor, used to oppression and accustomed to a low standard of living, was not willing, after it reached America, to regard itself as a permanent laboring class and it is in the light of this fact that the labor movement among white Americans must be studied. The successful, well-paid American laboring class formed, because of its property and ideals, a petty bourgeoisie ready always to join capital in exploiting common labour, white and black, foreign and native. (p. 17)

Eschewing the traditions forming in the European labor movements that would mature into the nineteenth century's socialisms of the First and Second Internationals, syndicalism and anarchism, the transplanted European workers became preoccupied with the possibility of accumulating wealth and power, of becoming capitalists.

Thus it was that American liberalism in the nineteenth century, with its ideals of individualism and its antagonisms to socialism, became manifest in a particular way. Its character was molded by an economic order that severely delimited material well-being and a racial consciousness that at one and the same time removed an entire section of the working classes, the Blacks, from the possibility of access to that well-being while also supplying a fictive measure of status to non-Black workers.

The wisest of the leaders could not clearly envisage just how slave labor in conjunction and competition with free labor tended to reduce all labor toward slavery. (p. 19)

It was only a minority of these non-Black workers that would join with liberal intellectuals and freedmen to form the abolitionist movement.[71] Du Bois had stated as early as 1915 that the "labor aristocracy" that was the result of the trade unionism of a materialistic labor movement—in Germany, England, and France as well as in the United States—was a crucial support to the imperialism and colonialism of the late nineteenth century.[72] In the United States, Black and non-Black labor became politically opposed "instead of becoming one great party." The northern non-Black working-class movement effectively excluded the freedmen, the slaves *and* the five million poor whites of the South. (It was even more specifically exclusionist after 1850 as it concentrated on a base of skilled industrial workers and craftsmen.) But it was a more generalized antagonism that would envelop Black and non-Black workers. During the Civil War itself, this conflict would erupt into race wars against Blacks. With the enactment of the Draft Laws in 1863, and with the encouragement of "pro slavery and pro-Southern" Copperheads from the North, the frustration of the non-Black workers, with their living and working conditions and the war, were turned

against Blacks. In the summer of 1863, hundreds of Blacks were killed by mobs of workers in New York City.

> The report of the Merchants' Committee on the Draft Riot says of the Negroes: "Driven by fear of death at the hands of the mob, who the week previous had, as you remember, brutally murdered by hanging on trees and lamp posts, several of their number, and cruelly beaten and robbed many others, burning and sacking their houses, and driving nearly all from the streets, alleys and docks upon which they had previously obtained an honest though humble living—these people had been forced to take refuge on Blackwell's Island, at police stations, on the outskirts of the city, in the swamps and woods back of Bergen, New Jersey, at Weeksville, and in the barns and out-houses of the farmers of Long Island and Morrisania."(p. 103)

More than once, in *Black Reconstruction*, in his editorials in *The Crisis*, and other works, Du Bois would return to this period in order to identify the roots of racial violence in the labor movement of the twentieth century. It also provided, he believed, an explanation for the tradition of skepticism found among Blacks for organized labor.

What was true for the mainstream of the American labor movement was also a factor in the radical traditions in the country. Though mid-nineteenth-century socialism had been largely transferred from areas of Europe where antipathies toward Blacks were inconsequential, its adherents, too, had not been capable, generally, of resisting the corrosive influences of slavery. This had been the case for both Marxist and non-Marxist socialists. The precedents established during this period would be of no substantial help to twentieth-century socialists whether their programs directly or indirectly addressed themselves to "the Negro Problem."

> Even when the Marxian ideas arrived, there was a split; the earlier representatives of the Marxian philosophy in America agreed with the older Union movement in deprecating any entanglement with the abolition controversy. After all, abolition represented capital. The whole movement was based on mawkish sentimentality, and not on the demands of the workers, at least of the white workers. And so the early American Marxists simply gave up the idea of intruding the black worker into the socialist commonwealth at that time. (pp. 24–25)

Though there had been exceptions,[73] the lack of an identity between the interests of Black and non-Black workers was fairly consistent in the labor movement. Wherever one looked—among those who saw the movement in political-electoral terms, or those who advocated revolutionary violence, or those who were committed to economic trade unionism—the labor movement was most often at best ambivalent toward Black liberation and progress. The ideology of racism in combination with self-interest functioned to pit immigrant and poor white workers against the Black worker and the slave. And after the Civil War, the same social consciousness divided the working classes—immigrant and white—from the ex-slave. More than twenty

years before the appearance of *Black Reconstruction*, and while his experience with the Socialist Party was still fresh in his mind, Du Bois had recognized this as a contradiction in the labor movement.[74] And during the intervening years, his anger had not dissipated. When it reappeared in *Black Reconstruction*, it was no longer simply a warning to a negligent labor movement, but an indictment. By then, the labor movement and capitalism were older and in deep crisis. By then, Du Bois spoke as a Black radical:

> Indeed, the plight of the white working class throughout the world today is directly traceable to Negro slavery in America, on which modern commerce and industry was founded, and which persisted to threaten free labor until it was partially overthrown in 1863. The resulting color caste founded and retained by capitalism was adopted, forwarded and approved by white labor, and resulted in subordination of colored labor to white profits the world over. Thus the majority of the world's laborers, by the insistence of white labor, became the basis of a system of industry which ruined democracy and showed its perfect fruit in World War and Depression. And this book seeks to tell that story. (p. 30)

Slavery and Democracy

We have already noted how the idea of slavery, to Du Bois's mind, was opposed to the ideals of democracy. The ideology necessary to rationalize slavery disallowed the further development of liberal democracy except as a myth. But Du Bois understood that the relationship between slavery and democracy was not a question of the clash of ideas. His approach to history was similar in this respect to that which Marx and Engels had presented in *The German Ideology*:

> This conception of history . . . comes to the conclusion that all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism, by resolution into "self-consciousness" or transformation into "apparitions," "spectres," "fancies," etc., but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which give rise to this idealistic humbug.[75]

For Du Bois, the creation of those political institutions and structures identified with American democracy involved congruence with the country's economic character, that is, with the slave system and capitalism. And so, though the American Constitution reflected the power of the plantocracy only in its devices for electoral representation, that had been sufficient advantage for the domination of the federal government by that class during the Republic's first several decades. This had meant a domination by a class that consisted of 7 percent of the South's population:

> It had in American history chosen eleven out of sixteen Presidents, seventeen out of twenty-eight Judges of the Supreme Court, fourteen out of nineteen Attorneys-General, twenty-one out of thirty-three Speakers of the House, eighty out of one hundred thirty-four Foreign Ministers. (p. 47)

Consequent to this power, the plantocracy had established a legal structure that effectively eliminated the civil rights of the nine million Black and poor white workers to be found in the South in the mid-nineteenth century. This perversion of the apparatus of representative democracy had survived the Civil War and the Reconstruction, and had persisted into the next century despite the challenges of Populism, organized labor, political radicalism, the Depression, and the mass Black movement of the UNIA.[76] Federalism had evolved into states' rights, the ideological dressing for first, slavery, and then the Black Codes, Jim Crow, and more contemporary forms of repression. Each shift in the apparatus of repression had been associated with the changing forms of exploitation as Blacks moved from being slaves to being sharecroppers and peons, and finally, to being proletariats or a labor reserve.

In the North, "the dictatorship of property" had been manifest in capital and investment. Not as rich or as powerful as the plantocrats in the beginning, the northern merchants, manufacturers, and industrialists had developed on the backs of southern agriculture and European labor. The North exploited its labor more efficiently, not having to absorb the costs of developing it during its nonproductive years. Those costs were incurred by the socioeconomic sectors of Ireland, Germany, Italy, and England. The North supplied the middlemen between the South and its European and domestic markets; it supplied the shipping and transportation for the South's produce. It was also in the process of developing a national economy of total integration before the Civil War, while the South was becoming increasingly dependent.

> In the world market, the merchants and manufacturers had all the advantages of unity, knowledge, and purpose, and could hammer down the price of raw material. The slaveholder, therefore, saw Northern merchants and manufacturers enrich themselves from the results of Southern agriculture (p. 41). His capitalistic rivals of the North were hard-working, simple-living zealots devoting their whole energy and intelligence to building up an industrial system. They quickly monopolized transport and mines and factories and they were more than willing to include the big plantations. . . . The result was that Northern and European industry set prices for Southern cotton, tobacco and sugar which left a narrow margin of profit for the planter. (p. 37)

Capital, both industrial and financial, continued to grow until the northern industrialists could challenge the political power of the plantocrats. And while it grew, it too undermined the structures of democracy:

> The North had yielded to democracy, but only because democracy was curbed by a dictatorship of property and investment which left in the hands of the leaders of industry such economic power as insured their mastery and their profits. Less than this they knew perfectly well they could not yield, and more than this they would not. (p. 46)

Once the industrial class emerged as dominant in the nation, it possessed not only its own basis of power and the social relations historically related to that power, but it

also had available to it the instruments of repression created by the now subordinate southern ruling class. In its struggle with labor, it could activate racism to divide the labor movement into antagonistic forces. Moreover, the permutations of the instrument appeared endless: Black against white; Anglo-Saxon against southern and eastern European; domestic against immigrant; proletariat against share-cropper; white American against Asian, Black, Latin American, and so on.

Reconstruction and the Black Elite

One of the most revealing aspects of *Black Reconstruction* was Du Bois's assessment of the Black petit bourgeoisie, that element of Black society with which he had been most closely associated for most of his then 67 years. For the first time in his public pronouncements, he was resolved to expose the extent to which his beloved elite, through the logic of its own development, had moved apart from the Black masses. As he reckoned it, the process of bourgeoisification and alienation that had begun during slavery had not revealed its contradiction until the Reconstruction. Suddenly, the petit bourgeoisie were confronted with the political expression of Black labor:

> The difference that now came was that an indefinitely larger number of Negroes than ever before was enfranchised suddenly, and 99 percent of them belonged to the laboring class, whereas by law the Negroes who voted in the early history of the country were for the most part property holders, and prospective if not actual constituents of a petty bourgeoisie. (p. 350)

Still, during these first heady days following the Emancipation and the ending of the Civil War, the Black petit bourgeoisie had presumed to lead. Quite soon, however, its ideological and political vacuity had begun to be apparent, its leadership nominal and at its best mere mediation between the demands of the Black masses and the power of the ruling classes:

> When freedom came, this mass of Negro labor was not without intelligent leadership, and a leadership which because of former race prejudice and the present Color Line, could not be divorced from the laboring mass, as had been the case with the poor whites. . . . Free Negroes from the North, most of whom had been born in the South and knew conditions, came back in considerable numbers during Reconstruction, and took their place as leaders. The result was that the Negroes were not, as they are sometimes painted, simply a mass of densely ignorant toilers. . . .
>
> It was, however, a leadership which was not at all clear in its economic thought. On the whole, it believed in the accumulation of wealth and the exploitation of labor as the normal method of economic development. But it also believed in the right to vote as the basis and defense of economic life, and gradually but surely it was forced by the demand of the mass of Negro laborers to face the problem of land. Thus the Negro leaders gradually but certainly turned toward emphasis on economic emancipation. (pp. 350–51)

Inevitably, however, even these tenuous links between the elite strata and Black labor had disintegrated. Du Bois now believed he understood the forces that had made a mockery of the racial solidarity that had been the elite's evangelism.

First there was the ambivalence of the Black petit bourgeoisie:

> The Negro's own black leadership was naturally of many sorts. Some, like the whites, were petty bourgeois, seeking to climb to wealth; others were educated men, helping to develop a new nation without regard to mere race lines, while a third group were idealists, trying to uplift the Negro race and put them on a par with the whites. . . . In the minds of very few of them was there any clear and distinct plan for the development of a laboring class into a position of power and mastery over the modern industrial state. (p. 612)

They were to pay, sometimes with their lives, when the changing order of privilege concomitant to the continuing development of northern industrial wealth left them vulnerable:

> The bargain of 1876 . . . left capital as represented by the old planter class, the new Northern capitalist, and the capitalist that began to rise out of the poor whites, with a control of labor greater than in any modern industrial state in civilized hands (p. 630). A lawlessness which, in 1865–1868, was still spasmodic and episodic, now became organized, and its real underlying industrial causes obscured by political excuses and race hatred. Using a technique of mass and midnight murder, the South began widely organized aggression upon the Negroes. . . . Armed guerrilla warfare killed thousands of Negroes; political riots were staged; their causes or occasions were always obscure, their results always certain: ten to one hundred times as many Negroes were killed as whites. (p. 674)

The violence and terror that descended upon Blacks during the fifty years that followed Reconstruction, left the Black elite shaken and pared down to its opportunists:

> Negroes did not surrender the ballot easily or immediately. . . . But it was a losing battle, with public opinion, industry, wealth, and religion against them. Their own leaders decried "politics" and preached submission. All their efforts toward manly self-assertion were distracted by defeatism and counsels of despair, backed by the powerful propaganda of a religion which taught meekness, sacrifice and humility (pp. 692–93). This brings us to the situation when Booker T. Washington became the leader of the Negro race and advised them to depend upon industrial education and work rather than politics. The better class of Southern Negroes stopped voting for a generation. (p. 694)

Through its wealth and educational institutions the Black elite survived, growing more remote from the masses of Blacks as its ability to reproduce itself developed:

> They avoided the mistake of trying to meet force by force. They bent to the storm of beating, lynching and murder, and kept their souls in spite of public and private

insult of every description; they built an inner culture which the world recognizes in spite of the fact that it is still half-strangled and inarticulate. (p. 667)

In this relative social isolation, its culture continued to adopt forms from the class peers from which it was estranged by race. But by the constant terror, the entire Black community had been turned in on itself; and by the persistence of poverty, its social stratifications had been stabilized. However, the resources of the Black community were too few to support a mobility of more than incremental significance. With the Black migration to the North and West, which occurred at the turn of the century, this situation would change but only slightly.[77] Meanwhile, though Du Bois still could not admit it, the idealism of the Black petit bourgeoisie had been transformed into an ideology that served to hold the Black community as a semi-preserve for the more effective exploitation by its elite. As he had made clear at the Rosenwald Conference, racial solidarity still overrode a radical critique of his class:

> We must rid ourselves of the persistent idea that the advance of mankind consists of the scaling off of layers who become incorporated with the world's upper and ruling classes, leaving always dead and inert below the ignorant and unenlightened mass of men. Our professional classes are not aristocrats and our masters—they are and must be the most efficient of our servants and thinkers whose legitimate reward is the advancement of the great mass of American Negroes and with them the uplift of all men.[78]

Du Bois, Marx, and Marxism

There is, however, a final aspect of significance in *Black Reconstruction* that demands close attention. From the vantage point of a Black radical historiography, Du Bois was one of the first American theorists to sympathetically confront Marxist thought in critical and independent terms. Undaunted by the political and personal concerns of Blacks in the American Communist Party, which frequently manifested themselves as a search for ideological orthodoxy in their work and writings, Du Bois had little reason or awareness for cautiously threading an ideological position between Ruthenberg, Lovestone, and Foster in the CPUSA or Trotsky, Bukharin, and Stalin in the Communist International.[79] As such, he could attempt to come to terms with Marx himself unmediated by Lenin or the emerging doctrines to be known as Marxist-Leninism.[80] And in so doing, he was articulating in theoretical terms the intersections between the Black radical tradition and historical materialism only vaguely hinted at in the formal organizations of the time. It was in those then irreconcilable roles—as a Black radical thinker and as a sympathetic critic of Marx—that Du Bois was to make some of his most important contributions concerning Black social movements. However, unless we continue to evoke a consciousness of the historical moment in which Du Bois was working, we have little chance of recognizing the nature of the thought to which he addressed himself in *Black Reconstruction*.

Since its inception, Marxism has meant to some a critical scientific system, a way of

understanding, comprehending, and affecting history.[81] The way in which Trotsky expressed his own excitement about Marxism underscores this point: "The important thing . . . is to see clearly. One can say of communism, above all, that it gives more clarity. We must liberate man from all that prevents his seeing."[82] The history of Marxist thought and Marxist organizations, however, has been more ambiguous. Concomitant with this presumed clarity, this way of seeing, was the emergence of its corrosives, its oppositions. The nature of change argued in Marxism, the dialectic, would lead one to anticipate just such oppositions to occur in Marxism. Specifically with the appearances of political dogma, historical certainty, and epistemological variations on empiricism, the history of Marxist thinkers has confirmed this expectation. This is not merely a question of distinguishing the true Marxists—that is, the "founders," Marx and Engels—from their less gifted epigoni.[83] It is not an intellectual or theoretical problem.

Dogma, certainty, and facticity are social and political phenomena. In Marxism they have emerged out of a context of specific organizational demands and definite collective and individual needs framed by particular historical and political dynamics. And it was with respect to these phenomena as they had manifested themselves in the American Communist Party organization in the late 1920s and early 1930s that Du Bois focused his work on revolutionary theory. To understand the significance to Marxist thought of what Du Bois was doing it is only necessary to recall that the American Communist Party in the 1930s was situated in the most advanced capitalist society in the world. Consequently it was soon to be the second most important communist party in the world, displacing the German movement but behind the Bolsheviks. To Marxist-Communists, the historical role of the CPUSA had been determined by the principles of Leninism: it was the vanguard of the most advanced proletarian movement.[84] It was this party's ideological dogma, its existential creed and theoretical orthodoxy as they related to Blacks that compelled Du Bois to a reassessment of Marx.

The first war of the world in the twentieth century is a watershed for those events that directly influenced the special character of the American Communist movement and the party's policies toward Blacks. It was during the war, or because of the war, or in the aftermath of the war that these events occurred. First, there was the transformation of international socialism: the Comintern succeeded the Second International as the leading force of the socialist movement. Second, in the United States, a Black emigration from the South resulted in the formation of northern, urban Black communities and subsequently, a new form of racial consciousness: Black nationalism. Third, beginning almost simultaneously with the formation of the American party, there was the intercession of the Comintern: Lenin and then Stalin on the "Negro Question." These were the critical events. It is necessary now to look at them in more detail.

Bolshevism and American Communism

The Second International succumbed to two forces: nationalism and revolutionary failure. With regard to nationalism, World War I found the majority of the workers of

England, Germany, France, and Austro-Hungary willing to go to the battlefields under national leadership in order to fight against each other. International worker solidarity upon which socialism was based disintegrated. The socialist movement had failed to maintain the dichotomy between the interests of workers and the interests of capitalist ruling classes. State nationalism had triumphed as the dominant ideology of the working classes. The pacifist tactics of the socialists had proved to be effective only in those countries that were either noncombatants or those, like the United States, which had been slow to enter the fray.[85]

Moreover, the revolutionary movements led by socialists failed—all, that is, but one. The Bolshevik Party had gained control over the revolutions in Russia, but in Germany, England, France, Hungary, and elsewhere, socialist revolutions either failed to materialize or when they did were aborted.[86] Thus, in the most advanced industrialized societies—the presumed site of revolution—no revolutions were brought about, no workers movements came to power. In point of fact, the only two successful revolutions of the period had occurred in societies whose populations were predominantly peasants: Mexico and Russia. Not only were they predominantly peasant societies but peasant movements had played critical roles in the triumphs of their revolutions, throwing into question the presumption that industrial workers were to be the "instruments of philosophy."[87] It is not surprising, then, that the organization of the international socialist movement atrophied.

The Second International had also come increasingly to represent or signify that revolution would come through the instruments and structures of bourgeois society: political reform through the institutions of bourgeois democracy.[88] When the International collapsed, so did its tactical and ideological resolutions. What appeared to replace them was the Third International dominated by Lenin and the policies of his Bolshevik cadre. Tactically, a renewed commitment to violent struggle became evident in the movement. Moreover, with the formation of the Third International, it became necessary for member national parties to pledge their loyalties to the Comintern, the Soviet Union and, in practical terms, to the Bolshevik Party. The defense of the Soviet Union was to be the highest priority. Party discipline was to conform to the dictates of the Executive Committee of the Comintern—a Committee chaired by Zinoviev, the second leading Bolshevik:[89]

Each party desirous of affiliating with the Communist International should be obliged to render every possible assistance to the Soviet Republics in their struggle against all counter-revolutionary forces. The Communist parties should carry on a precise and definite propaganda to induce the workers to refuse to transport any kind of military equipment intended for fighting against the Soviet Republics, and should also by legal or illegal means carry on a propaganda amongst the troops sent against the workers' republics, etc.

. . . All the resolutions of the congresses of the Communist International, as well as the resolutions of the Executive Committee are binding for all parties joining the Communist International.[90]

Still, the vigor with which the Comintern pursued and institutionalized its hegemony had no immediate effect on the American communist movement. The history and organizations of revolutionary socialists and workers movements in the United States had been too disparate for any authority, domestic or otherwise, to impose cohesion and/or subordination.

The crucial social basis for radical workers' movements in the United States was provided by the forces of labor recruited to American industrial production. Commenting on the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, Nathan Glazer argued:

> One central fact about the American working class in this period, and during subsequent decades, too, must be remembered: it was largely composed of immigrants. The working force in the steel mills, the coal mines, the textile factories, the clothing shop was overwhelmingly foreign-born, and that part of it that was not was concentrated in supervisory jobs and in the more highly paid skilled occupations.[91]

Earlier, as we have seen, the African and Afro-American agrarian workers had supplied the critical surplus value that supported the transformation of the economy into an industrialized and ultimately capital-intensive one. In turn, late nineteenth-century European immigrants—expropriated, trained, reproduced, and disciplined by European sectors of the world economy (in Germany, England, Ireland, and Italy primarily)—constituted the labor forces uniquely developed and historically necessary for the American industrial transformation. But most of these European immigrant workers had come from societies in which labor movements were already developed. In fact most of these movements had by the mid-nineteenth century developed unique and particular complexes of tactics, strategy, and ideology. Whole traditions in these labor movements and oppositions in those traditions had been achieved. These were a part of the political, organizational, and ideological cultures that accompanied the foreign workers to America. Theodore Draper observes:

> From the very outset, the American Socialist movement was peculiarly indebted to the immigrants for both its progress and its problems. The first convention of the Socialist Labor Party in 1877 was composed of representatives of seventeen German sections, seven English, three Bohemian, one French, and a general women's Section. Immigrants naturally assumed the role of teachers and organizers, but they were mainly concerned with teaching and organizing themselves.
>
> The Socialist Labor party was never more than an American head on an immigrant body.[92]

As these peoples dispersed and/or concentrated in the United States according to various social and economic determinants, their traditions were either conserved, adapted, or dissipated. Two ways in which they were conserved were through ethnic-specific and industrial-specific communities. The labor movement—whether it was trade unionist, electoral-party, or revolutionary—was largely organized on the basis of national, ethnic, and industrial groups:

> In the Socialist Party of 1914, the membership in the Northeastern and Midwestern states was largely ... Jews, Germans, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, Hungarians, South Slavs, and many others. ...
>
> Later immigrant groups, however, formed parties or groupings that were still related to the Socialist parties of their respective countries, of which so many had been members. These federations of immigrant workers played a special role in American socialism.[93]

This, then, was one critical contradiction in early American socialist development. The organizing principle was ethnicity while at the same time nationalism—a logical conclusion of ethnicity—endangered and frustrated socialist unity. Ethnicity dominated the movement organizationally, ideologically, conceptually, and theoretically. This objective contradiction was a persistent character of the socialist and labor movements and would reach critical proportions in response to both European and American events (i.e., the Franco-Prussian War in the 1870s; World War I; and ethnic competition for jobs and its subsequent violence).[94] Even among the minority sections of the socialist movement—the English-language federations—there was a basic conflict between nationalism and socialism. Much of the membership of these federations was in fact made up from second-generation immigrant clusters. Among the factors involved in the decision to become socialists and communists, Gabriel Almond argued, was the assimilative motive. Almond maintained that the English-language federations were influenced by both the organizational priority of Americanization so as to influence the development of a "native" American working class, and their members' own sociopsychological needs.[95]

The American Communist Party was formed, then, during a time of some theoretical and ideological confusion. In point of fact, the movement in the United States had broken down into so many competing ideological factions in the early 1920s that it became necessary for the Comintern to impose order, uniting them into a single party.[96] The party that resulted was dominated by foreign-language federations, the most powerful being the Russian and Finnish federations. The federations, though, were still often more concerned with the fortunes of the movement in their homelands than in America. Nationalism and nationalist rivalries were, consequently, a part of the party's historical character.[97] When one adds to this situation the disputes inherited from the Second International concerning the nature of capitalism and the form the socialist revolution would assume, the appearance of Bolshevik hegemony can be understood to have been both a further force for chaos and order. The success of the Bolshevik party gave the Russian-language association an advantage—for a time—in influencing party policy, but it also intensified ideological disputes and theoretical quarrels, since the Bolsheviks were a historical anomaly in classical Marxist terms. But a form of Russian nationalism had assumed dominance in the American movement as it had throughout the Comintern. Though this idea was acceptable to many in the American movement, it could also be expected to encounter opposi-

tion especially among those peoples who had been historically subject to Tsarist Russia's imperialism.[98] In a movement dominated by national parties and subparties, the character of the Comintern and the consequent inflation of the political influence of Russian nationals in the United States was bound to produce or revitalize counter-nationalisms. The growing power of specifically Russian Jews in the movement created or exasperated cleavages within the Communist movement that were not resolved even by the late 1920s.[99] Regardless, the direct influence of the Bolsheviks on the American movement that had begun as early as late 1916—months before its own spectacular successes and nearly three years before the first World Congress of the Communist International—would seldom be seriously challenged in the next forty or fifty years.

Black Nationalism

For Blacks, in sociological and political terms, one of the most important events in American history at the time of the First World War was the migration to the sites of urban and particularly northern industry. With the outbreak of the war, the European immigration of laborers had been severely restricted by both the exigencies of war and Congressionally imposed controls. In addition, war-time conscription had removed thousands of white workers from their jobs while at the same time war was opening markets to U.S. goods and increasing the demand for labor. The war, then, produced a labor scarcity in American industry. In such a labor market, workers had an advantage in their demands for wage increases; and as the term of the war lengthened, job action as a labor tactic became more diffused among workers, including the semi-skilled. Northeastern industrialists and their counterparts in the Midwest attempted to resolve the problem of increasing labor costs and labor militancy by recruiting southern and Caribbean Blacks.

As we had noted, at this time the overwhelming majority of American Blacks lived in the rural South. Despite the campaigns of terror and violence directed against them, and which had been a constant undercurrent in their lives since the Reconstruction, most of them were still reluctant to break historical, social, and cultural ties by migrating to confrontations with northern antipathies. To meet this problem, corporate managers had developed a sophisticated propaganda campaign to excite the interests of southern Black workers. Labor recruiters were sent South with instructions to fill the empty freight cars often accompanying them; Black newspapers (some subsidized by northern industrialists), led by the *Chicago Defender*, ran articles on the opportunities for employment in the North juxtaposed with accounts of the anti-Black activities of southern whites. Robert Abbott, editor of the *Defender*, was relentless:

> Abbott put out a "national edition" of his weekly, aimed at southern blacks. It carried in red ink such headlines as: 100 NEGROES MURDERED WEEKLY IN UNITED STATES BY WHITE AMERICANS; LYNCHING—A NATIONAL DISGRACE; and WHITE GEN-

TLEMAN RAPES COLORED GIRL. Accompanying a lynching story was a picture of the lynch victim's severed head, with the caption: NOT BELGIUM—AMERICA. Poems entitled *Land of Hope* and *Bound for the Promised Land* urged blacks to go North, and editorials boosted Chicago as the best place for them to go. Want ads offered jobs at attractive wages in and around Chicago. In news items, anecdotes, cartoons, and photos, the *Defender* crystallized the underlying economic and social causes of black suffering into immediate motives for flight.[100]

The promise of economic integration into some of the most advanced sectors of American production had its impact. As noted, an estimated quarter of a million to a million Black workers and their families migrated during the war years, substantially increasing the populations of the Black communities situated in the critical industrial areas east of the Mississippi.

This migratory flood coincided with one emanating from the English-speaking West Indies. The poverty and deteriorating well-being of Caribbean Blacks were the direct legacies of colonialism. Tens of thousands of West Indians came to the United States during the first decades of the twentieth century. It was work, too, that attracted them, and so they located in precisely the same Black communities that received the internal migration:

> One unusual and complicating feature of the New York ghetto in Harlem was the presence of two quite different nonwhite populations. By far the larger was the group of southern migrants, but a minority not to be ignored had originated in the Caribbean islands, chiefly the British West Indies, with some from the Dutch West Indies, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. To the 5000 foreign-born blacks who lived in New York in 1900 were added 28,000 more during the war decade. In 1917 the New York *Times* estimated that they formed one quarter of the population of Harlem.[101]

The congregating of these peoples, the deep disruptions that accompanied their translocations, and the persistent hostility with which they were confronted forced them on to each other, politically and socially. As such it became necessary for them to develop social and political forms that would transcend the particularistic identities due to specific historical differences. It was within this particular milieu that both the UNIA and the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) emerged; and both would have enormous consequence for the American Communist Party's efforts at organizing Blacks.

It has never been possible to characterize the United Negro Improvement Association in precise terms. Its dominant ideology was eclectic: incorporating elements of Christianity, socialism, revolutionary nationalism, and race solidarity. As an organization; it exhibited a range of structures responsive to circumstance and personality. Responsibility for policy- and decision-making varied as well. They were formed in accordance with ideological factors: the circumstance of situationally crucial individuals; the nature of the issues; and the momentary fortunes of the organization. Too, the organization did change over time, responding to the political and social signifi-

cances of the interactions between itself and its social and political environment. Nevertheless, observers have most frequently typified the organization as ideologically a "back to Africa" movement; or for very different reasons, and with implicit organizational characterizations, as "the Garvey movement." It was never quite so obviously simple.[102]

The UNIA's main thrust appears to have been toward the development of a powerful Black nation economically organized by a modified form of capitalism.[103] This powerful entity was to become the guardian of the interests of Blacks in Africa (where it was to be located) and those dispersed in the African diaspora. The nation was to be founded on a technocratic elite recruited from the Black peoples of the world. This elite, in turn, would create the structures necessary for the nation's survival and its development until it was strong enough to play its historical role and absorb and generate subsequent generations of trained, disciplined nationalists. As a number of historians have noted, in many ways both directly and indirectly, the UNIA had incorporated elements of the self-help movement identified with Booker T. Washington; but without the restrictions imposed upon that movement, the UNIA had pushed the concept to its logical conclusion.[104] In pursuit of this ideal, the organization had developed structures that anticipated a national formation. The UNIA had possessed a protonational bureaucracy; security forces with women auxiliaries; a national church; an international network of chapters (or consulates); and the beginnings of an economic base consisting of a series of small businesses and service industries. Hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of Blacks were enrolled in the organization. Though recruitment went on primarily in the United States and the West Indies, the UNIA possessed dues-paying members in Africa and Latin America. The scale of the organization made the UNIA by far and away the largest nationalist organization to emerge among Blacks in America. In these terms, the organization's significance still remains unrivalled in U.S. history.[105]

Since most histories of the organization were written by its critics, distortions of the UNIA abound in the literature. They are especially marked with regard to its founder and principal organizer, Marcus Garvey.[106] Even Du Bois, while participating in the opposition to the UNIA, had contributed exposes of its financial practices and bitter characterizations of Garvey.[107] But the one predominant tactic of the UNIA's critics was to identify the organization with Garvey, thus tending to reduce their criticisms to studies of aberrant personality or political opportunism. Robert Bagnall, one such critic, writing in A. Philip Randolph's and Chandler Owen's paper, *The Messenger*, described Garvey as

a Jamaican Negro of unmixed stock, squat, stocky, fat, and sleek, with protruding jaws, and heavy jowls, small bright pig-like eyes and rather bull-dog-like face. Boastful, egotistic, tyrannical, intolerant, cunning, shifty, smooth and suave, avaricious; . . . as adept as a cuttle-fish in beclouding an issue he cannot meet, prolix in the nth degree in devising new schemes to gain the money of poor ignorant Negroes; gifted at self-advertisement, without shame in self-laudation, promising

ever, but never fulfilling, without regard for veracity, a lover of pomp and tawdry finery and garish display, a bully with his own folk but servile in the presence of the Klan, a sheer opportunist and demagogic charlatan.[108]

Others with more charity came to the same point. Claude McKay would write in his *Harlem: Negro Metropolis*:

> The movement of Marcus Garvey in Harlem was glorious with romance and riotous, clashing emotions. Like the wise men of the ancient world, this peacock-parading Negro of the New World, hoodooed by the "Negromancy" of Africa, followed a star—a Black Star. A weaver of dreams, he translated into a fantastic pattern of reality the gaudy strands of the vicarious desires of the submerged members of the Negro race.
>
> There has never been a Negro leader like Garvey. None ever enjoyed a fraction of his universal popularity. He winged his way into the firmament of the white world holding aloft a black star and exhorting the Negro people to gaze upon and follow it.[109]

In this way the UNIA became known as "the Garvey movement." This has always implied or bespoken the presence of autocratic authority and demagoguery. As principal spokesman and symbol of the UNIA, Garvey became the object of study rather than the masses of people involved in making the organization. Robert Hill, Tony Martin, and Theodore Vincent are three historians who have recently begun to correct that fault.

> The UNIA's official demands, set down in a Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, included the right to vote, a fair share of political patronage, representation on juries and on the judge's bench, and full freedom of press, speech, and assembly for all. The UNIA sought these basic freedoms primarily to create and strengthen a separate black world, while groups like the NAACP would utilize these freedoms primarily to create an integrated world.
>
> Socially, the UNIA was a huge club and fraternal order. . . . For Garveyites, there was the fraternal camaraderie of all the black people of the world. UNIA parades, Saturday night parties, women's group luncheons, etc., had a significance far beyond that of providing social diversion. Their affairs were designed to build a pride and confidence in blackness.[110]

Clearly, the UNIA possessed a substantial cadre and several tiers of secondary leadership. It was a complex organization functioning on a number of levels simultaneously. And its popular appeals and attractive political style were combined with pragmatic programs of racial achievement. For the five years of its peak development, from 1918 to 1923, it became the most formidable movement in the history of American Blacks.

Like the UNIA, the organizational cadre of the African Blood Brotherhood consisted largely of West Indians and Afro-Americans who had developed professionally as social agitators and journalist-propagandists. Its founding organizers in 1919 were

Cyril Briggs (Nevis Island), Richard B. Moore (Barbados), and W. A. Domingo (Jamaica).[111] Later, in the period between 1920 and 1922, Otto Huiswoud (Surinam) and a number of important Afro-American radicals joined the movement, including Otto Hall, Haywood Hall (Harry Haywood), Edward Doty, Grace Campbell, H. V. Phillips, Gordon Owens, Alonzo Isabel, and Lovett Fort-Whiteman.[112]

> The largest membership was in the New York home office, but there were sizable contingents in Chicago, Baltimore, Omaha and West Virginia. . . . The ABB also established groups in the Caribbean area; in Trinidad, Surinam, British Guiana, Santo Domingo and the Windward Islands. At its height, the ABB had only three to five thousand members, most of them ex-servicemen. . . . The number was kept small, in part by design, but the possibilities of danger, and the Brotherhood's militantly nationalistic and left-wing ideology, undoubtedly alienated and confused many people. The ABB saw itself as a tight-knit, semi-clandestine, paramilitary group which hoped to act for a "worldwide federation" of black organizations. The Brotherhood's official program stated, in part: "In order to build a strong and effective movement on the platform of liberation for the Negro people, protection of their rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, etc., all Negro organizations should get together on a Federation basis, thus creating a united centralized movement.[113]

For the bulk of its dozen-odd years of existence, the ABB was a secret, paramilitary organization dedicated to the "immediate protection and ultimate liberation of Negroes everywhere."[114] This aspect of its ideology, however, was not a true reflection of its origins or future.

When the Brotherhood was first proposed in Briggs's monthly magazine, *The Crusader*, it was designated The African Blood Brotherhood "for African Liberation and Redemption." Even earlier, though, *The Crusader* had

> advertised itself as the "Publicity Organ of the Hamitic League of the World" (June 1919, p. 1). This so-called Hamitic League, with headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, set itself the task of uniting the so-called Hamitic peoples, the chief ethnic group of North Africa. One of its leaders, George Wells Parker, made contact with Briggs and they agreed to support each other. . . . The reference to the Hamitic League was removed from The Crusader in the issue of January 1921.[115]

The Brotherhood's beginnings inadvertently exposed a degree of identity-confusion among its founders. A similar confusion would mark its appeals and the designation of the audience the organization presumed to address.[116] In the next decade, that audience would be transformed from Hamitics to Africans, then Negroes and, finally, Black workers. Behind the fluctuations, however, was the premise enunciated by Briggs in 1917:

> Departing from Garvey's plan for a Negro state in Africa, he advanced the idea that the "race problem" could be solved by setting up an independent Negro nation on

American territory. "Considering that the more we are outnumbered, the weaker we will get, and the weaker we get the less respect, justice or opportunity we will obtain, is it not time to consider a separate political existence, with a government that will represent, consider, and advance us?" he argued.[117]

Briggs, for one, had spun away from the paternalistic projects of African colonization and African missionizing that had concerned "race-men" like Crummell, Turner, and Du Bois, and his fellow West Indians, Blyden, Garvey, and J. Albert Thorne.[118]

It seems fair to say that the African Blood Brotherhood had begun as a revolutionary nationalist organization.[119] It soon, however, came to be influenced by the socialism of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, and state Bolshevism. And once several of its cadre were absorbed into the American Communist Party, it came to be accepted that in both the United States and Africa, the Brotherhood would act as an ideological, organizational, and military vanguard. In its closest rapprochement with the CPUSA, it was conceived as the core of a liberating force developed in the hinterlands of Africa and the shock troops of a Black and white revolutionary movement in the United States.[120] Finally, the Brotherhood, or at least prominent members of that organization—Briggs, Moore, and especially Harry Haywood—appears to have provided to the Party the immediate ideological stimulus for the development of the Comintern's position after 1928 that Blacks constituted a "national question" in America.[121]

Within a year or two of its founding in 1919, the Brotherhood's leadership in New York and Chicago was acting in concert with officials of the Communist movement in attempting infiltration and/or subversion of the UNIA. The leaders of the UNIA, having found difficulty in respecting Black nationalists who had conceded the principles of autonomous leadership and "race first" action, were now the subjects of intrigues, public charges and recriminations, and betrayals. Though several historians have traced the antagonism between the Brotherhood and the UNIA to supposed differences on the issues of the roles of socialism and white workers in the Black movement, they do not appear to be the crux of the matter. Much of the rancor between the organizations was a result of the Brotherhood's insidious tactics, its growing dependence and domination by the CPUSA, and its persistent attempts—by Briggs, Domingo, Moore, and others—to unseat Garvey and the rest of the UNIA's "Negro Zionist" leaders. According to Tony Martin, Briggs's several cycles of position-reversals toward the UNIA were begun in 1921. In anticipation of the UNIA's First International Convention, Briggs

offered Garvey a proposition—that Garvey (with his international mass movement, perhaps millions strong) should enter into a program of joint action with the ABB (an obscure organization of a thousand or two) for African liberation. . . . Briggs then took the opportunity provided by Garvey's assembled multitude to do a little recruiting for himself and passed around copies of the ABB program.

The next ploy in Briggs' attempt to impose a communist united front on Garvey was to have his white communist friend Rose Pastor Stokes address the convention. She expatiated on Russia's desire to free Africa and on the need for black-white

working class unity. She then called on Garvey to take a stand in relation to her communist overtures. Garvey was polite but noncommittal. The final stroke in Briggs' strategy was to have ABB delegates to the convention introduce a motion for endorsement of the communist program. The motion was debated and tabled. The ABB, piqued at this setback, them immediately published a *Negro Congress Bulletin* on August 24, almost entirely devoted to a scurrilous misrepresentation of the UNIA convention.[122]

Whatever motives Briggs and his associates might have had, this pattern of contradictory approaches to the UNIA would characterize the relations of the two organizations until the demise of the Brotherhood in the 1930s. In the Party, Briggs, Moore, Haywood, Otto Hall, Fort-Whiteman, and others found a complementary radical element and a potential international ally for the struggle against colonialism and world capital. Within the UNIA, Garvey for one, felt much more sympathy for the Russian Communists than for the Brotherhood and its American Communist colleagues.[123]

Blacks and Communism

In its beginnings, the American Communist movement required no special policy with regard to Blacks. Having been constituted from the rebellious Left Wing of the socialist movement did not signify for these communists a departure from the presumption that Blacks were simply a segment of the unskilled working classes.[124] Moreover, with the American socialist movement drawn predominantly from immigrant ethnic and national minorities, the notion of class solidarity was of substantial importance to the movement, theoretically and practically. It provided a category of political activity through which the diverse social elements of the revolutionary movement—ethnics and nationalities, workers and intellectuals—could be reconciled, transcending their several particular interests. The absence of such a class consciousness among Blacks, and in its stead the presence of a racial consciousness, was seen by early American Communists as both an ideological backwardness and a potential threat to the integrity of the socialist movement itself.[125] To the degree that the early movement became aware of Black nationalism, that, too, would be unacceptable. Black nationalism was intolerable to a movement so constantly close to foundering on national and ethnic divisions. This concern was made manifest by the frequency with which "Back to Africa" ideologies were described as "Zionist" and compared to "Back to Palestine" movements among the Jews—a substantial and influential minority in the early socialist movement.[126] The party consistently opposed Black nationalism until its own variant: self-determination, emerged in the Soviet Union in 1928. The UNIA, as the strongest organization among Blacks with a nationalist ideology, was characterized as a bourgeois reactionary group and made a focus of the attack on Black nationalism. American racism did not justify the program of Black nationalism. European immigrants with other than Anglo-Saxon origins were also targets of racist abuses and discriminations. Racism, then, was merely

an element of ruling-class ideology and white "chauvinism" its political position. Thus the social context of Blacks was adapted by ideologues in the socialist movement to the social experience of European immigrant workers.[127]

The Communist parties did not actively recruit Blacks until 1921. This change in policy seems to be largely the responsibility of Lenin, and is even more remarkable when we recall that Lenin's name was barely known to any of the national elements in the American movement four years earlier.[128] Nevertheless, it was Lenin who raised the "Negro Question" at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920. And it was Lenin who wrote to the party in America, "some time in 1921 expressing surprise that their reports to Moscow made no mention of party work among Negroes and urging that they should be recognized as a strategically important element in Communist activity.[129] The American Communist Party then began its recruitment of Blacks, primarily, though, radical Black intellectuals and nationalist organizers. The nucleus, as we have pointed out, was those who made up the majority of the Supreme Council of the African Blood Brotherhood. Still, the historical and theoretical antecedents of the American Communist Party's work among American Blacks and its eventual positions on Black nationalism were substantially drawn from the experiences of Russian revolutionists.

In the same year that Lenin had addressed the Second Congress of the Comintern, he had written in "Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder:

> [T]o reject compromises "on principle," to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously. . . . There are different kinds of compromises.[130]

Here Lenin was mounting an attack on what he termed "left opportunism," that is, political action and judgment that used the texts of Marx and Engels to criticize and oppose Lenin and the Bolshevik Party's leadership. The setting was 1920. In Russia, the civil war was still undecided; and in Europe, the revolutionary movement had been "temporarily" defeated. Lenin was urging a tactical retreat. This document was meant to stem criticism that emerged from other Russian revolutionists who insisted that the revolution must maintain an international arena and scope, and could not be secured in one national territory. Through the document and other activities, Lenin hoped to defuse the "left deviationists" before they became an unmanageable and disruptive force at the Second Congress, and broke the Bolshevik Party's control and direction of the Third International. Despite its logical inconsistencies, historical omissions, and distortions, and its contradictions of Marxist theory, his document became one of the most significant works of the first decade of the Third International. Much of this was to be attributed to Lenin's authority in the movement as the world's most powerful Communist; but as important was the work's legitimation of accommodation to world capitalism and imperialism. It provided a pragmatic modus vivendi for Communist parties elsewhere to survive while maintaining the illusion of being revolutionary rather than reformist.[131]

The thread of Lenin's argument and his political declarations could be traced

stylistically to his critique of the "Left Communists" in 1918, when in writing *"Left-Wing" Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*, Lenin had been forced to defend the development of state-capitalist bureaucracy and the Brest Treaty with the Ukrainian government. Substantively, the thread could be found in his characterization of the revolutionary party as the vanguard of the revolutionary masses:

> By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.[132]

To Lenin, the party was the possessor of true historical consciousness, and was the true instrument of history. The party was Marxist theory in practice. It did what it did because the proletariat had demonstrated that it was insufficiently class-conscious.[133] It followed, then, for Lenin, that opposition to the tasks defined for itself by the party could only come from two sources: the reactionary bourgeoisie on the right, and the pseudo-Marxist, petit bourgeoisie "intellectual" opportunists on the left. If, in order to survive, the party acting as the state compromised with Germany, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey (the Quadruple Alliance) at Brest-Litovsk, it could not be accused of compromising *in general*. The alternative had been continued war and defeat. One must distinguish, Lenin argued, between "obligatory" compromises (preservation) and those compromises that transformed one into "accomplices in banditry." The Bolshevik Party made only obligatory compromises . . . except when it made "minor and easily remediable" errors. With a bit of sophistry, Lenin declared:

> What applies to individuals also applies—with necessary modifications—to politics and parties. It is not he who makes no mistakes that is intelligent. There are no such men, nor can there be. It is he whose errors are not very grave and who is able to rectify them easily and quickly that is intelligent.[134]

Programmatically and tactically, Lenin was laying the grounds for member parties of the Comintern in Europe and elsewhere to assume nonrevolutionary positions for the moment. Party members were instructed to join parties, movements, and organizations and to attempt to influence policy toward reformist demands necessarily intolerable to capitalism. "Communists should not rest content with teaching the proletariat its ultimate aims, but should lend impetus to every practical move leading the proletariat into the struggle for these ultimate aims."[135]

In 1920, and again in 1921, Lenin had indicated disappointment in the direction and organizational priorities established by the American Communist Party. He suggested further that Blacks should play a critical role in the party and in the vanguard of the workers' movement since Blacks occupied the most oppressive sector of the American society, and were clearly to be expected to be the most angry element in the United States. All of this was somewhat characteristic of Lenin as he rationalized the basic opportunism that had dominated the history of the Bolshevik movement.[136]

However, Lenin had found no basis of support for his declarations within the American delegation to the Second Congress. Indeed, in the person of the Harvard-trained revolutionary writer, John Reed, the American delegation, preoccupied with the image of the UNIA, repudiated Lenin's position:

> Reed defined the American Negro problem as "that of a strong racial and social movement, and of a proletarian labor movement advancing very fast in class-consciousness." He alluded to the Garvey movement in terms that ruled out all Negro nationalism and separatism: "The Negroes have no demands for national independence. All movements aiming at a separate national existence for Negroes fail, as did the 'Back to Africa Movement' of a few years ago. They consider themselves first of all Americans at home in the United States. This makes it very much simpler for the Communists."[137]

For the time being, the Comintern was satisfied by a vague plan to invite Black revolutionists to a future congress.

Two such figures attended the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922: Otto Huiswoud, as an official delegate, and Claude McKay, as an unofficial and non-Communist observer. McKay and Huiswoud ("the mulatto delegate," as McKay would refer to him in his autobiography, *A Long Way From Home*) tended to complement each other in both official and informal discussions of the "Negro Question."

> When the American Negro delegate was invited to attend meetings and my mulatto colleague went, the people asked: "But where is the *chorny* (the black)?" The mulatto delegate said: "Say, fellow, you're all right for propaganda. It's a pity you'll never make a disciplined party member."[138]

And with the aid of the Japanese revolutionary, Sen Katayama, who had spent some time in the United States working as a cook and other things on the west and east coasts, had been a founder of the unified and Bolshevized American Party, and now sat on the commission for national and colonial questions,[139] McKay and Huiswoud successfully presented to the Comintern sessions a more realistic basis for discussion. And it was at the Fourth Congress that the Comintern made its first formal declaration of policy toward American Blacks: Early the following year, Rose Pastor Stokes, the radical wife of J. C. Phelps Stokes one of the NAACP's millionaire-sponsors, returned to the United States and reported to her fellow party members:

> One of the most significant developments in the Fourth Congress of the Communist International was the creation of a Negro Commission and the adoption of the Commission's Thesis on the Negro Question which concludes with the declaration that "the Fourth Congress recognizes the necessity of supporting every form of Negro Movement which tends to undermine capitalism and Imperialism or to impede their further progress," pledges the Communist International to fight "for race equality of the Negro with the White people, for equal wages and political and social rights," to "exert every effort to admit Negroes into Trade Unions"

and to "take immediate steps to hold a general Negro Conference or Congress in Moscow."

Two American Negroes were guests of the Congress. One, a poet, the other a speaker and organizer, both young and energetic, devoted to the cause of Negro liberation and responsive to the ideals of the revolutionary proletariat. They charmed the delegates with their fine personalities.[140]

According to Mrs. Stokes, the Negro Commission itself was international in its membership, made up of delegates from the United States, Belgium, France, England, Java, British South Africa, Japan, Holland, and Russia. The perspective of the Commission was thus international, reflecting the internationalism of Marxist organization, the theory of capitalism, and its membership. As the chairman of the Commission, Comrade Sasha [Stokes] had announced:

> [T]he world Negro movement must be organized: in America, as the center of Negro culture and the crystallization of Negro protest; in Africa, the reservoir of human labor for the further development of Capitalism; in Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua, and other "Independent" Republics), where American Imperialism dominates; in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo and other islands washed by the waters of the Caribbean . . . in South Africa and the Congo . . . in East Africa.[141]

The work among Blacks in America, then, was to be one sector in a world movement against colonialism and imperialism as the contemporary stages of world capitalism. The Communist International was to be the vehicle through which the enslaved white workers of Europe and America and the "revolutionary workers and peasants of the whole world" would converge on the common enemy:

> It is the task of the Communist International to point out to the Negro people that they are not the only people suffering from the oppression of Capitalism and Imperialism; that the workers and peasants of Europe and Asia and of the Americas are also the victims of Imperialism; that the struggle against Imperialism is not the struggle of any one people but of all the peoples of the world; that in China and India, in Persia and Turkey, in Egypt and Morocco the oppressed colored colonial peoples are rising against the same evils that the Negroes are rising against—racial oppression and discrimination, and intensified industrial exploitation; that these peoples are striving for the same ends that the Negroes are striving for—political, industrial and social liberation and equality.[142]

Notwithstanding its contradictions and ideological formulations, this *Theses on the Negro Question* was a quite remarkable document. Certainly its New World–centric view limited it (for example, the proposition that the "center of Negro culture and . . . protest" was in America). Certainly the presumption that a proletarianized Black people in America was the most advanced sector of the Black world was more a vulgarization of Marx than a product of analysis. But just as certain, this statement

was a more sophisticated presentation of the world system than had been developed in the earlier internationalism of the UNIA. The Commission had successfully urged the Fourth Congress to recognize the relationship between the "Negro Question" and the "Colonial Question."

The intention behind the Negro Commission of the Fourth Congress was to substitute system- and class-consciousness for race-consciousness among American Blacks. Yet one enduring lesson learned from the UNIA was that Blacks were capable of organizing on an international scale. The Negro Commission suggested that the UNIA's was only a particular form of race-consciousness and that it was possible for race-consciousness to be transformed into a progressive force. A world-historical race-consciousness, recognizing the exploitation of Blacks as Blacks, but as part of and related to the exploitation of other workers could develop from the earlier form. The historical problem posed before the Comintern and its member parties—and especially for American Communism—was whether the Communist movement had the capabilities to perform this transformation. Starting with the efforts of Huiswoud, McKay, and Katayama, it had become increasingly clear to the leadership of the Comintern—Radek, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Lenin, and later, Stalin—that only a special program could attract large numbers of Black workers to the movement. After 1922, the tutelage and training of Black cadres in the Soviet Union was taken quite seriously. The most critical of the results was the formulation of the "nation within a nation" thesis announced by the Sixth Congress in 1928.

Haywood Hall (Harry Haywood) was one of the American Blacks brought to the Soviet Union to study at the University of Toilers of the East (KUTVA). When he arrived in April 1926, he joined a small colony of Black students that included his brother Otto Hall (John Jones) O. J. and Jane Golden, Harold Williams (Dessalines), Roy Mahoney (Jim Farmer), Maude White (who arrived in December 1927), and Bankole (a Gold Coast inhabitant).[143] Of the seven Black students at KUTVA[144] and the Blacks who arrived in the Soviet Union as delegates to the Sixth Congress in 1928, Haywood alone advocated the position of "self-determination" for American Blacks. Haywood's own conversion had come in the Winter of 1928 when in preparation for the Congress, he had responded to a dismissive report on the UNIA authored by his brother, Otto:

> In the discussion, I pointed out that Otto's position was not merely a rejection of Garveyism but also a denial of nationalism as a legitimate trend in the Black freedom movement. I felt that it amounted to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. With my insight sharpened by previous discussions, I argued further that the nationalism reflected in the Garvey movement was not a foreign transplant, nor did it spring full-blown from the brow of Jove. On the contrary, it was an indigenous product, arising from the soil of Black super-exploitation and oppression in the United States. It expressed the yearnings of millions of Blacks for a nation of their own.
>
> As I pursued this logic, a totally new thought occurred to me, and for me it was

the clincher. The Garvey movement is dead, I reasoned, but not Black nationalism. Nationalism, which Garvey diverted under the slogan of Back to Africa, was an authentic trend, likely to flare up again in periods of crisis and stress. Such a movement might again fall under the leadership of utopian visionaries who would seek to divert it from the struggle against the main enemy, U.S. imperialism, and on to a reactionary separatist path. The only way such a diversion of the struggle could be forestalled was by presenting a revolutionary alternative to Blacks.

... I was the first American communist (with perhaps the exception of Briggs) to support the thesis that U.S. Blacks constituted an oppressed nation.[145]

N. Nasanov (Bob Katz), a Russian representative of the Young Communist League, having spent some time in the United States, was already convinced that American Blacks constituted a national question. Katayama was as well, and suggested to Haywood that Lenin had supported the idea. But they, and similarly minded Soviet Communists, had found difficulty in locating any American Blacks to support their position.[146] Nasanov heard Haywood's arguments and promptly requested his collaboration. From the moment Haywood voiced his commitment to Black nationalism, the momentum was established for the self-determination line that would become the Comintern's official policy after the Congress. The resolutions and discussion papers drafted by Haywood and Nasanov eventually culminated in the language on the "American Negro Question" included in the Congress report, "Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies," 12 December 1928:

In those regions of the South in which compact Negro masses are living, it is essential to put forward the slogan of the Right of Self-determination for Negroes. A radical transformation of the agrarian structure of the Southern States is one of the basic tasks of the revolution. Negro Communists must explain to non-Negro workers and peasants that only their close union with the white proletariat and joint struggle with them against the American bourgeoisie can lead to their liberation from barbarous exploitation, and that only the victorious proletarian revolution will completely and permanently solve the agrarian and national questions of the Southern United States in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the Negro population of the country.[147]

Black self-determination was presented to the American Communist Party as a fait accompli. And for years the true origins of the line would be a mystery to members of the American Communist movement as well as to its historians.[148] Its meaning, however, was clear: as Josef Pogany (John Pepper) characterized it (or as Haywood argues, caricatured it) in the line's first American exposure, the logic of self-determination would conclude in a "Negro Soviet Republic."[149]

As a strategy, Black self-determination addressed itself to several concerns within the Comintern and the American movement. First of all, by the procedure through which it was established, it underlined the leadership of the Comintern over its national parties. Moreover, legitimated by the existence of other national liberation

movements as well as the earlier history of American Blacks, it also relieved somewhat the disappointments of some Third Internationalists caused by the failure of an immediate world revolution to develop—national liberation struggles were by their nature protracted ones. As a political model, it was also useful as a means of expression for those nationalisms and chauvinisms of longer duration in the American Communist Party: many ideologues in the American movement identified their own nationalist sensibilities with Black nationalism.[150] Finally, it was believed it was the most effective means of approaching one of the oldest American peoples, the "Negro," first through its radical nationalist intelligentsia, and then its masses. Not only should self-determination attract Blacks, it was argued, but it could also be the litmus for determining the degree of progressiveness among non-Black party militants while weakening the ruling class by jarring the Bourbon pseudo-aristocracy from its industrial and finance-capitalist sponsors.

Still the theoretical basis for the party's identification of Blacks as a nation was quite unorthodox in terms of Marxist theory. Marx and Engels had both distinguished between "nations" and "nationalities," recognizing in the former the capacity for independent economic existence and in the latter an incapacity. Engels had expressed himself quite clearly:

> There is no country in Europe where there are not different nationalities under the same government. . . . Here, then, we perceive the difference between the "principles of *nationalities*" and the old democratic and working-class tenet as to the right of the great European *nations* to separate and independent existence. The "principle of nationalities" leaves entirely untouched the great question of the right of national existence for the historic peoples of Europe; nay if it touches it is merely to disturb it. The principle of nationalities raises two sorts of questions: first of all, questions of boundary between these great historic peoples; and secondly, questions as to the right to independent national existence of those numerous small relics of peoples which, after having figured for a longer or shorter period on the stage of history, were finally absorbed as integral portions into one or the other of those more powerful nations whose greater vitality enabled them to overcome greater obstacles.[151]

The logical extension from Marx or Engels would have been to identify the Blacks of America as a national minority or as a nationality, but not as a nation. For Marx and Engels, the nation was a quite particular historical phenomenon:

> Since the end of the Middle Ages, history has been moving towards a Europe made up of large national states. Only such national states constitute the normal political framework for the dominant European bourgeois class and, in addition, they are the indispensable prerequisites . . . without which the rule of the proletariat cannot exist.[152]

Engels's historicism branded the nation as an instrument of the bourgeoisie; its emergence was concomitant to the development of a bourgeois society, a capitalist

society. And once nation and then the transnational became realized, it was possible for an international revolutionary movement to command the society that had produced it. For Marx, both language and culture appeared to be secondary phenomena, the first to be associated with nationality, the second, with the dominant class. Unfortunately, throughout the nineteenth century and into the next, much of the theoretical grammar brought by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other Marxists to the analysis of American phenomena and processes was similarly naive. It was naive because of its ahistoricity and its tendency toward the use of aggregative concepts to the point of superfluousness. Ultimately, its naivete was contradictory: at the historical point of massive immigration, the application of race and class, the grammar's two most fundamental categories, presumed the existence among the majority of American workers of a white working class; thus the eventual appearance of a Black nation suggested an opposite historical momentum.[153] Lenin proved to be the theoretical and ideological midwife, but it was Stalin, it came to be believed in the American Communist Party and by its historians, who had provided the theoretical basis for the party's position that Blacks were a nation within a nation. "If there was a 'genius' in this scheme," Theodore Draper would declare, "it was undoubtedly Stalin."[154] However, the contrast between Stalin and Engels and Marx was dramatic. In what was to be one of the most frequently cited justifications for the Comintern's "Negro program," Stalin had entirely forsaken analytical sophistication:

> A nation is a historically established, stable community of people, coming into existence on the basis of a community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological constitution, which manifest themselves in a community of culture.[155]

This extraordinary passage is perhaps characteristic of Stalin's theoretical contributions to Marxist thought and to world knowledge. First, it too is ahistoric, since no contemporary nation has emerged in this way; second, it is abstract and vague, utilizing such phrases as "psychological constitution"; third, it is tautological: community manifests itself as community; and finally, it is not Marxian, tending as it does toward an evolutionary paradigm as opposed to that of historical materialism. Its one apposite feature was that it was in keeping with the ideological and programmatic opportunism that characterized Stalin's immediate predecessor. The policy implications of this passage fit quite well into the rationalizations found in *"Left-Wing"* *Communism*. This is, perhaps, another sort of proof that the policy was a gloss on the history of Black movements and not the independent product of the Soviet Union's political elite. Like formulations on other national liberation struggles one discovers in Comintern declarations, it was political opportunism searching for theoretical justifications. It thus represented the critical importance to the Soviet Party of forming alliances with movements that were emerging from theoretically "precapitalist" societies. Given historical necessity, Marxist-Leninism compromised itself theoretically with nationalism, and as such institutionalized the force that had brought the Second International to its submission. It might be said in the most simple-minded

reading of the dialectic, that the Third International was a synthesis of the thesis (socialism) and anti-thesis (national chauvinism) of the Second.

As the official policy of the American Communist Party, self-determination—the Black Belt Thesis—would survive Stalin, but only barely. And even while Stalin was a dominant figure in the world Communist movement, it would have its ups and downs, responding to the national and international dynamics of the revolutionary movement.

> The policy of Negro self-determination has lived twice and died twice. After over-throwing Lovestone's "revisionism," Browder made self-determination one of the cardinal articles of faith of his leadership. In November 1943, long after it had ceased to show any signs of life, he delivered a funeral oration over the corpse of self-determination; he explained that the Negro people had already exercised the historical right of self-determination—by rejecting it. After overthrowing Brow-der's "revisionism," Foster made self-determination one of the cardinal articles of faith of his leadership. In 1946 self-determination was reincarnated in a slightly watered-down version—as a programmatic demand and not as an immediate slogan of action.
>
> In 1958, the Communist leadership again buried the corpse of the right of self-determination. It decided that the American Negro people were no longer a "stable community"; that the Negro national question was no longer "essentially a peasant question"; that the Negroes did not possess any distinctively "common psychologi-cal make-up"; that the main currents of Negro thought and leadership "histori-cally, and universally at the present time" flowed toward equality with other Ameri-cans; that the American Negro people did not constitute a nation; and therefore that the right of self-determination did not apply to them.[156]

Lenin had compelled the American Communist Party to take the Black American as a critical element in its policy and organization. Stalin, himself a member of a Russian national minority, had been the authority through which the Comintern and the American Communist Party had come to recognize Blacks as an oppressed nation.[157] And for a while the policies directly influenced by these two Bolsheviks had been successful: thousands of Blacks came into the CPUSA during the 1930s in response to the party's attentions and expressed intentions.[158] However, in the background were the UNIA and the Brotherhood. They had established the political and ideological preconditions for the party's policies and its successes. It was the UNIA that had embodied the Black radical tradition and primed the Black masses with a sense of nationhood. It was the UNIA and the ABB through which many of the early Black activists in the party had passed. And it was the UNIA and the Brotherhood that had demonstrated the capacities of Blacks to organize politically and respond ideo-logically. It remains a telling point on the nature of the early American Commu-nist movement that the significance of these examples had to depend upon Soviet-directed policy to be revealed.

In the light of this account of Russian and Comintern intervention into the affairs of the American Communist Party, it would appear to be a historical irony that it was through Du Bois's work that a first reassessment of Marxian revolutionary theory was attempted. It was Du Bois who introduced into American Marxism a critical interpretation of the nature and significance of revolution—based in large measure on the developments of the Russian Revolution and the American Reconstruction period.

Du Bois and Radical Theory

As a Black, Du Bois was sensitive to the contradictions in American society, in particular to the material force of racism. He was even more *conscious* of racism since in his early years he had been cocooned from it. He was a young man by the time he was forced to openly confront the culture of racism. Later, as a Black scholar, he had had an immediate and profound experience with the false histories produced in that culture. Both his training at Harvard with its history department largely influenced by German historiography, and his studies in Berlin had left him with an acute sensitivity for myth and propaganda in history. And as we have suggested earlier, as a critic of Marx, Du Bois had possessed no obligations to Marxist or Leninist dogma, nor to the vagaries of historical analysis and interpretation that characterized American Communist thought. Given these attributes, enveloped by the events of the post–World War I period, Du Bois obtained the skills to seize the advantage created by this crisis of capitalism:

> [S]omebody in each era must make clear the facts with utter disregard to his own wish and desire and belief. What we have got to know, so far as possible, are the things that actually happened in the world. . . . [T]he historian has no right, posing as scientist, to conceal or distort facts; and until we distinguish between these two functions of the chronicler of human action, we are going to render it easy for a muddled world out of sheer ignorance to make the same mistake ten times over. (p. 722)

He had written these words with American historiography in mind. But we may also assume he had an additional application at hand.

Among the several truths that Du Bois set out to establish in *Black Reconstruction*, there were a number that related directly to Marxist and Leninist theory. Specifically, his ideas concerned the emergence of capitalism; the nature of revolutionary consciousness; and the nature of revolutionary organization. As we recall, first Du Bois would insist on the world-historical significance of American slavery in the emergence of modern capitalism and imperialism. In this, he went no further than Marx, but this is merely where he began. Next, he would demonstrate, historically, the revolutionary force of slave and peasant laborers—this in opposition to a reactionary industrial working class. Finally, with Lenin in mind, Du Bois would question the presumed roles of a vanguard and the masses in the development of revolutionary consciousness and effective revolutionary action.

With regard to the first issue—the relationship between the destruction of slavery and the emergence of modern capitalism and imperialism—Du Bois argued that the American Reconstruction period was *the* historical moment in the developing world system. This was the moment when world capitalism assumed the character that would persist into the twentieth century:

> The abolition of American slavery started the transportation of capital from white to black countries where slavery prevailed, with the same tremendous and awful consequences upon the laboring classes of the world which we see about us today. When raw material could not be raised in a country like the United States, it could be raised in the tropics and semi-tropics under a dictatorship of industry, commerce and manufacture and with no free farming class.
>
> The competition of a slave-directed agriculture in the West Indies and South America, in Africa and Asia, eventually ruined the economic efficiency of agriculture in the United States and in Europe and precipitated the modern economic degradation of the white farmer, while it put into the hands of the owners of the machine such a monopoly of raw material that their domination of white labor was more and more complete. (p. 48)

According to Du Bois, this was not a necessary development but the one that followed upon the dismantling and destruction of the "dictatorship of labor" established in the southern United States during the Reconstruction:

> [T]here began to rise in America in 1876 a new capitalism and a new enslavement of labor. . . .
>
> The world wept because the exploiting group of New World masters, greed and jealousy became so fierce that they fought for trade and markets and materials and slaves all over the world until at last in 1914 the world flamed in war. The fantastic structure fell, leaving grotesque Profits and Poverty, Plenty and Starvation, Empire and Democracy, staring at each other across World Depression. (p. 634)

But rather than seeing this process as inevitable due to the contradiction between the modes of production and the relations of production, Du Bois argued that it was made possible by the ideologies of racism, and, to a lesser extent, individualism. It was these ideologies as historical forces that had precluded the emergence of a powerful labor movement in the United States—a movement whose nucleus would have consisted of the nine million ex-slave and white peasant workers of the South. The force of these ideologies manifested itself after the war when these workers did not move to the next logical step: the institutionalization of their historical convergence in order to dominate the Reconstruction's "dictatorship of labor." Without this movement, the revolution begun in 1855 with John Brown's Kansas raids could not continue.[159] The failure to achieve a consciousness of themselves as a class was not a consequence of the absence of the concentration of production in agriculture, as some Marxists might presume, for in the North workers had had this experience, yet their labor movement was predominantly trade-unionist.[160] On the other hand, in the South, where the

character of production with regard to the concentration of labor was more ambiguous, it was these workers, Black and white, who had produced the "General Strike" decisive in ending the Civil War.

The General Strike had not been planned or consciously organized. Instead, what Du Bois termed a "General Strike" was the total impact on the secessionist South of a series of actions circumstantially related to each other: some 200,000 Black workers, most of them slaves, had become part of the Union's military forces. These, and an even larger number of Blacks, had withdrawn their productive labor and paramilitary services from the Confederacy, transferring a substantial portion of them to the Union. In addition, tens of thousands of slaves and poor whites had emigrated from the South. The former were escaping slavery, the latter their poverty and the demands and ravages of a war in which they had no vested interest. The result was to critically weaken the secessionists. The ordering of these diverse actions was then a consequence of the social order to which they were reactions. The contradictions within southern society rather than a revolutionary vanguard knit these phenomena into a historical force. After the war, a different ordering would be required to integrate these phenomena into a political movement. This could be accomplished if only the ruling ideologies of the society were transcended. This was not done.

> [T]he power of the Negro vote in the South was certain to go gradually toward reform.
>
> It was this contingency that the poor whites of all grades feared. It meant to them a reestablishment of that subordination under Negro labor which they had suffered during slavery. They, therefore, interposed by violence to increase the natural antagonism between Southerners of the planter class and Northerners who represented the military dictatorship as well as capital. . . .
>
> The efforts at reform, therefore, at first widely applauded, one by one began to go down before a new philosophy which represented understanding between the planters and poor whites. . . . [I]t was accompanied by . . . eagerness on the part of the poor whites to check the demands of the Negroes by any means, and by willingness to do the dirty work of the revolution that was coming, with its blood and crass cruelties, its bitter words, upheaval and turmoil. This was the birth and being of the Ku Klux Klan. (p. 623)

But it was not merely a matter of the antagonisms of the poor whites against the Blacks being revitalized by the prominence assumed by the latter during the Reconstruction. The "deep economic foundation" for these antagonisms was in fact being challenged by proposals to radically alter land tenure put forward by Black legislators. Rather, it was the remnants of the southern ruling class that focused the attention of poor whites on to the Black workers. The ruling class had been so weakened by the war that for the first time it was forced to aggressively recruit poor whites as its allies. "The masters feared their former slaves. . . . They lied about the Negroes. . . . They forestalled the danger of a united Southern labor movement by appealing to the fear

and hate of white labor. . . . They encouraged them to ridicule Negroes and beat them, kill and burn their bodies. The planters even gave the poor whites their daughters in marriage" (p. 633).

It was in this fashion that the bond between the two elements of the southern working class failed to materialize. By necessity, Du Bois felt, Blacks fixed class alliances with northern capitalists and petit bourgeois Radical Republicans. Both alliances were by nature short-lived. Once Northern capital had sufficiently penetrated the southern economic sector so as to dominate its future development, it ceased to depend on Black electorates and state legislatures responsive to Blacks and the radical petit bourgeoisie. The alliance ended with the withdrawal of Federal troops from the South and the destruction of the governments supported by the bureaucracy of occupation. By the 1880s, the under-capitalized character of southern agrarian production was established and the need for external sources of raw materials more than apparent. In Mexico, the Philippines, Haiti, the Caribbean and Pacific islands, and elsewhere, northern capitalists constructed their own forms of slavery: but ones for which they could not easily be held accountable or among which they would be compelled to live.

Turning now to the question of revolutionary consciousness and organization, it is again Du Bois's presentation of the General Strike that provides a critique of Marxist thought. But first we should recall just what constituted Marxist theory in America at the time.

At the time of Du Bois's writing of *Black Reconstruction*, Marxism came in several forms depending on which revolutionary or intellectual tradition one considered. Raphael Samuel has maintained that such "mutations of Marxism" were to be expected and, indeed, had been preceded by changes in Marx's own writings:[161]

> In Russia Marxism came into existence as a critical trend within populism, in Italy in the form of a syncretism with positivist sociology, in Austria—and Bulgaria—in tandem with the thought of Lassalle. Second International Marxism was a heterodox affair, with numerous tendencies competing for political attention, and nothing approaching a finished body of doctrine. Marxism was necessarily superimposed on preexisting modes of thought which it incorporated rather than displaced, and which were regarded as being intrinsic to the new outlook. . . .
>
> The contours change radically in the period of the Third International, but Marxism, despite its increasingly Party-minded character, was very far from being hermetically sealed. In the 1920s there was a vigorous, indeed furious, philosophical debate within the Soviet Union itself, with rival schools contending in the name of dialectical materialism.[162]

But generally, in the order of prestige in revolutionary socialism, first were the available works of Marx and Engels and their nearest contemporaries in Europe and Russia.[163] These constituted the classical texts of Marxism. Second, there were the works of the Soviet intelligentsia, Plekhanov, Lenin, Bukharin, Trotsky, and Stalin.[164]

From 1917 on, these writings became more significant to the socialist movement. With the bureaucratization of the Russian Revolution and the institutionalization of the Comintern, Stalin and his interpretations of Lenin's thought ultimately superseded all other Marxist writers in authority.

> All serious theoretical work ceased in the Soviet Union after collectivization. Trotsky was driven into exile in 1929, and assassinated in 1940; Ryazanov was stripped of his positions in 1931 and died in a labour camp in 1939; Bukharin was silenced in 1929 and shot in 1938; Preobrazhensky was broken by 1930 and perished in jail in 1938. Marxism was largely reduced to a memento in Russia, as Stalin's rule reached its apogee.[165]

In the United States, dichotomies reflecting the conflicts in Europe and Russia could be found. But in America, Party propagandists were much more prominent than independent theorists. The presence of theorists in the party had been substantially reduced by the events of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The expulsions of a "Trotskyite" left followed by the "Lovestone" right; the spectacle of the purges of veterans of the Russian Revolution from the Bolshevik Party; the compromises of the Popular Front period after 1933; and the protracted demise of capitalism, had all taken their toll, especially on revolutionary theory:

> Marx's emphasis upon the historic inevitability of revolution had diminishing importance for Party members and left intellectuals alike in the thirties. Communists may have claimed Marxism as their own, but it was merely a ceremonial claim after the Popular Front had been announced. There were, however, few times in CP history when Marxist theory was applied in a serious and sustained analysis of American society. And even the non-Communist intellectual . . . made only infrequent and incomplete stabs at such analyses.[166]

Revolution had been relegated to the background while more pressing needs—like support for the New Deal; the pursuit of "collective security" for the Soviet Union; the organization of the new unionism represented by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO); and the fight for state assistance to the unemployed and elderly—assumed priority. Finally, though Marxism might continue to develop elsewhere within the nexus of Communist Parties, in Europe its further elaboration in the thirties seems to have been confined to Germany, France, and Italy. And even then, as Perry Anderson suggests, the tradition was strained:

> Astonishingly, within the entire corpus of Western Marxism, there is not one single serious appraisal or sustained critique of the work of one major theorist by another, revealing close textual knowledge or minimal analytic care in its treatment. At most, there are cursory aspersions or casual commendations, both equally ill-read and superficial. Typical examples of this mutual slovenliness are the few vague remarks directed by Sartre at Lukács; the scattered and anachronistic asides of Adorno on Sartre; the virulent invective of Colletti against Marcuse; the amateur

confusion of Althusser between Gramsci and Colletti; the peremptory dismissal by Della Volpe of Althusser.[167]

Still, much was in disarray.

Despite the shared premise that human emancipation was to be identical with the achievement of the socialist revolution, the writings produced by Marxian theorists contained serious disagreements and differences with respect to the historical processes and structural elements involved in the emergence of the revolution. Among the areas of contention were questions regarding the nature of class consciousness; the role of a revolutionary party; and the political nature of the peasantry and other "precapitalist" laboring classes. Since it is impossible to even summarize the volume of conflicting opinion to be found in Marxist literature, we will concern ourselves with only those aspects to which Du Bois addressed himself.[168]

Marx and Engels had argued that the alienation intrinsic to the capitalist mode of production, the contradictions arising between that mode and the social relations accompanying it, and the extension of expropriation could result in a socialist revolution led by the industrial working classes. Though the revolution itself was not inevitable (that would have amounted to economic determinism), the role of this specific kind of worker in such a revolution was certain.[169] The historical dialectic identified the industrial worker—the proletariat—as the negation of capitalist society; the force produced by capitalism that could finally destroy it. Capitalism pitted one class, the bourgeoisie, against another, the proletariat. This was the specific character of the class struggle in capitalist society. However, since there were more than two classes in all the nineteenth-century societies that Marx and Engels studied, it became necessary for them to identify and assign to these other classes particular historical roles. The petit bourgeoisie were both nominally and historically the middlemen of capitalism: its managers, technicians, small merchants, and shopkeepers. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the petit bourgeoisie did not own or control the means of production. Still, it was a class whose members recognized their dependence on the bourgeoisie for social privileges. Their political loyalties were to the bourgeoisie and as such they were understood to be reactionary by their class-nature.[170] A fourth class, the lumpen-proletariat, too, was reactionary. The class was characterized as one that fed off the proletariat in a parasitic manner. The lumpen-proletariat were the thieves, the thugs, the prostitutes, "people without a definite occupation and a stable domicile."[171] It was from this class that the society recruited many of those who would form its coercive instruments: the army, the state militias, the police. The fifth class was the peasantry. This was the class that came closest to the poor whites and Black workers of the antebellum period in terms of its systemic relationship to industrial capitalism, its social organization, and its historical origins.[172] For Marx and Engels, the peasantry was a remnant of the precapitalist society. But unlike other residues from feudalism, for example, the clergy, the aristocracy, and the artisan-craftsmen, the peasantry continued to be of importance in capitalist society. Both the peasantry and the bourgeoisie had been negations of feudalism, however the peasantry's "narrow-minded"

self-interest had been intent on destroying feudalist relations by moving historically backward to small, individual land-holdings and away from the inclusive, nationally integrated economic structures for which the bourgeoisie aspired. In feudalism, the bourgeoisie had been a historically progressive contradiction, and the peasantry a historically reactionary negation. With the destruction of feudalism by capitalist forces, the peasantry became reactionary in a different way. The peasantry was now a potential ally of the bourgeoisie to be poised against the political force of industrial labor and the socialist revolution.

Lenin and Trotsky, coming from Tsarist Russia, a society dominated by a peasant-subsistence or "backward" economy, saw the peasantry differently from Marx or Engels.[173] In the central and western Russian countryside at the end of the nineteenth century, the remnants of Russian "feudalism" were to be found in the aristocracy and the poor peasantry. There were, too, the *kulaks* consisting of a rural bourgeoisie supported by capitalist agriculture, and a middle peasantry essentially locked into modified forms of subsistence agriculture. The roving peasantry, the rural proletariat, according to Lenin, emerged from the poor peasants who worked either for the *kulaks*, the landlords or some exceptional middle peasants. Both Lenin and Trotsky agreed that the rural relations of production were subject to "internal" antagonisms of class struggle (*kulaks* versus poor peasants) and, most importantly, that the peasantry could be an ally to the working-class movement. In 1901, for example, Lenin had observed:

> Our rural laborers are still too closely connected with the peasantry, they are still too heavily burdened with the misfortunes of the peasantry generally, to enable the movement of rural workers to assume national significance either now or in the immediate future . . . the whole essence of our agrarian programme is that the rural proletariat must fight together with the rich peasantry for the abolition of the remnants of serfdom, for the cut-off lands.[174]

But in 1905, after several years of recurring peasant uprisings, his view of the "rural proletariat" was more sanguine: "We must explain to it that its interests are antagonistic to those of the bourgeois peasantry; we must call upon it to fight for the socialist revolution.[175] Though Trotsky and Lenin were opposed to the "Black Partition" (Marx's term for the extra-legal seizure and breaking up of land into small, individual holdings), they saw it as a tactic for momentarily attracting the peasantry to the side of the revolution. Once the dictatorship of the proletariat was secured, other arrangements could be made for the peasants.[176]

Part of the reason for the judgments made by Marx or Engels of the peasantry had to do with the conditions of work that circumscribed peasant production and the social relations that fixed the peasants into prescribed links of exchange. Marx saw the peasantry as a "vast mass" consisting of functional clones: simple cultivators, proximate but without significant intercourse; lacking in all but the most rudimentary political organization or consciousness.[177] Engels, too, was impressed by the "great space" that peasants occupied, and ascribed to them a tradition of submissiveness and

loyalty to particular masters.[178] Neither suggested that the peasantry was capable of independent political action. And if we compared the descriptions found in Marx and Engels of peasant life with those of Du Bois concerning the slaves and poor whites, we would discover striking and important similarities. Of the slave workers, Du Bois commented:

[B]efore the war, the slave was curiously isolated; this was the policy, and the effective policy of the slave system, which made the plantation the center of a black group with a network of white folk around and about, who kept the slaves from contact with each other. Of course, clandestine contact there always was; the passing of Negroes to and fro on errands; particularly the semi-freedom and mingling in cities; and yet, the mass of slaves were curiously provincial and kept out of the currents of information. (pp. 121–22)

In the masters' domiciles, the complexities of the relationships between labor and the exploiters of labor many times included bonds of sentiment, but more importantly and persistently the house servants had realized "The masters had stood between them and a world in which they had no legal protection except the master." And that "The masters were their source of information"(p. 123). Earlier in the work, Du Bois had suggested, "Any mass movement under such circumstances must materialize slowly and painfully" (p. 57). And of the poor white workers, ignored as he believed by the American labor movement, the abolitionists, northern capitalists and southern planters, Du Bois reckoned similarly pessimistic judgments could be made. He reiterated Francis Simkins's and Robert Woody's bleak description of their conditions:

A wretched log hut or two are the only habitations in sight. Here reside, or rather take shelter, the miserable cultivators of the ground, or a still more destitute class who make a precarious living by peddling "lightwood" in the city. . . .
    These cabins . . . are dens of filth. . . . Their faces are bedaubed with the muddy accumulation of weeks. . . . The poor wretches seem startled when you address them, and answer your questions cowering like culprits. (p. 26)

Du Bois added that the poor whites were also bound to the master class: "Indeed, the natural leaders of the poor whites, the small farmer, the merchant, the professional man, the white mechanic and slave overseer, were bound to the planters and repelled from the slaves. . . . [T]he only heaven that attracted them was the life of the great Southern planter" (p. 27). Yet in the midst of the Civil War, it was these two peoples, the Black and the white workers, who had mounted the rebellions, the "General Strike," which had turned loose the revolutionary dynamics that Du Bois would describe as "the most extraordinary experiments of Marxism that the world, before the Russian revolution, had seen" (p. 358). One hundred thousand poor whites had deserted the Confederate armies and perhaps a half million Black workers had abandoned the plantations. It was the same pattern, indeed, that would come to fruition in Russia. Like the American slaves and the poor whites, in the midst of war the Russian

peasantry would desert their armies in the field. Their rebellion, too, marked the beginnings of revolution.

Like most informed men and women of his time, Du Bois was deeply impressed by the Russian Revolution and he believed he could write and speak of it without having "to dogmatize with Marx or Lenin."[179] He had referred to what he considered a significant element of the revolution as early as 1917 when he criticized the American Socialist Party's ideologues for praising the successes of the Russian peasantry while ignoring the achievements of American Blacks:

> Revolution is discussed, but it is the successful revolution of white folk and not the unsuccessful revolution of black soldiers in Texas. You do not stop to consider whether the Russian peasant had any more to endure than the black soldiers of the 24th Infantry.[180]

The processes of the Russian Revolution were a framework for his interpretation of Reconstruction because it, too, had begun among an agrarian, peasant people. It was a characteristic shared by all the revolutions that Du Bois linked in significance to the American Civil War and its Reconstruction: that is, France, Spain, India, and China (p. 708). In addition, since before his visit to the Soviet Union in 1926, he had been cautious about the nature of class-consciousness among workers in Russia, the United States, and elsewhere. In 1927, when he had returned from the Soviet Union, he had written:

> Does this mean that Russia has "put over" her new psychology? Not by any means. She is trying and trying hard, but there are plenty of people in Russia who still hate and despise the workingman's blouses and the peasant's straw shoes; and plenty of workers who regret the passing of the free-handed Russian nobility, who miss the splendid pageantry of the Czars and who cling doggedly to religious dogma and superstition.[181]

And despite his note to the tenth chapter of *Black Reconstruction,* which explained why he was not using his original title for that chapter ("The Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat in South Carolina"),[182] Du Bois knew the Russian Revolution was a dictatorship of the proletariat that was less democratic and less dependent upon conscious action of the workers than was to be found in the post–Civil War period in America:

> As the [Russian] workingman is today neither skilled nor intelligent to any such extent as his responsibilities demand, there is within his ranks the Communist Party, directing the proletariat toward their future dictatorship. This is nothing new.[183]

And in 1938, Du Bois would declare:

> When now the realities of the situation were posed to men, two radical solutions were suddenly resorted to: Russian communism and fascism. They both did away

with democracy, and substituted oligarchic control of government and industry of thought and action. Communism aimed at eventual democracy and even elimination of the state, but sought this by a dogmatic program, laid down ninety years ago by a great thinker, but largely invalidated by nearly a century of extraordinary social change.[184]

Like Lenin, but for different reasons and in a different way, Du Bois had realized that Marx had not anticipated the historical transformations of capitalism, specifically, the complicating phenomena of imperialism. And caution, as well, was required in any application of Marx to the situation of American Blacks:

It was a great loss to American Negroes that the great mind of Marx and his extraordinary insight into industrial conditions could not have been brought to bear at first hand upon the history of the American Negro between 1876 and the World War. Whatever he said and did concerning the uplift of the working class must, therefore, be modified so far as Negroes are concerned by the fact that he had not studied at first hand their peculiar race problem here in America.[185]

This left a monumental gap in the analysis of capitalism and its developments, assigning Marx's own work to a specific historical period. Du Bois would conclude, while working on *Black Reconstruction*, that "we can only say, as it seems to me, that the Marxian philosophy is a true diagnosis of the situation in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century despite some of its logical difficulties."[186]

In American Marxism, Lenin had largely replaced Marx as the definitive revolutionary thinker by the early 1920s. Where Marx had anticipated and depended upon the rise of class consciousness, Lenin had posited the party in its stead. For Lenin, the party, a small group of trained, disciplined, and professional revolutionists, constituted a necessary first stage in the development of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The party would deliberately and scientifically create the conditions for the evolution of worker consciousness and for socialism. Where Marx had presumed that a bourgeois society established by a bourgeois revolution was a necessary condition for the evolution of a conscious socialist movement. Lenin, in April of 1917, would declare that the process had been completed in Russia in less than three months.[187]

Du Bois had been skeptical of Marx and Lenin on both scores. In *Black Reconstruction*, he reviewed the events of the American post bellum with a Hegelian sense of the "cunning of Reason." The slaves freed themselves, Du Bois thought, not by way of an objective consciousness of their condition but rather by the dictates of religious myth:

The mass of slaves, even the more intelligent ones, and certainly the great group of field hands, were in religious and hysterical fervour. This was the coming of the Lord. This was the fulfillment of prophecy and legend. It was the Golden Dawn, after chains of a thousand years. It was everything miraculous and perfect and promising. (p. 122)

And the other figures in the drama of emancipation, from Lincoln down to the poor whites, were just as much overtaken by the unintended consequences of their actions:

> Lincoln had never been an Abolitionist; he had never believed in full Negro citizenship; he had tried desperately to win the war without Negro soldiers, and he had emancipated the slaves only on account of military necessity. (p. 153)
>
> Freedom for the slave was the logical result of a crazy attempt to wage war in the midst of four million black slaves, and trying the while sublimely to ignore the interests of those slaves in the outcome of the fighting. (p. 121)

Leaders, then, led in increments. The northern field officers who put the fugitive slaves to work did not intend to free them ... but they did. The Confederacy moved to preserve slavery ... it helped to end it. Groups moved to the logic of immediate self-interest and to historical paradox. Consciousness, when it did develop, had come later in the process of the events. The revolution had *caused* the formation of revolutionary consciousness and had not been caused by it. The revolution was spontaneous.

To the second point, the precondition of bourgeois society, Du Bois maintained that no bourgeois society was the setting of this revolution. The dominant ideology of the society was that of the plantocracy, a dictatorship of labor and land with no democratic pretensions. But of more significance, the ideology of the plantocracy had not been the ideology of the slaves. The slaves had produced their own culture and their own consciousness by adapting the forms of the non-Black society to the conceptualizations derived from their own historical roots and social conditions. In some instances, indeed, elements produced by the slave culture had become the dominant ones in white southern culture. The process had spanned generations: "[T]he rolling periods of Hebrew prophecy and biblical legend furnished inaccurate but splendid words. The subtle folk-lore of Africa, with whimsy and parable, veiled wish and wisdom; and above all fell the anointed chrism of the slave music, the only gift of pure art in America" (p. 14). This was the human experience from which the rebellion rose. Torn from it were the principles of "right and wrong, vengeance and love ... sweet Beauty and Truth" that would serve as guideposts to the ex-slaves. It was the tradition critical to the framing of the survival of these new people.

Du Bois, despite all the diversions and distractions of intellect, social origins, and ambition that had marked his even then long life, had at last come to the Black radical tradition. In the midst of the most fearsome maelstrom his age had seen, and with the pitiable reaction of the declared revolutionary opposition in mind, his purposeful interrogation of the past had led him to the hidden specter of Black revolutionists. Their revolution had failed, of course. And with its failure had gone the second and truer possibility of an American democracy. But until the writing of *Black Reconstruction*, the only mark on American historical consciousness left by their movement had been a revised legend of their savagery. Du Bois had understood, finally, that this was insufficient. "Somebody in each era," he had written, "must make clear the facts." With that declaration, the first ledger of radical Black historiography had been filled."[188]

In *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois had striven to enrich the critique of capitalism

and bourgeois society that had merged into the dominant strains of Western radicalism. He had no choice if he was to comprehend the crises of war and depression that devastated the world system in his lifetime, and the rebellion and revolution in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the New World that were their concomitants. Du Bois came to believe that the preservation of the capitalist world system, its very expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, had involved the absorption of new sources of labor power, not by their conversion into wage labor but by coercion. Characteristically, capitalist imperialism had magnified the capacity for capital accumulation by force variously disguised as state nationalism, benevolent colonialism, race destiny, or the civilizing mission. Except in scattered instances, the peasantries of the Third World had become neither urban nor rural proletariats but near-slaves. For most, their social development had been effectively arrested. The result, relative to their own recent pasts and the situation of European workers, was retardation. Indeed, whole populations had been eliminated either during "pacification" or through forced labor. The belief that capitalism would advance African and Asian and other peasantries had for the most part proved to be misplaced. Beyond Western Europe, the capitalist world system had produced social and economic chaos. No theory of history that conceptualized capitalism as a progressive historical force, qualitatively increasing the mastery of human beings over the material bases of their existence, was adequate to the task of making the experiences of the modern world comprehensible. For Du Bois, America in the first half of the nineteenth century, a society in which manufacturing and industrial capitalism had been married to slave production, had been a microcosm of the world system. The advanced sectors of the world economy could expand just so long as they could dominate and rationalize by brute force the exploitation of essentially nonindustrial and agrarian labor. The expansion of American slavery in the nineteenth century was not an anachronism but a forewarning. But so too, he believed, was its defeat.

It was also true, as Marx, Engels, and others had anticipated, that there were contradictions to the world economy and the systems of coercion upon which it depended. However, Du Bois came to perceive that they were not limited to the contradictions discerned by the radical Western intelligentsia. In the long run, that is, by the beginnings of the twentieth century, the vision of the destruction of bourgeois society entertained by Western socialists had been shown to be of only partial relevance. The working classes of Europe and America had indeed mounted militant assaults on their ruling classes. But in defeat they had also displayed their vulnerabilities to bourgeois nationalism and racialist sentiment. Elsewhere other realities had too come to the fore. The shocks to Western imperialism, which in the previous century had appeared to European radicals to be at the margins of the world revolution, were by the 1930s occupying center stage. The Indian Mutiny, the Boxer Rebellion, the nationalist struggles that had erupted in the Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia, Abyssinia, West and southern Africa, and carried over into the twentieth century—the "people's wars"—had achieved major historical significance in the revolutions in Mexico, China, and Russia. And in every instance, peasants and agrarian

workers had been the primary social bases of rebellion and revolution. Nowhere, not even in Russia, where a rebellious urban proletariat was a fraction of the mobilized working classes, had a bourgeois social order formed a precondition for revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary consciousness had formed in the process of anti-imperialist and nationalist struggles, and the beginnings of resistance had often been initiated by ideological constructions remote from the proletarian consciousness that was a presumption of Marx's theory of revolution. The idiom of revolutionary consciousness had been historical and cultural rather than the "mirror of production." The oppositions that had struck most deeply at capitalist domination and imperialism had been those formed outside the logic of bourgeois hegemony. In *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois had tried to give these processes a concrete, historical appearance. Again he had had very little choice in the matter. The ideology of the Black struggle, the revolutionary consciousness of the slaves, had appeared to his Westernized eyes, part legend, part whimsy, part art. Yet he realized it had been sufficient to arouse them into mass resistance and had provided them with a vision of the world they preferred. Their collective action had achieved the force of a historical antilogic to racism, slavery, and capitalism.

C. L. R. JAMES AND THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION

10

Black Labor and the Black Middle Classes in Trinidad

In the warm Caribbean Sea, where colonies of African labor were compressed on to the Antilles—the tropic archipelago that serpentined its way from the open claw of the Yucatan and Floridian peninsulas of Central and North America to the northern crowns of Venezuela and Colombia in South America—the same Black antilogic extended itself into the twentieth century. In the earlier century, it had destroyed the plantation economy upon which the momentum of African slavery rested.[1] But the Africanization of the islands—their transformation from forced labor into peasant economies where daily life was mediated by the cultural syncretisms of the diaspora— had been incomplete. Political power had been transferred from the venal order of the plantocracies to an uneasy accommodation between the imperial bureaucracy at the metropoles and the highest strata among the entrenched white minorities. Even Haiti, to employ the language of Rainboro again, was witnessing the destruction of democracy by property in fear of poverty.[2] In the British possessions, racial arrogance assumed the posture of trusteeship over the islands' Black populations and deter- mined its proper structure should be that of the system of crown colonies.

> The Colonial Office soon realized . . . that the West Indies were quite unsuited for self-government. How could assemblies so blatantly unrepresentative of the bulk of the population be granted responsibility, asked the veteran civil servant, Sir Henry Taylor? As the islands were fast becoming financial liabilities, the old representative

constitutions became a bar to good government. The new free populations could never by "represented" under existing conditions. Thus the idea took root that the West Indies should be persuaded to reconsider their constitutions and become crown colonies.

By 1875 all the Caribbean colonies except Barbados (to which might be added the Bahamas and Bermuda) agreed to give up their old constitutions and become Crown colonies. In 1868 the colonial secretary announced that the new legislative councils would all have a basic feature: "that the power of the Crown in the Legislature, if pressed to its extreme limit, would avail to overcome every resistance that could be made at it." In other words, the British government had stepped into the West Indies to protect the population from the power of the former slave-owning class.[3]

The alternative, as was demonstrated by the Black rebellion in Jamaica in 1865, was to suffer the colonial oligarchy's inadvertent but constant encouragement to violent Black militancy.[4] This, we may surmise, was an unacceptable political risk to the architects and guardians of the Empire whose over-extended charge had already absorbed the disastrous mutiny in the Indian sepoy army in 1857 (and the subsequent occupation of India by British troops),[5] and was as well a senior and chartered member in the European "scramble" for Africa and Asia. Neither the English people themselves nor the masses of imperial subjects could be expected to perpetually accede to the imperial myth of civilizing in the face of the overtly selfish and catastrophic preoccupations of white settler colonists.

For the Black peasants and workers in the British West Indies, however, the "new imperialism" that displaced the Caribbean oligarchy was by far the more formidable enemy. While government power in the British home isles ricocheted between the Liberal and Conservative parties, as it had after the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884, while state policy staggered between "free trade, free production, the freedom of nationalities" (that is, home rule for the Irish and Welsh), and anti-imperialism[6] and the alternative of aggressive, jingoistic imperialism, popular support for a global British presence was measurably inconstant. Even a Select Committee of the House of Commons, as early as 1865 had "recommended that most British colonies should be given up as soon as possible and that they should be prepared for independence."[7] An industrialized Britain was then more than a match for its European rivals and its domestic economy reflected its international domination of commerce. But in the last decades of the nineteenth century, "Britain was and knew herself to be threatened by 'empires.'"[8] Sandwiched between the diplomatic and mercantile momenta of Germany, France, Russia, and the United States, overdrawn by financial scandal and mismanagement, the weakened British economy and a restive public encouraged and compelled the imperialist faction that, until then, could only pursue its vision with restraint. Even the final liberal government of the nineteenth century (1892–95) was overwhelmed by the imperialist ethos.[9] By the fateful Conservative victory in 1895,

imperialism had come to dominate the public mind. With its offer of new markets for a diminished trade, new lands for British settlement, with its new nationalistic "half-penny" press and its imperialist literati and intelligentsia,[10] the imperialism of the businessman's Parliament, masked as national interest and destiny, seemed to fulfill the wildest fancy:

> No doubt [in 1891] the population of Great Britain barely exceeded 38,000,000, but there were nearly 2,000,000 British subjects in Cape Colony and Natal, over 600,000 in New Zealand, over 3,000,000 in Australia, and 5,000,000 in Canada. Add to these figures the Indian subjects of Great Britain, almost 300,000,000, and a further 46,000,000 in the remaining territories under some form of British rule or influence and the total amounted to 394,600,000. What other State could hope to rival such a figure. . . . The area of the Empire was also on the increase: in September 1896, a statesman calculated that in twelve years 2,600,000 square miles had been added to it—that is to say twenty-four times the area of Great Britain. In 1895, it was 11,335,000 square miles. A few more annexations and it would amount to a quarter of the entire land surface of the globe.
>   This was the object which the convinced imperialists deliberately pursued.[11]

For another two generations, the lives of the West Indian masses and those of other colonial subjects would be directly affected by representatives of a ruling class bathed by its self-manufactured glory and whose monumental conceit hid from it the source and scale of the horrors with which it would be associated. As if to satisfy Marx's contempt and add to Engels's class humiliation, the English bourgeoisie and its European confederates sank into the historical swamp of pretentious imperialism and counter-preening nationalisms from which the carnivore of global warfare disgorged. Reckless provocations, diplomatic inanition (followed by its military genus) and intoxications with empire inexorably led the ruling classes of Europe to that destruction of their means of production and their labor forces that they signified with the name "World War."

In Trinidad, during the seven-plus decades between the formal abolition of slavery in the British possessions and the slaughter of a generation in the early twentieth century, the massive withdrawal of labor from the plantations by the Africans and Creoles[12] had led to some dramatic countermoves on the part of the sugar estates companies and the planters.[13] With the moral pretensions of the abolitionists still resonating in public discourse, the former owners of Black labor resorted to pseudo-Calvinist rhetoric to elicit support from Parliament for their next exercise in the exploitation of labor. Their leading spokesman, William Burnley, lamented

> the paucity of the labouring population, which prevents competition among them; and they are enabled to make more money than is good and advantageous for them which I consider to be the great cause why, instead of advancing in moral improvement, they are rather retrograding at the present period; for I hold that it is

impossible for any moral improvement to take place in a community where the want of a good character and a good reputation interpose no serious obstacle to a man gaining a lucrative employment.[14]

New immigrants, they all agreed, would be necessary. The competition of immigrant labor would discipline Trinidad's Black workers to reasonable wages and regular hours of labor. This would, in turn, make it possible for British sugar producers to undermine the slave sugar of their foreign competitors in the European market. "Free Trade, after all, meant the free movement of men as well as of goods."[15]

There were three possible sources of immigrant labor that were immediately at hand: the other islands of the West Indies; the free Negroes of the United States; and the Africans liberated by the Royal Navy from "illegal" slave ships along the West African coast. None of these sources, however, proved sufficient. Although an estimated 10,278 West Indians immigrated to Trinidad between 1839 and 1849 (in the same period another 7,582 went to British Guiana), and between 1841 and 1861, 3,581 liberated Africans from Sierra Leone and St. Helena arrived, and an even smaller number of free Blacks made their way from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, the lure of Trinidad's sugar fields was shortlived, the sources of immigration too irregular.[16] Somewhat tardily, indeed, following the leads of Parliament, the East India Company and the planters of British Guiana, the Trinidadian ruling class and its metropole partners turned their attention to India.[17] For the next 70 years, from 1845 to 1917, Indian indentured labor became the basis for the sugar plantations of western Trinidad.[18] "Indians, both indentured and free, had become the backbone of Trinidad's plantation labor force by about 1860."[19]

> About 143,000 Indians came to Trinidad up to 1917. Immigration began in 1845; there was a break in 1848–51; then from 1851 right down to 1917 Indians arrived steadily each year. Between 1845 and 1892, 93,569 labourers came, channelled through two main Indian ports, Calcutta in the North, and Madras in the South. The great majority, however, came from Calcutta and after 1872 there were no more arrivals from Madras.[20]

They were, for the most part, peasants from the northeast of India, the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), and Bihar, and amounted to a mere fraction of the hundreds of thousands of Indians who abandoned the region in the nineteenth century's last decades to find their ways to the West Indies, Fiji, Natal, and Nepal.

> This area, the seat of ancient cultures, was overpopulated and economically depressed in the later part of the nineteenth century. The extreme heat in the summer, the floods in the monsoon leading to whole-scale destruction of crops, and the recurrent famines made life difficult under the British rule. Rural indebtedness was appalling and agriculture was "by no means an easy business by which to make a living." Moreover, the Mutiny-cum-Revolt of 1857 had a disastrous socio-economic effect on this region.[21]

Propelled by these circumstances into the far extremities of the British colonial system, they brought with them their culture: their languages, their castes, their music, and their religions.[22] And up to the First World War, it came to be accepted that they served in Trinidad as a "substantial counterpoise against troubles with the negroes and vice versa."[23] "Coolie" labor, to be sure, had provided momentary succor for sugar production. And Trinidad's economy, diversified by cocoa production and, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, oil and asphalt industries,[24] rode above the depression that visited the other West Indian monocultures in the last quarter of that century. But a deeper social process was occurring, one beneath the apparent antipathy between "coolie" and Creole. Where they were thrown together, the existential vice of labor was drawing East and West Indian into certain cultural approximations:

> In 1865 a fierce riot over precedence broke out between the Indians of Woodford Lodge and Endeavour Estate at Chaguanas. Creoles and Chinese went to the help of their workmates; loyalties to the estate transcended those of race in the fighting. . . .
>
> Rowdy elements among the Creoles were joining in the Hosein celebrations in the 1850s. For them it was like Donnybrook Fair where people went in the hope of a fight. But also Negroes began to take a more respectable part in the procession as drummers for which they were paid in rum or cash, and, as in Mauritius in the 1850s, the *taziyas* were sometimes borne by Negroes.[25]

The significance of these events should have been clear, but the whites were deceived by their discourse of domination.[26] That error was of strategic proportions in a society that by the opening decades of the next century was 4 percent white, 15 percent mulatto, 1 percent Chinese, and 80 percent of African and East Indian origins and descent.[27]

The dead season of collective resistance in Trinidad, the time up to the earliest years of the twentieth century, was both real and partially imagined. Because "the Creole population had nearly all withdrawn from the estates,"[28] it was certainly not until they were drawn as workers to the docks, the railways, and public works, and to the oil fields and asphalt works that they would obtain an effective cause and objective circumstance to openly challenge the crown and the white minority. Meanwhile, they claimed their liberation in other ways:

> Black labourers in Trinidad, during this period, reacted to the oppressive society they lived in by attempting to reduce their dependence on the plantation, by seeking to create an area of freedom for themselves, however limited. They tried to become peasants or artisans; if they failed, they drifted to the towns. In the towns, constant urban unrest reflected an awareness of oppression. The bands fought each other because they were unable to attack the real sources of their misery or powerlessness, not because they were unaware of them.[29]

Thus the ideologic and phatic ingredients of the radical tradition of the slaves was preserved by the African Creoles (who were augmented by the liberated Africans) in

their culture: their language, the *patois* "not understood by most policeman, magistrates, and officials";[30] their profane festivals such as Canboulay and the jamet Carnival where thinly veiled disregard for Anglican and Catholic moralities abound; in their syncretistic religious sects and noisy wakes; in their music and dance.[31] These evoked hostility and disgust among the Anglicized colored classes, shocked the upper-class whites, and inspired discomfort in official Trinidad. In 1868, *obeah* was outlawed; in 1883, drum dances (Calenda, Belaire, Bongo) were prohibited as "immoral"; in 1884 and 1895, the festivals or aspects of them (band stick-fighting, the wearing of masks) were suppressed. In time, too, it was believed and expected, public primary education would eradicate "Creole." But the verse of Calypso suggested the spirit of liberation, the sense of dignity was unextinguishable. There one found a quiet but steeled expression of outrage.

> Can't beat me drum
> In my own, my native land.
> Can't have we Carnival
> In my own, my native land.
> Can't have we Bacchanal
> In my own, my native land.
> In my own, native land.
> In me own native land,
> Moen pasca dancer, common moen viel.[32]

Indian indentured workers, who had now assumed the economic role of the slaves (and in the eyes of many, white and Creole, their status as well),[33] were understandably somewhat distant from collective resistance. Within 20 years of the arrival of the first 225 Indians on the *Fatel Rozack* in 1845, according to Donald Wood, their semi-segregated communities and villages had quite successfully begun the replication of much of the social striation of the subcontinent: vast chasms had been opened between the prosperous who had obtained land, shops, or managed to become money-lenders, and the "coolie" masses.[34] Within 20 more years, in several hundred villages woven around sugar and their own industries of wet rice, maize, and peas,[35] the blanket of their transferred society muffled their response to being cheated, abused, extorted, and exploited by white and countryman alike. Periodically there were labor strikes on the estates (a series of them occurred in the 1880s), but the initial expression of Indian consciousness was liberal rather than resistant.[36] Chinese workers, their importation abortively curtailed to less than 2,500 in total, racially melted into one or other of the Black populations or acquired their independence through crafts, the cultivation and marketing of garden vegetables, or further migration.[37]

For the whites, particularly the more numerous and culturally dominant "French Creoles,"[38] the crown, its governor, its colonial administration, and its Legislative Council were an annoyance. Elective representation would have been preferable, but the provision of an abundant supply of cheap labor in Indian immigration had largely calmed their concerns about the crown colony system. Still, the "birds of passage,"

that is the colonial officials and their families, were extended status among the upper classes in deference to their positions. For the most part, neither their culture in the national sense and in its amount, nor their education or descent qualified them for acceptance otherwise.

> The governing power was, of course, "North European"; and the superstructure of government, law, and education derived from Britain. But there was an important elite group which cherished ideas and values which were Latin and French rather than Anglo-Saxon. White Creoles of French and Spanish descent outnumbered the English Creoles and British residents, and were almost certainly more influential in setting the tone of the society.[39]

And not until the aristocratic French Creoles were thoroughly Anglicized and substantially displaced by British capital and British upper-class families in the late nineteenth century was there any possibility of a whole-hearted reception in that quarter. The British faction (primarily English and Scottish), which during the decline of French Creole sugar fortunes in the mid-century had for a time sought to forcibly Anglicize and subordinate the "foreign" Creoles, had been subdued since Governor Gordon's regime in the late 1860s.[40] They were content to leave the settling in of the white hierarchy to time.[41] But despite their differences, the white elite held the line on two matters. The first involved representative government. The elite would raise this issue on those occasions when their more aggressive ambitions were thwarted by the crown's executive or by the British Parliament. The Water Riot of 1903 and the troubles simultaneous to the First World War were just such occasions.[42] The second was the colored and Black middle classes, a presence increasingly difficult to ignore. They "represented a greater threat to continued white control of the society [than the black and Indian masses], even though their numbers were relatively few; they held the key to the political and social future of Trinidad, and some far-seeing Trinidadians realised it."[43]

Only the colored and Black middle classes, whose development had been in a sense interrupted only to build up to a crescendo in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were as a class unassuaged by Trinidad's prosperity and uncomfortable in the island's catacomb of class and racial relations.

> [T]he coloured and black middle class consisted of two distinct groups. There was a small group of families of mixed African and European descent who were the descendants of the French free people of colour settled in Trinidad since the 1780s. Secondly, there were the people, both black and coloured, who can be described as "self-made." They were the descendants of the Trinidad ex-slaves, or of "Liberated" African immigrants, or of immigrants from the eastern Caribbean. And they had acquired their middle-class status mainly through their command of British culture and their white-collar jobs.[44]

The second of the colored classes, having come into being while Trinidad was under a British colonial order, was never allowed to obtain the prominence of the Romains,

Philips, Angernons, Montrichards, Maresses, and the Beaubruns of the first (which P. G. L. Borde, the French Creole historian, had described as having "formed a second society parallel to the first; and no less distinguished than it").[45] In British Trinidad, the colored and Black middle classes had fallen from their previous heights, ceasing to be able to claim a share in the island's upper classes:

> Probably a majority of educated black and coloured men in this period were civil servants. With commerce virtually closed to them, teaching, the professions, and the service offered the only viable alternatives, except for the relatively small number of coloured planters. Only a small minority could hope to obtain the university education essential for law or medicine. This left employment in the service, including teaching in the government schools, as the only source of acceptable white-collar jobs.[46]

The distribution of privilege and advantage in a racially determinant society frustrated their larger vision: the achievement of equality with the white oligarchy, the acquisition of power. Like their counterparts among Black petit bourgeoisie elsewhere, they resented the arbitration to which the belief in Black inferiority assigned them.

> A correspondent to the *Telegraph* wrote that no amount of wealth or education enabled a man in Trinidad to enjoy social prestige, if he lacked "the correct tinge." Planters of wealth, merit, and character were "tabooed," being without the 'colonial passport' . . . more potent than education, habits, principles, behaviour, wealth, talent, or even genius itself. People outside the West Indies had no idea of the actual position of the educated man "of the *incorrect* tinge." It was especially galling when coloured men of "good" family were subjected to discrimination.[47]

And so, though it had not been necessary to respond to Anthony Trollope when in 1859 he published his anti-Black tome, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, by 1888 when Froude's *The English in the West Indies* appeared, a challenge from the newer elements of the middle class was imperative.[48] Interestingly enough it came from a Black and not a colored representative, and was fundamentally radical. Jacob Thomas,[49] in his *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained*, set before his readers a broader canvas than the "childish insults of the blacks" with which Froude had been intellectually satisfied:

> The intra-African negro is clearly powerless to struggle successfully against personal enslavement, annexation, or volunteer (or fight for) protection of his territory. What we ask, will in the coming ages be the opinion and attitudes of the extra-Africans: ten millions in the Western hemisphere, dispersed so widely over the surface of the globe, apt apprentices in every conceivable department of civilised culture. Will these men remain for ever too poor, too isolated from one another, for grand racial combination, or will the naturally opulent cradle of their people,

too long a place of violence and unholy greed, become at length the sacred watch-
word of a generation willing and able to conquer or perish under its inspiration.[50]

Thomas, whose parents had been slaves only a few years before his birth, who had
himself grown up and taught in the pathetically inadequate little country schools that
had been distributed by the government among the rural Black masses, and whose
command of the *patois* had resulted in his writing *Creole Grammar* in 1869, spoke not
for the middle class. He rejected their ambition and the master from which it was
copied. The middle classes, however, could not reject him. He was the most impor-
tant Black intellectual in Trinidad during his lifetime. His "efforts were important to
the coloured and black middle class, for they seemed to show that this group was
more cultured than the dominant whites, who were dismissed as being crassly mate-
rialistic. Thomas' literary activities indicated that non-whites were the cultural lead-
ers."[51] And though the majority of the colored and Black middle classes were pained
to lever their lives, their families and their reputations away from association with the
Black masses, a few Black men of letters, like Samuel Carter and Joseph Lewis (the
editors of *New Era*), William Herbert (editor of *Trinidad Press*, and then *Trini-
dad Colonist*), H. A. Nurse (George Padmore's father), and the barrister Henry Syl-
vester Williams, achieved, respectively, closer approximations to Thomas's compre-
hension.[52] Williams, of course, the primary initiator of the Pan-African Conference
that convened in London in July 1900, came closest.[53] He chose to realize Thomas's
ideal. He and Thomas, along with other explicitly political figures in the colored and
Black middle classes (Henry Alcazar, Edgar Maresse-Smith, and C. Prudhomme
David) active in the official affairs of Trinidad, tentatively began the radicalization of
the island's public discourse. It was, however, a second thrust of the middle classes
that set the tone and lent that discourse a particular character.

The society arranged by these generations of the colored and Black middle classes
of Trinidad was a chiaroscuro of the white upper classes. Its priorities had little to do
with the elements of the radical tradition sounded in Thomas's *Froudacity*.[54] In their
society, the shadings of privilege and status, acceptability and tolerance, the play
etiquette of Brown upon Black were as subtle a social art as could be devised with the
cultural, historical, political, educational, familial, and financial materials in their
hands. One almost had to be a Trinidadian, one with a special intuition at that, to
know what was required and expected, what indeed were the possibilities for any of
their young launching into the orbit of adult intercourse. While the white elite
seemed to possess the convenience of bold denominational distinctions, the more
easily measured amassed acreage or fortune, and the property of names that could be
located in the historical traditions frankly elaborated in Trinidadian literature and
journalism, the standard deviations among the colored and Black middle classes were
many times of such tiny gradation that an instinctive social subtlety was a sine qua
non. Gross disparities, to be sure existed, but they occurred too infrequently for
custom or habit to be unerring guides. In any case, the highly esteemed place of

the light-complexioned elite was easily enough achieved over a generation or two. Though its value was not appreciably lessened by "mixed" marriages, simple color was considered a crude and rude measure at best. Any Black aspirant sufficiently talented, ambitious, or sponsored by professional training or family affluence could ensure his/her grandchildren would be phenotypically eligible for the pinnacle of intra-class recognition. There was though the ceiling beyond which the Black could not rise. Anticipating that closure, many of the Blacks, particularly the intelligentsia, sought to substitute education and literature as currency in the inter-class exchange. Where Thomas had succeeded, others naturally strove, hoping to draw the legitimizing attentions of white and colored alike and thereby rolling aside the stone of caste for themselves and hopefully for their children. The highest coin, as was the case among the Victorian English intelligentsia itself, was literature. It was the mark of the educated Black:

> Probably because education was so important in their rise in status, the members of this group attached great weight to cultural and intellectual life. They boasted of their command of British culture, their ability to speak and write "good" English, their interest in things of the mind. It was literacy, familiarity with books, the possession of "culture" which mattered, as well as an occupation which involved no manual labour. These things were more essential criteria for membership of the middle class than wealth or lightness of skin. . . . In one sense they formed an intelligentsia, in that they took pride in being the most cultured sector of the community, although they were not part of the ruling class.
>
> They attached so much importance to culture because they had no other valuable and valued possession to hold on to. . . .
>
> It is not surprising, therefore, that members of the coloured and black middle class often took the lead in literary or intellectual activities.[55]

In journalism and literary criticism they grew to be supreme, outdistancing the whites in their celebration and message of the most advanced social ideas, literary forms, and preoccupations available to an English-speaking public. Thus, when it was their turn to articulate a challenge to colonialism and racial domination, their superior education and intellect were both their rationale and their tool.[56] They were, indeed, the basis for the nationalism that C. L. R. James exhibited in his first political work, *The Case for West-Indian Self Government*:

> On his arrival in the West Indies [the colonial official] experiences a shock. Here is a thoroughly civilised community, wearing the same clothes that he does, speaking no other language but his own, with its best men as good as, and only too often, better than himself. What is the effect on the colonial Englishman when he recognises, as he has to recognise, the quality of those over whom he is placed in authority? Men have to justify themselves, and he falls heavily back on the "ability of the Anglo-Saxon to govern," "the trusteeship of the mother country until such

time" (always in the distant future) "as these colonies can stand by themselves," etc., etc.[57]

For a community such as ours, where, although there is race prejudice, there is no race antagonism, where the people have reached their present level in wealth, education, and general culture, the Crown Colony system of government has no place. It was useful in its day, but that day is now over. It is a fraud, because it is based on assumptions of superiority which have no foundation in fact. Admirable as are their gifts in this direction, yet administrative capacity is not the monopoly of the English; and even if it were, charity begins at home, especially in these difficult times.[58]

The Black Victorian
Becomes a Black Jacobin

Cyril Lionel Robert James was born in Trinidad in 1901, "the son of a Black Trinidadian school teacher, grandson just over half a century after the abolition of slavery of a sugar-estate pan boiler and an engine driver."[59] His earliest years were in Tunapuna, a village of 3,000 by his account, situated half way between the capital at Port of Spain to the west and Arima to the east. It had been along the road between Port of Spain and Arima that the ex-slaves had founded many of their new villages in the 1840s.[60] In the valleys around Tunapuna, "liberated" Africans had settled, planting their gardens in the hillsides, and 30 years later, in the 1870s, it was one of the sites where the dancing and fighting bands with their territorial and semisecret codes had proliferated. Tunapuna had "boasted gangs called Sweet Evening Bells, Tiepins, Greyhounds, Island Builders."[61] As a child in a slightly more respectable Tunapuna, James recalls that he had quite early begun to absorb much of the survival ethic that had attached itself to the Black middle class of which he was a part:

I was about six years of age when I got hold of my mother's copy of Shakespeare. There were 37 plays in it, or 36, and there was an illustration in the front of each play. The illustration had below it the Act and the Scene which it illustrated and I remember the illustration before *Julius Caesar* saying, "How ill this taper burns." Now I could not read a play of Shakespeare but I remember perfectly looking up the Act and Scenes stated at the foot of the illustration and reading that particular scene. I am quite sure that before I was seven I had read all those scenes.[62]

Notwithstanding the availability of adventure stories in his mother's library, the child's reading was hardly what Richard Small described as "the normal youth's interest." James was being trained in and was exhibiting the lessons of his class. In that prescribed inventory there was contained also the Puritan importance of class propriety:

I was fascinated by the calypso singers and the sometimes ribald ditties they sang in their tents during carnival time. But, like many of the black middle class, to my

mother a calypso was a matter for ne'er-do-wells and at best the common people. I was made to understand that the road to the calypso tent was the road to hell, and there were always plenty of examples of hell's inhabitants to whom she could point.[63]

The sexual and moral customs of the Black lower classes, for all their vitality and attractiveness, amounted to a rejection of English bourgeois sensibility, they were an affront to the morality of the colonial model set before the natives. Unquestionably, in a Black family that knew the rules, this implicitly political statement had no place in the future of a properly instructed young Black man. "Good" society, white, Black, and colored, conspired against what it interpreted as Dionysian, Satanic humors. Cricket, however, was lionized in the culture of James's class. Indeed, from all indications, its presence pervaded every strata of Trinidadian society. Richard Small reported:

> The membership of the various clubs was determined by occupation and social class and at that time, even more sharply than now, that discrimination would be virtually the same as differentiation according to color. Queens Park Club, the controllers of cricket in the island, were white and wealthy; Shamrock, Catholic French Creole traders and cocoa planters; Maple, middle class of brown skin; Shannon, the Black middle class version, white collar office types, and teachers; and then Stingo, the tradesman, artisan, worker. . . . Add to that that almost everybody played or took an interest in cricket and that it was played for up to eight months of the year, and some estimate of its potential for social and sublimated social expression will be grasped.[64]

Cricket was James's father's game, his uncle Cuffie's and Aunt Judith's game, his cousin Cudjoe's game; an interest even to be found in his grandfather, the extraordinary Josh Rudder. It was a game of the English school boy. "Recreation meant cricket, for in those days, except for infrequent athletic sports meetings, cricket was the only game. Our house was superbly situated, exactly behind the wicket."[65] For James, then, it was a natural obsession; one to which he would turn as he sought to make his way in the adult world; and one to which he would return when he sought to make comprehensible his life and the colonial world in which he was raised.

The Trinidad of James's young life was already showing signs of popular agitation. In 1897, following the models of the English Workingmen's Association of the 1830s and the Leeds Workingmen's Parliamentary Reform Association organized in 1861, the Trinidad Workingmen's Association was founded. With a membership of 50 skilled and unskilled workers, which included Black carpenters, masons, tailors, and at least one pharmacist and one chemist, it was, according to Brinsley Samaroo, the first such organization in the British West Indies:

> [T]he Trinidad body emerged as one concerned with both trade union and political pressure group functions. It was founded just before the visit of the 1897 Royal Commission, sent to the British West Indies to examine the seriousness of the sugar depression and to recommend measures for bringing relief to the colonies. The

Association's first president, Walter Mills, a pharmacist, gave evidence before the Commission. . . . Mills complained against the insanitary conditions of the colony's towns, dwellings and estates . . . press[ed] for a reduction in taxes, especially on foodstuffs and agricultural implements used by the labouring people . . . better transport facilities, the setting up of minor industries, the introduction of Savings Banks and the further opening of Crown Lands. In addition, the Association was strongly opposed to state-aided Indian immigration which, Mills claimed, increased the competition for the "starvation wages paid on sugar estates." . . . Above all, Mills said, the colony should be granted elective government.[66]

The Association soon lapsed only to be reactivated, affiliating itself in 1906 with the new British Labour Party.[67] Now with hundreds of members, it began to function as a representative of the working classes, campaigning for labor reform and agitating for shorter working hours, sick leave, and against the "color bar," expanding its membership by attracting the "traditionally apolitical" East Indian worker. The colonial government was unsurprisingly hostile, advising the Colonial Office of the Association's dubious character:

Its members, some of whom are of but doubtful reputation, are for the most part not workingmen, and have no stake in the colony. They have adopted their title simply with the object of securing recognition by the English Labour Party and thus obtaining for themselves an importance that they would not otherwise possess.[68]

But Europe and the colonial governments of the British and French empires were soon caught up in the First World War. It would prove to be a historical force from which the empires would never recover. The war itself, over and above the toll it exacted in Europe (but not entirely European), was a fundamental contradiction to the raison d'être of the British Empire: the assumption was that "the defence of the self-governing colonies from external attack and the maintenance of sea-power were British responsibilities."[69] During the war, India alone with 1½ million men and women in British uniforms of one sort or another supplied more troops than all the other dominions and colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa were dominions) together.[70] And what India had done for Britain, Africa did for France: "Over 545,000 African native soldiers," wrote George Padmore, "were employed by France, chiefly as shock troops in stemming the tide of the German advance during the most critical periods of the war."[71] Tens of thousands of Africans also served with Germany, Belgium, and British forces in East Africa, while from the United States, of the 342,277 Black troops who served, 200,000 fought with the French army, uniformed as French soldiers.[72] From the West Indies, troops were also mobilized, most of them, some 20,000, serving in the British West India Regiment. However, there had been problems. For some, certain considerations overrode loyalty to Britain:

In Trinidad the press used the term "better class" to describe the whites and the lighter-complexioned mulattos who constituted the merchant and planter class. In

Barbados the term used was "the best class." When enlistment of recruits started in 1915 the "better class" young men throughout the British West Indies refused to join, except as officers, in the same contingents as the black soldiers. Arthur Andrew Cipriani, a Corsican creole who was leading the campaign for recruits complained that "our better class young men are shirking" from joining the public contingents "because of the lamentable question of colour which lies at the bottom of everything in these parts." . . . Some "better class" soldiers came to London and joined British regiments, the majority joined with "better class" soldiers in the other colonies to form the Merchants' and Planters' Contingent.[73]

But the advent of the Great War had brought to the fore a more considerable and mean enemy of colonial interests:

[N]ot everyone was prepared to make sacrifices for the general good. The colony's merchants saw the start of the war in Europe as a signal for an immediate increase in prices. On the very day of the government's announcement that the war had started in Europe, *The Port of Spain Gazette* reported that prices had risen steeply.[74]

This inflation of prices broke the backs of the Black working class in the island's cash economy, and was the primary cause of the strikes that followed: oil workers struck in 1917, railworkers, scavengers, stevedores, sweepers, sugar, and dock workers in 1919, asphalt and railworkers again in 1920.[75] And the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, joined after the war by returning ex-soldiers enraged over the racial discrimination they had experienced in military service,[76] was at the center of the agitation. This was the basis of the social force that Captain Cipriani, returning from the same war, would lead into the Trinidad Labour Party in 1932:

Contact with Europe during the first World War gave West Indian radicals a first-hand opportunity to learn from Europe and so the postwar period was increasingly "Socialist" in the way that West Indians understood the term. Cipriani wore a red button on his lapel and many of his followers wore red shirts in imitation of the "Reds" of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.[77]

In these years, Trinidad had become a part of the postwar Black movement that within twenty or so years would pull all the empires apart:

[J]ust as the 1914–18 war saw the Indian nationalists make great strides, so there were important stirrings elsewhere. In 1915, riots in central Ceylon led an alarmist governor to proclaim martial law and to imprison many notable Sinhalese. They included Don Stephen Senanayake (later the first prime minister), who never quite forgave the British. In 1918 the Ceylon National Congress was formed following the Indian precedent. In the same year as the Ceylon riots an abortive rising in Nyasaland, led by the Rev. John Chilembwe, demonstrated the growing passion of African nationalism. . . .
    In West Africa the Indian nationalists had eager admirers. When India was invited to the War Cabinet in 1917 they cried: "Why not West Africa as well?" As

India and the Dominions were invited to the peace conference in 1919, Dr. Nanka-Bruce of the Gold Coast sent resolutions to the western powers so that "the voice of West Africa" could also be heard at Versailles. The first [sic] Pan-African Congress met in Paris in 1919. . . .

At the same time in Kenya the Kikuyu began to organize political associations. Lives were lost in Nairobi riots in 1922. . . . Similarly, a few political movements were growing in the West Indies, such as the "Representative Government Association" of Grenada, founded in 1914, and Captain Cipriani's "Trinidad Workingmen's Association," which flourished at the end of the war. Marcus Garvey of Jamaica founded the Negro nationalist "Universal Negro Improvement Association," which had brief international fame at the end of the war.[78]

James, however, though he was aware of these events, kept his distance. "In politics I took little interest."[79] He had finished school in 1918 and was content to tend his two passions, his two disciplines: cricket and literature.

I had a circle of friends (most of them white) with whom I exchanged ideas, books, records and manuscripts. We published local magazines and gave lectures or wrote articles on Wordsworth, the English Drama, and Poetry as a Criticism of Life. We lived according to the tenets of Matthew Arnold, spreading sweetness and light and the best that has been thought and said in the world. . . . Never losing sight of my plan to go abroad and write, I studied and practiced assiduously the art of fiction.[80]

He had, to be sure, made choices, political choices, with which he would find it increasingly difficult to live as the forces of the world bore down on him and the Black radical tradition acquired its revolutionary form. Still, his earliest direction was in contrast to that of Malcolm Nurse, his childhood playmate.[81] Nurse, matriculating at the Roman Catholic College of Immaculate Conception and the private Pamphylian High School, also graduated in 1918. For a few years, he, as did James, would work as a reporter (for the *Weekly Guardian*). In 1925, he would emigrate to the United States, and within two years of his arrival he would join the American Communist Party. It was then that Nurse would become George Padmore. But even before leaving Trinidad, he had developed an open antagonism to imperialism. The *Guardian* had provided him with an object:

The job bored him, there was no scope for thoughtful writing and he detested his editor, Edward J. Partridge, an Englishman who demanded subservience from his black staff. When Partridge died, Nurse wrote that he had been "one of the most arrogant agents of British Imperialism I have ever encountered. I held him in utter contempt, and had hoped to use my pen in exposing his role before the colonial workers and peasants whom he oppressed through his dirty sheet the *Guardian*."[82]

James and Padmore would meet in London in 1932.[83] By then James would have just become a Trotskyist, and Padmore was barely a year from the end of his work with the Communist movement.[84] Their political collaboration would begin in 1935.

While still in Trinidad, James had taught in school, played cricket (for Maple), and worked as a part-time reporter. As a Black journalist on the island in the early 1920s, he witnessed the maturing of nationalist politics under Cipriani. Richard Small, however, suggests that: "It was not until 1924 that James started paying anything like close attention to [Cipriani's] speeches and not till 1931 that he became a follower of Cipriani."[85] It was his conversation in 1923 with Learie Constantine, the cricketer, that had unnerved him, and, perhaps begun the process:

> I was holding forth about some example of low West Indian cricket morals when Constantine grew grave with an almost aggressive expression on his face.
> "You have it all wrong, you know," he said coldly.
> "What did I have all wrong?
> "You have it all wrong. You believe all that you read in those books. They are no better than we."
> I floundered around. I hadn't intended to say that they were better than we. Yet a great deal of what I had been saying was just that.
> Constantine reverted to an old theme.
> "I have told you that we *won* that match. We *won* it."
> The conversation broke up, leaving me somewhat bewildered.
> "They are no better than we." I knew we were man for man as good as anybody. I had known that since my schooldays. But if that were the truth, it was not the whole truth.[86]

James's politics like those of Cipriani, however, remained within the parameters of parliamentarianism. He would need Marxism, he maintained later, to break with that assumption.[87] By the late 1920s he was a nationalist, but though he had read Garvey's *Negro World*, had interviewed Garvey himself when the latter visited Trinidad after his expulsion from the United States, and was also familiar with some of Du Bois's early works, James's vision had still only partially progressed beyond the ideological tradition in which he had been reared: "I hadn't really the faintest idea about Black politics then, nor was there any talk about any African or Black revolt."[88] His commitment was to fiction writing, an intent that had born some fruit in the publication of some of his short stories, and the development of the manuscript for what would become *Minty Alley*.[89] Nevertheless, his political apprenticeship had begun and he was preparing to write a biography of Cipriani:

> I began to study the history of the islands. I collected *Hansards*, old White Papers, reports of Royal Commissions. There were plenty around which nobody wanted. It was all very simple and straightforward. For background I had the Whig interpretation of history and the declarations of the British Labour Party. For foreground there were the black masses, the brown professional and clerical middle classes, the Europeans and local whites, Stingo and Shannon, Maple and Queen's Park. My hitherto vague ideas of freedom crystallized around a political conviction: we should be free to govern ourselves.[90]

It was then that Constantine, the more disruptive political force in James's social milieu, intervened. Constantine wanted to write a book, one which from his experience of playing cricket in England since 1929 might express his insights into the game and English society. He invited James to England to collaborate with him on the project. In March of 1932, James left for England. He would not return to Trinidad for 26 years.[91]

British Socialism

The socialist traditions in the British metropole to which Anglophone Blacks of Africa and the Caribbean were exposed differed decidedly from those of their Francophone and American counterparts. For one, the history of the development of socialist movements and socialist thought in Britain had been marked by unique historical events: the formation of the first significant industrial working class; the defeat of the revolutionary and then the parliamentary reform (Charter) movements in the early nineteenth century; British domination of international capital and trade during most of the century; the ambiguous presence of Marx and Engels in Britain from the mid-nineteenth century until their deaths in 1883 and 1895, respectively; the founding of the First International in 1864; the appearance of the new British Empire, and the concomitant intensification of Anglo-Saxonism as a national ideology. One of the historical consequences of these several events was the persistence into the twentieth century of a working-class movement with strong trade unionist sympathies:

> [In 1895] the total membership of the unions of the United Kingdom, including those which were not represented at the Congress [of British Trade Unions that year], was estimated at one and a half million—that is, say, about a fifth of the entire number of adult male workers. There was nothing like it in any other great nation. Moreover, an estimate of the strength of the working class not confined to a general view of the country as a whole, but distinguishing between the different districts and branches of the national industry yielded even more striking results. . . . In Lancashire, Durham, and Northumberland the trade unions contained at least a tenth of the entire population, and half the adult male workers. It would be true to say that for the Lancashire cotton spinner or weaver, the miner in Durham or Northumberland, membership of a trade union was in practice compulsory.
>
> Indeed the size of this army of workmen was perhaps the best security that the unions would pursue a prudent policy. In a highly civilized country there are not a million or a million and a half revolutionaries; and of the British unions, about the year 1895, the most conservative and cautious were precisely those whose membership included the largest proportion of the men employed in the trade.[92]

This impulse was joined by the formation of specifically political and electoral arms of the socialist movement: the Independent Labour Party (founded in 1893) and the Labour Party (circa 1900). Together, the trade unions and the parliamentary parties had a decisive effect on worker militancy:

While there is evidence to suggest a degree of working-class mistrust of the state in its everyday forms, the British labour movement had tended to insert both its industrial and political activities within the existing national political structure; in Gramscian terms it lacked a sufficiently hegemonic perspective to challenge the central institutions of state power.[93]

Finally, English nationalism or Anglo-Saxonism, so powerful an ideological phenomenon during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to some extent insulated British socialists from a ready acceptance or submission to socialist currents originating from the continent.[94] The political and ideological impacts of organizations like the Marxian Henry Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation (1883), which exhibited its founder's hostility to trade unionism,[95] William Morris's "patrician" Socialist League (1885), and the Socialist Labour Party (c.1900) inspired by the visionary American intellectual Daniel DeLeon, were of only indirect significance.

> Prior to 1917 there were only two Marxist organisations of any consequence. These were the British Socialist Party (B.S.P.) and the Socialist Labour Party (S.L.P.). The B.S.P. was the direct descendant of the Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) founded in 1883 under the leadership of Hyndman, having been formed in 1911 as a coalition of the S.D.F., sections of the non-Marxist I.L.P., the *Clarion* movement and various local socialist societies. The membership of the S.D.F. during the nineteenth century never exceeded 4,000; the B.S.P.'s initial nominal membership of 40,000 declined to no more than a third that number by the outbreak of war, and active membership was considerably less. The S.L.P. had split away from the S.D.F. at the turn of the century. It was purer in doctrine and correspondingly much smaller; the membership never exceeded a thousand, the majority concentrated in Scotland.[96]

More well-known (and affluent) was the Fabian Society (Sidney and Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw, Annie Besant, Graham Wallas, Sydney Olivier, G. D. H. Cole, and Margaret Cole) whose tendencies were broad enough to encompass imperialism, state socialism, and anarchy.[97] Their mark would be more enduring in British thought, not the least for their establishment of the London School of Economics.[98] But it was "Labour Socialism," the anti-Marxist, reformist, ethical, and pragmatic resolution to the class war, that directed the policies of the British trade unions and the Labour Party, and to which British workers mostly attended:

> By their very nature the rank and file—the men and women who bought and sold literature rather than wrote it, and listened to speeches rather than gave them— produced very little material of their own. We need to know more of these anonymous men and women who swelled the ranks of the trades councils, constituency parties and I.L.P. branches up and down the country. But such testimony as we do have, supplemented by the local Labour press and other historical records, testifies to the pervasive influence of Labour Socialism. Particular phrases such as "a higher social consciousness," "the social organism," "the Socialist Commonwealth," "let us

call to the man with the muck-rake," "ballot boxes and not bullets," etc. are encountered repeatedly.[99]

When eventually, after the Russian Revolution and the founding of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), an "uncompromisingly" revolutionary Marxist party appeared, it was still the case that very little success would accrue to Marxism among the working classes. As Neal Wood maintains: "British communism has to a great extent been shaped by its development in the shadow of what has become the largest and most powerful Social Democratic Party in the world." Much of the history of the CPGB and its differences from Communist parties elsewhere can perhaps be explained by the gargantuan strength and effectiveness of the Labour Party.[100] And neither the postwar economic decline of the 1920s nor even the Depression, coming on the heels of the party's fiasco in the General Strike of 1926,[101] could salvage the CPGB as a mass party.[102]

For the most part, then, following the Depression, English Marxism became a creature more of the sons and daughters of the middle and upper-middle classes than of English workers. Massive unemployment in their ranks, the emergence of fascist movements in Europe, a decade of the display of the corruption and incompetence of "bourgeois democracy," and the spectacular achievements of the Russian Revolution, had worked their magic:

> Changes in the intellectual life of a nation can often be perceived at an early date among university students. Prior to the nineteen-thirties British students had never exhibited the political fervor so characteristic on the continent. Consequently, it must have been with some satisfaction that Karl Radek was able to announce to the Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 that "In the heart of bourgeois England, in Oxford, where the sons of the bourgeoisie receive their final polish, we observe the crystallization of a group which sees salvation only together with the proletariat." The beginning of an unprecedented political ferment took place in 1931, when embryonic communist organizations were established at London and Cambridge Universities by students returning from Germany. . . . A Marxist Society saw the light of day at the London School of Economics in 1931, and the radical Cosmopolitan Society replaced the old International Society. Oxford's notorious October Club, founded in January 1932, was banned in November of the following year, ostensibly for its criticism of the Officers' Training Corps.[103]

Nevertheless, class arrogance, bitter divisions between workers and the class of the intelligentsia,[104] the residues of xenophobia (so central in the earlier century to the role of Irish workers in the British working-class movement and later as a support for imperialism), all worked against the possibility of the British Communist movement becoming a dominant force among the country's proletariat. Indeed, counterforces to the CPGB and Bolshevism had already developed in the 1920s among British workers with the emergence of "the Plebs League, the National Guilds League, sections of the I.L.P., the Workers' Socialist Federation (W.S.F.) and the South Wales Socialist Society

(S.W.S.S.)."[105] By the 1930s, British Marxism—the intellectual and moral residue of British Communism—had achieved its most enduring influences among university intellectuals;[106] and British socialism had been transformed into an electoral phenomenon with the Labour Party and the ILP as its most significant manifestations.[107]

Black Radicals in the Metropole

During these same years, the British Empire's African and Caribbean subjects were not frequent visitors to the metropole. In actuality, they had much less access to Britain than their Francophone counterparts had to the European continent. Nevertheless, African merchants were frequent visitors to London, and in time Black students from the emerging middle classes or sponsored by missionary societies found their way to the British Isles.[108] Still, many of the figures who would emerge as important ideologues, theorists, and activists in the anti-imperialist movements in the British colonies after World War I and World War II, were forced to take rather circuitous routes before arriving in Britain. Padmore, like Azikiwe of Nigeria, Nkrumah of the Gold Coast, and P. K. I. Seme of South Africa, came to Britain from the United States. With its tradition of Black colleges and universities, America was a much more hospitable and accessible route to further education, but experience in the metropole was still important. T. Ras Makonnen (George T. N. Griffith) came to Britain via America and Denmark. A few others, like Johnstone (Jomo) Kenyatta of Kenya, spent a number of penurious years in the metropole and on the Continent caught between colonial officialdom, missionary networks of limited resources, and rather haphazard employment.[109] The administrators of British colonialism, as we have seen, particularly in those colonies where European settlement had occurred, were generally hostile to natives acquiring Western education outside the auspices of the missionary schools or much beyond an elementary level. Some Blacks in both the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did make it to Britain for advanced training or to further pursue professional careers. Usually the sons of the fledgling colonial middle classes found all over the Empire, they remained within the margins of what was expected of them. Among them, however, were such figures as Henry Sylvester Williams (Trinidad), already discussed, Harold Moody (Jamaica), T. R. Makonnen (British Guiana), Mohamed Ali Duse (Egypt), and James—all of whom would play prominent roles in Black politics in Britain but who traveled to Britain with at least professional interests in mind. Once there, these experienced some changes of minds, augmenting their original intents or entirely devoting themselves to Black liberation. Among their achievements in Britain would be the establishment of newspapers like Mohamed Ali Duse's *African Times and Orient Review* (where Marcus Garvey received his first introduction to Pan-Africanism);[110] such publishing presses as Makonnen's Pan-African Publishing Company; and the founding of a series of social and political organizations: the Afro-West Indian Literary Society (1900), the Ethiopian Progressive Association (1906), the Union of Students of African Descent (1917), the West African Students Union (1925), and the League of Coloured Peoples (1931).[111]

During the interim between the world wars, a few members of the colonial Black intelligentsia working in Britain were closely associated with Marxist or Communist movements. Padmore, prominent in the Third International until 1933, was to head the Red International of Labour Unions' (the RILU or *Profintern*) International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUC-NW); Rajani Palme Dutt, an English-born Eurasian who studied at Oxford, would become the leading theoretician of the CPGB for 40 years; Peter Blackman, a Barbadian who had worked in West Africa as a missionary, would become a prominent spokesman and journalist for the CPGB (he had been preceded by two other Barbadians, Chris Jones of the Colonial Seamen's Association, and Arnold Ward); Shapurji Saklatvala, a physician born in Bombay, was one of the first two Communists standing for Parliament to be elected, he represented North Battersea in 1922; and, of course, James was to be well-known as a writer and speaker for the Trotskyist movement.[112] Left politicians, such as Willie Gallacher, the Communist MP, Fenner Brockway and Rev. Reginald Sorenson among the left wing of the Labour Party (and in Brockway's instance, the Independent Labour Party), and the independent Reginald Reynolds, were all associates of the radical faction of this Black intelligentsia in Britain.[113] But just as some events, like the worldwide depression of the late 1920s and 1930s, would propel some members of this intelligentsia toward the left, others caused them to seriously question the commitment of European radicals, and particularly European Communists, to their causes. In the early and middle 1930s, two such events, the Third International's disbanding of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers in 1933, and the press revelation of the Soviet Union's trade with Italy in war materials during the Italo-Ethiopian War (in contravention to League of Nations sanctions),[114] proved to be critical. In Britain, the most radical Black activists generally turned toward Pan-Africanism as the form of their political work while retaining aspects of Marxism for their critique of capitalism and imperialism.

In these early decades of the century, as had been the case for most of the previous century, the significance of the metropole for colonial Black intelligentsias was their interest in preparing for a role in, and for some a share of, the Empire. Others—for instance tribal authorities or missionaries—might appear in London seeking official relief from this or that manifestation of greed or injustice on the parts of colonial administrators or settlers. But for the ambitious, this was entirely a waste of the seat of Empire. For them, as James would testify of his own arrival in Britain, it was often a case of the "British intellectual going to Britain."[115] Many, of course, returned to their colonial homelands—particularly those from West Africa and the more populous islands of the Caribbean—but quite a few remained in England for the rest of their lives. And as the century proceeded, their numbers were substantially, if intermittently, augmented by the arrivals of Blacks with peasant and urban working-class backgrounds, propelled toward the metropole by the more chaotic forces that catalyzed or were the results of the crises in the world system: that is, wars and labor shortages.[116] Finally, a smaller number of these Blacks, but certainly the most prominent, came to the Western metropoles to pursue careers in sport and entertainment,

careers that would be certainly delimited if not entirely proscribed in their native ground.[117] In some part, members of the Black intelligentsia resident in Britain acted as a mediation for Black labor in the metropole and the colonies. As doctors, like Peter Milliard (British Guiana), they tended to the needs of the Black and white working classes in the industrial ghettos; as barristers, like H. S. Williams and Learie Constantine, they often acted in the interests of colonial appellants, or were active in civil and welfare rights.[118] Others, such as Makonnen in Manchester, and Samuel Opoba ("Sam Okoh") and "Joka" in Liverpool, established restaurants and dance clubs for colonial students, seamen, and immigrant workers, Black and white. Still others, like Edward G. Sankey, later a Nigerian businessman, acted as scribes and personal counselors.[119] Britain was at "the centre of gravity."[120] It was the source of authority for the Empire, the highest seat of appeal from the sometimes arbitrary ravages of colonial policy and authority. It was the site so persistently and idyllicly envisioned in the literary and historical texts employed in the "colony of schools" that ringed the Empire, and where they could extend their intellectual and professional attainments and anticipate being permitted to come into their rightful heritage. England was, in short, the natural setting for this British, if Black, middle class, frustrated at home as so many of them were by their recognition of the "two Englands—the England of the colonies and that of the metropolis."[121] The first, they knew, was constricted by the castelike boundaries of racialist order; the second, they believed, was fair-minded and a virtual meritocracy.

Only a few among them came to Britain for explicitly political purposes. Makonnen and Padmore did, but such others as Williams their predecessor and James their contemporary, acquired those purposes while living in Britain. Together, they helped to constitute that generation of Black intellectuals that—at their historical juncture— presumed or perhaps understood that the project of anti-imperialism had to be centered in the metropole. After their time and because of their work, decolonization and Black liberation would return to their native lands.

Makonnen had first come to Britain in 1935. He returned two years later and took up residence for 20 years. He was a Pan-Africanist when he arrived and remained so, deserving to be ranked along with Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, and Padmore in that movement. Indeed, he was more responsible than anyone else for bringing the movement together at Manchester in 1945 for the Fifth Pan-African Congress—the last time many of them would meet as ideologues without power.[122] As a publisher, Makonnen had been the first to publish Eric Williams's work and had published some of the writings of Kenyatta and Padmore as well.[123] For Makonnen, who had lived for a time in the United States, the center of the British Empire was a most significant platform. He celebrated the contrast between its liberalism and that of his own society in British Guiana. It did not take him long to come to the belief that colonial radicals could depend upon British traditions of free speech and a free press in their attack on the Empire.

What was it like to be a black man in the Britain of the 1930s? Certainly we were not rich; far from it. But we were generally happy in our lot—just to know that we were

challenging one of the greatest empires in the world. Imagine what it meant to us to go to Hyde Park to speak to a race of people who were considered our masters, and tell them right out what we felt about their empire and about them . . . write any tract we wanted to; make terrible speeches; all this when you knew very well that back in the colonies even to say "God is love" might get the authorities after you![124]

Persistently anti-Communist throughout his life, a man who could and did beseech his brothers: "If you are interested in communism, then buy the book. . . . Don't join the club!"[125] Makonnen could still appreciate the "leveling" in British political life that minimized national groups and negated "the Negro Problem" that he had experienced as so prevalent in America.

The few West Indians, West Africans or Somalis who worked in the ports or in London were certainly living under terrible conditions but these were not different from those of the Welsh miner, or the appalling area of the Glasgow slums. . . . [W]e were able to see the worker, the struggle of the proletariat much more clearly than across the Atlantic.[126]

More important to him, the same sort of solidarity was true of Blacks. Because Blacks were so few in Britain, he believed, kinship overrode class. Unlike America where a pretentious urban Black middle class had become alienated from the majority of working-class Blacks, those in pre–World War II Britain formed a responsive fraternity. When in England some of them became disoriented and went "*shenzi*," "instead of being disgraced we would provide money to pay for their passage [home]."[127] Harold Moody's League of Coloured People and various members of the radical Left were also a part of this services network. The most central characteristic of England for Makonnen, however, seemed a result of imperial inadvertence. While in Britain the ruling classes commanded the society by virtue of a certain hegemonic grace, in the colonies the more brutal machinery of domination persisted. Those Blacks who made the journey between these two polarities could never be the same:

[W]hen you look at the results of those Africans who had been to England, you wouldn't be far wrong in saying that England had been the executioner of its own colonial empire. In the sense that she had allowed these blacks to feel the contrast between freedom in the metropolis and slavery in the colonies.[128]

Padmore, it seems, despite his vigorous opposition to British imperialism, shared Makonnen's enthusiasm for the metropole. He was also impressed by the liberal traditions of what he had learned as a Marxist to identify as "bourgeois democracy." The same man, we are told, who in 1931 detailed the exploitation, "Bloody deeds," and "hypocripsy" of the Empire in Africa and the West Indies (in his *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*), was also capable of exclaiming to Makonnen in near-reckless admiration:

[T]he security people, they know we are here; they come into our offices pretending to be buying books or magazines, and sometimes when we're returning from a

trip to Russia, they hold us back after crossing the Channel. But you can joke with them and say, "We've just been across to get some Russian gold, and we're coming back to enrich the old country." Instead of giving you the American cattle-prod treatment, they laugh it off.[129]

Of course, it was all delusion. There was, in the 1930s, little that was quaint or liberal about British politics or generous about the British state. While it was true that in a small niche of British society the Popular Front and its Third International allies flourished, that radical writers and artists could produce political and literary journals such as Storm, Cambridge Left, Left, the Left Review, New Verse, and others, that such weeklies as The Tribune or Claud Cockburn's The Week could be published, that the Left Book Club could be organized, and drama groups like Unity Theatre and the Group Theatre could perform, that mass mobilizations like the unemployed of the Jarrow Crusade (1936) could demonstrate, and thousands volunteer for the Spanish Civil War's International Brigade (some 2,762 were thought to have gone to Spain, 1,762 wounded, 543 killed),[130] it was also true that power in British society was being employed for other things. In the streets, Sir Oswald Mosley's tens of thousands of British Union Fascists exacted a terrible physical toll on antifascists, and destroyed shops like those in London's Mile End Road owned by Jews.[131] Julian Symons recalled: "Certainly the police force, never notably sympathetic towards Left-wing movements, seemed always to assume very readily the task of protecting the Fascists from opposition."[132] But the official faces of British politics were no less venal. In 1936, at its Edinburgh conference, the Labour Party had "turned its back on the needs of republican Spain,"[133] and even earlier the National Government embarked on a "neutralist" course between fascist states and their victims.[134] Yet the same state had no pretensions toward neutrality where its Empire was concerned. Black activists in Britain in the 1930s were subject to the same "heavy manners"—as West Indians would say—as their predecessors. Just as in the 1920s, Mohamed Ali Duse had been "constantly trailed" by MI5, by Scotland Yard, and agents of the Colonial Office,[135] and Claude McKay, listed in the files of the British Secret Service, was prevented from returning to Jamaica decades after his single year (1919–21) of radical journalism in England,[136] British Intelligence and the Colonial Office had taken note of Padmore (as early as 1931) and proceeded to neutralize his work in Africa.[137] In the Caribbean, particularly during the workers' strikes of 1937–38, Black activism was ruthlessly suppressed. And when the Second World War followed, many of these "subversives" were duly interned.[138] But the delusion of liberalism of which Makonnen and Padmore spoke was also self-delusion, a piece of a larger misconception. To them and many of their fellows, England, the second England, the meritocratic England of romance novels and Whig histories, was the embodiment of fair play and deep moral regulation. It was an ideal, then, that even the most committed anti-imperialists among them found difficult to shake. Not even the gross imperfections and racism they confronted in the metropole dissuaded them. It was as though they had come to accept that as

Black Englishmen a part of their political mission was to correct the errant mother-land. Of all of them, it was James who would come closest to understanding why this was so. Doubtlessly it was his comprehension of English society that provided him with insight into British imperialism, British liberalism, and the British Left. On this score, he would proceed far beyond the economism of Engels, Marx, and many of the most recent British Marxists.[139]

Perhaps one reason for James's less euphoric reaction to English society was that his introduction to the country had differed in important ways from those of Makon-nen and Padmore. Living in Lancashire with Learie and Norma Constantine, physi-cally remote from the more typical sites of middle-class radicalism and organized politics, James was enveloped by a more contemplative work and a more mundane politics. Through Constantine, to be sure, he had gained access to the *Manchester Guardian* and was soon substituting for Neville Cardus, the paper's cricket corre-spondent. But his major preoccupations: the collaboration with Constantine on *Cricket and I*, the public lectures on the West Indies, the editing of *The Life of Captain Cipriani*, provided him the opportunity to read Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky, to review the lie of labor politics in Britain, and to meet with British workers for discussions removed from super-heated circumstances. Indeed, he would later admit that the development of his critical stance regarding the Labour Party (with which he had identified as a "Ciprianian" nationalist) was due to discussions with Lancashire work-ers that brought discredit on the Party's leadership: "My Labour and Socialist ideas had been got from books and were rather abstract. These humorously cynical work-ing men were a revelation and brought me down to earth."[140] Apparently sharing their disillusionment with the Labour Party, he soon found an alternative:

> I read the *History of the Russian Revolution* [Trotsky] because I was very much interested in history and the book seemed to offer some analysis of modern society. At the end of reading the book, Spring 1934, I became a Trotskyist—in my mind, and later joined. It was clear in my mind that I was not going to be a Stalinist.[141]

It was from this political base and ideology that he would write *World Revolution: 1917–1936. The Rise and Fall of the Communist International* in 1937, and translate Boris Souvarine's *Stalin* in 1938.[142] It was as a Trotskyist that James would author *The Black Jacobins*, the work for which he is best known. First published in 1938, this still formidable study of the Haitian and French revolutions and their signification for British abolitionism, was at one and the same time an analysis of the relationship between revolutionary masses and leadership, and an attempt to establish the histori-cal legacy of African revolutionary struggles. Within the same volume it is not diffi-cult to unearth a critique of Stalinism, an expression of Trotsky's concept of perma-nent revolution, and the elaboration of Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat—all constructed upon Marx's extraordinary determination of the primi-tive, that is, the imperialist accumulation of capital. It was from the beginning recog-nized as an extraordinary work. We will return to it shortly.

However, it was a second turn of consciousness that provided James with a perspective on English society. That development is recounted in *Beyond a Boundary*, James's most exquisite statement on British imperialism and the development of English bourgeois society. Published in 1963, it was a sort of autobiographic study— Sylvia Wynter has called it an "autosociographical system[143]—ostensibly of the game of cricket. Here James excavated his entrance into English society as a proper member of the English middle class, steeped in the public school code. His memory of being a Black boy at Queen's Royal College in Trinidad characterized the bourgeois morality and rationalism to which he and his fellow colonials were introduced:

> [I]nside the classrooms the code had little success. Sneaking was taboo, but we lied and cheated without any sense of shame. I know I did. . . .
>
> But as soon as we stepped on to the cricket or football field, more particularly the cricket field, all was changed. . . . [W]e learned to obey the umpire's decision without question, however irrational it was. We learned to play with the team, which meant subordinating your personal inclinations, and even interests, to the good of the whole. We kept a stiff upper lip in that we did not complain about ill-fortune. We did not denounce failure, but "Well tried" or "Hard luck" came easily to our lips. We were generous to opponents and congratulated them on victories, even when we knew they did not deserve it. . . . On the playing field we did what ought to be done.[144]

Cricket, he writes, became one of his obsessions. He played it, he read about it, and in time as we have noted he came to write about it. In a way, his youth was dominated by the game; cricket was the means of his introduction to the island's Brown middle class; it selected his personal friends; it grounded his perceptions of manhood and the judgments he would make of other men; and eventually, through Constantine, it became the reason for his coming to England. His other obsession was literature. This, too, was an emanation of the English bourgeoisie. For James, it had begun with William Makepeace Thackeray: "I laughed without satiety at Thackeray's constant jokes and sneers and gibes at the aristocracy and at people in high places. Thackeray, not Marx, bears the heaviest responsibility for me."[145]

> After Thackeray there was Dickens, George Eliot and the whole bunch of English novelists. Followed the poets in Matthew Arnold's selections, Shelley, Keats and Byron; Milton and Spenser. . . . I discovered criticism: Hazlitt, Lamb and Coleridge, Saintsbury and Gosse. . . . Burke led me to the speeches: Canning, Lord Brougham, John Bright.[146]

But the two—cricket and English literature—were complements. Each of them, as he was to discover in England, were cultural and ideological expressions of the same social order, a bourgeois order grounded on capitalism, systematized in the nineteenth century by Thomas Arnold's philosophy of the public school, tutored by the moral persuasions of Thomas Hughes, and embodied in the play of W. G. Grace, the cricketer.[147] The game and its place in the social history of England told it all:

It was created by the yeoman farmer, the gamekeeper, the potter, the tinker, the Nottingham coal-miner, the Yorkshire factory hand. These artisans made it, men of hand and eye. Rich and idle young noblemen and some substantial city people contributed money, organization and prestige.

The class of the population that seems to have contributed least was the class destined to appropriate the game and convert it into a national institution. This was the solid Victorian middle class. It was accumulating wealth. It had won its first political victory in the Reform Bill of 1832 and it would win its second with the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. It was on its way. More than most newcomers it was raw. . . . The Victorian middle classes read Dickens, loved Dickens, worshipped Dickens as few writers have been before or since. It is a very bold assumption that they did not understand what Dickens was saying. . . . Dickens saw Victorian England always with the eyes of a pre-Victorian. His ideal England was the England of Hazlitt and of Pickwick. Man of genius as he was, the Victorians were more perspicacious than he. They were not looking backwards. They wanted a culture, a way of life of their own. They found it symbolized for them in the work of the three men, first in Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby, secondly in Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and lastly in W. G. Grace. These three men, more than all others, created Victorianism, and to leave out Grace is to misconceive the other two.[148]

Cricket and football as organized games had begun as expressions of the "artistic instincts" of the English rural and artisan classes. Had James had available to him what E. P. Thompson was concurrently formulating in *The Making of the English Working Class* (what might be mistaken for coincidence if one were not aware that both James and Thompson were Marxist historians; both were responding to a recent experience of profound political disillusionment; for James, his defeat at the hands of Eric Williams upon his return to Trinidad,[149] for Thompson, his resignation from a British Communist Party he reckoned morally and politically comatosed by Stalinism;[150] and both were, in Thompson's words, "attempting to defend, re-examine and extend the Marxist tradition at a time of political and theoretical disaster"),[151] he would have had no reason to hesitate in assigning this emergence of organized games to the process of working-class formation in England. These games, more particularly their organization and their preindustrial spirit "untainted by any serious corruption," were one aspect of the cultural mediation constructed by the working classes as a response to the historical processes of capitalist dislocation, expropriation, and a deepening alienation. James, however, could only hint a comprehension of that signification: "[W]hen the common people were not at work, one thing they wanted was organized sports and games."[152] The reflexive logic of his own development drew his attention elsewhere. He focused his analysis on what the games came to signify for the ruling classes, the classes whose capacities for literary and philosophical articulation had done so much to form his own consciousness.

For James, the starting point for understanding the English ruling classes and their

hegemony over the laboring classes at home and abroad was in the historical parallel he discovered between ancient Greece and nineteenth- and twentieth-century Imperial Britain. It was a natural place for him to begin, he was British and "Greco-Roman we are."[153] In both societies, he recognized a relationship that fused power and organized games; an almost fanatical obsession with athletics, cemented (as he wrote of the Greeks) to the assertion of "the national unity of Greek civilization and the consciousness of themselves as separate from the barbarians who surrounded them."[154]

> The first recorded date in European history is 776 B.C., the date of the first Olympic Games. The Greek states made unceasing war against one another. But when the four-yearly games approached they declared a national truce, the various competitors assembled at Olympia, the games were held and when these were over the wars began again. . . . To every Greek city and every colony (as far away as Italy, Sicily, Africa, Egypt and Marseilles) the envoys went from Olympia with the invitations, and the communities sent their representatives and their official deputations. Forty thousand pilgrims would assemble, including the most distinguished members of Greek society.[155]

But, James insisted, the whole spectacle and its apparent but deceptive parallel in British society required closer analysis. Such an inspection would reveal the subtle dialectic between culture and the exercise of domination:

> The games were *not* introduced into Greece by the popular democracy. In fact, when the democracy came into power it lifted another type of celebration [the tragic drama] to a position of eminence to which the games soon took second place.
>   The Olympic Games had been a festival of the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie of Greece. Only the bourgeoisie had the money to stand the expense of the competitors. . . . Only the aristocratic families were in a position to take part in the chariot races.[156]

In England, organized sport had been a mass phenomenon, a spontaneous and public creation. And then, just as with land and labor, the rising bourgeoisie had expropriated it for their own purposes. Undisciplined, vulgar, and lacking self-confidence,[157] they had sensed that their reliance on naked force in their personae as expropriators, exploiters, and imperialists would ultimately destroy them if they could not establish to their own satisfaction their right to rule: "They wanted a culture, a way of life of their own."

> Arnold believed in religion and he believed in character. Scarcely less powerful in his conceptions was the role of the intellect. . . . The English ruling classes accepted Arnold's aims and accepted also his methods in general. But with an unerring instinct they separated from it the cultivation of the intellect and substituted for it organized games, with cricket at the heart of the curriculum.[158]

The public school and its regimen of organized games and athleticism provided them with a way of life. John Rae, himself a headmaster, concurs:

> Athleticism was a complex phenomenon at the heart of which was a belief that compulsory, competitive team games identified and developed qualities of character that were admirable in themselves and essential for "life's long earnest strife." ...
> [F]or some sixty years from 1853 to 1914 this belief dominated not only the public-school system but also those areas of British and Imperial society where public-school men played the leading roles. ...
>
> By 1900 the original rationale for organized games had been long forgotten and athleticism had developed its own ideological justification. Games not only postponed the mental torment of sex. They taught a morality. They developed manliness and toughness without which an expanding empire could not be run. They encouraged patriotism as the fierce loyalty to house and school was transferred to the regiment and the country.[159]

Though it might be said: "By it a ruling class disciplined and trained itself for the more supple and effective exercise of power,"[160] James believed such an interpretation was too mechanistic, too much the clever manipulation, too much the literal translation of what Arnold had intended. The psychological expression of the emergent English bourgeoisie had been drawn from the historical and cultural materials within which it had generated. James preferred to see the forms of their hegemony as extracted from a movement of the national culture; a renewal of English life drawing on the Puritan past but universal enough to affect other peoples far removed from its origins: "This signifies, as so often in any deeply national movement, that it contained elements of universality that went beyond the bounds of the originating nation."[161] It would be, he maintained, the only contribution that English education would make to the general educational ideas of Western civilization. He was not as sure (or as clear) as he might have been in the company of Thompson of the process he termed "modern civilization." But he did reveal one of its consequences. The English ruling bourgeoisie, at first, had required a discipline for themselves, for their own raison d'être and reproduction. They found their instrument among the cultural goods produced by the working classes. What they extracted or embedded in athleticism were rules of class, moral values, and a utilitarian rationalism. What they shared in the social spectacle of the games became part of the cement that bonded the several social orders into an identical imperial mission—one that would include even those natives at the peripheries whose claims to an English identity would amount to a tragic mistake. In the absence of more telling evidence, we must surmise that James discovered that mistake in England, 30 years before he sat down to write *Beyond a Boundary*.

When James and his contemporaries appeared in the metropole in the 1920s and 1930s, the England in which they had been immersed had already passed. Indeed, except in the airy fantasies manufactured by the ruling classes and their intelligentsia,

it may never have existed. Among those elements that truly made a difference, the working classes were becoming detached from their identifications with the bourgeoisie and the nobility. English workers were militantly demonstrating that they were no longer persuaded that their future and that of the ruling classes were identical. Their betrayal by capitalism, manifested in the millions of unemployed, made many, for the moment, no longer willing to fight imperialist wars. By the mid-1930s, their declared interests could be found in demonstrations like the Hunger March of 1934 and the Jarrow Crusade of 1936; and they formed into militant grass-roots groups like the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, their numbers swelling even the membership figures of the CPGB (in one year, 1935–36, the Party went from 7,000 to 11,500).[162] The material crises of world capital and the political incompetence of the ruling classes, despite the repeated betrayals by the leaderships of the Labour Party and the trade union movement, provided a basis for a certain regeneration of the formal working-class movement and its electoral aspect. Membership in the trade unions expanded,[163] and the Labour Party, in disgrace in 1931, made substantial gains (as did the CPGB) in the municipal elections of 1932, 1933, and 1934, and the general election of 1935.[164] The organized Left, however, was not a major beneficiary.

For Padmore, Makonnen, and their African comrades, I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and Kenyatta, in the anti-imperialist Left, there was another difference. Inevitably, even James realized that the illusion of the Empire as a global fraternity, benevolently orchestrated by advanced races for the interests of backward ones, was at best remote from the actualities they encountered. England, with its ever-broadening, grubby, dark poverty, its "low-life" fascists actively aligned and identified with factions of the ruling classes, its vulgar displays of racism (which "inexplicably" victimized those among the colonials who were proudest of being British), and its political mediocrity, inspired contempt, not confidence. The sheer pettiness of political discourse and bureaucratic cant betrayed what one expected from the "English heritage" or even from a respected enemy. These were not the actions of pretentious colonial administrators, they were manifestations in the home country itself. And while revolutionary movements of grandeur, scale, and vision could be seen emerging among "backward" peoples in India, Ceylon, China, and Africa, while even the Japanese ruling classes were mounting a massive territorial empire and the Soviets rationalizing one, the Left in Britain displayed characteristic factionalism, ideological "toadyism," and a politics dishonorably distant from the working classes and their struggles. Abandoned, as Padmore believed, by their most powerful ally, the world Communist movement, thoroughly disgusted with the duplicity of imperial policy, they turned toward the Black radical tradition.

The Theory of the Black Jacobin

The thirties were rich in political dramas that might ground Black radical intelligentsias in their own historical traditions. Their indulgence in the militant rhetoric of the Western European Left, evoking images of emergent revolutionary lower orders of its

own would have logically brought them to it eventually. For in the older sense of the word, who was more proletarian than Blacks in the imperialist and capitalist order? But it was a different, though not unrelated, historical logic that was maturing. They read Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* with its evocation of the brilliance of Black radicalism in nineteenth-century America, and they recognized its unmistakable debt to the Black masses of the early twentieth century who had produced the Chilembwes, the Garveys, the Lamine Senghors, and the Simon Kimbangus.[165] And then in 1934–35, when the Fascist Italian army invaded Ethiopia, the dam burst. Makonnen recalled:

It's very important to put the response of the black world to the Ethiopian War into perspective, especially since it is easy to get the impression that pan-Africanism was just some type of petty protest activity—a few blacks occasionally meeting in conference and sending resolutions here and there. But the real dimensions can only be gathered by estimating the kind of vast support that Ethiopia enjoyed amongst blacks everywhere. We were only one centre, the International African Friends of Ethiopia, but that title was very accurate. Letters simply poured into our office from blacks on three continents asking where could they register. . . . And the same was true of Africa. When the Italians entered Addis Ababa, it was reported that school children wept in the Gold Coast. . . .

It brought home to many black people the reality of colonialism, and exposed its true nature. They could then see that the stories of Lenin and Trotsky, or Sun Yatsen, must have their African counterparts. . . . It was clear that imperialism was a force to be reckoned with because here it was attacking the black man's last citadel.[166]

Within the International African Friends of Ethiopia, however, there were disagreements as to what was to be done. Makonnen believed that the "collective security" of the League of Nations (to which Italy belonged and, paradoxically, through Italy, Ethiopia's membership had been accepted) should be invoked, arguing that it was a chimera unless Fascist Italy was stopped. James, who chaired the IAFE, was ambivalent, however. As an International Socialist, he accepted the Independent Labour Party's position that all the British and French capitalists were concerned with was using Ethiopia as a pretext for a war to destroy their rivals.[167] The "defense" of Ethiopia was a mask for an imperialist war. He opposed the League of Nations and the concessions (in return for sanctions against Italy) its "diplomats" had extorted from the Emperor, himself a feudal reactionary.[168] As a Black man, however, he had other imperatives. With Garvey in Hyde Park, denouncing Mussolini as "the arch barbarian of our times" and vigorously urging Blacks to support Abyssinia despite the Emperor's infamous reluctance at identifying himself as a Black man,[169] with the worldwide popular response among Blacks, James's ground was prescribed:

I offered myself through the Abyssinian Embassy here to take service under the Emperor, military or otherwise.

My reasons for this were simple. International Socialists in Britain fight British Imperialism because obviously it is more convenient to do so than fight, for instance, German Imperialism. But Italian Capitalism is the same enemy, only a little further removed.

My hope was to get into the army. It would have given me an opportunity to make contact not only with the masses of the Abyssinians and other Africans, but in the ranks with them I would have had the best possible opportunity of putting across the International Socialist case. I believed also that I could have been useful in helping to organise anti-Fascist propaganda among the Italian troops.

And finally, I would have had an invaluable opportunity of gaining actual military experience on the African field where one of the most savage battles between Capitalism and its opponents is going to be fought before very many years. . . .

I did not intend to spend the rest of my life in Abyssinia, but, all things considered, I thought, and still think, that two or three years there, given the fact that I am a Negro and am especially interested in the African revolution, was well worth the attempt.[170]

Obviously, James was in conflict. But by early 1936, the situation had resolved itself for the moment: the occupation of Ethiopia was an accomplished fact, and the emperor was in exile in Britain.[171] By the end of the year, however, the Spanish Civil War had begun. Now the entire international Left was at war.[172] And Blacks from Africa, the Caribbean, and America joined the International Brigades to fight against the fascist forces of Spain, Germany, and Italy.[173] (And some Blacks fought for fascism: the Moroccan soldiers, General Franco's "storm-troopers.") But even before the International Brigades were withdrawn from Spain in 1938–39, the West Indies exploded into strikes and brutal repression.[174] The world seemed enveloped in struggle and Blacks and the Black struggle were a part of that world. For many radicals, an unavoidable lesson of the era was the necessity for armed resistance to oppression and exploitation. But for James, what the Italian army had done in Ethiopia: the killing of tens of thousands of peasants, and the complicity of the "bourgeois democracies" was instruction enough:

Africans and people of African descent, especially those who have been poisoned by British Imperialist education, needed a lesson. They have got it. Every succeeding day shows exactly the real motives which move imperialism in its contact with Africa, shows the incredible savagery and duplicity of European Imperialism in its quest for markets and raw materials. Let the lesson sink deep.[175]

The lesson sank deeper than he imagined. His tutorship under European radical thought had come to an end. From this point on his work would leap beyond the doctrinaire constructions of the anti-Stalinist Left and Engels and Marx themselves. The force of the Black radical tradition merged with the exigencies of Black masses in movement to form a new theory and ideology in James's writings.

In James's view, with only the most sporadic support to be expected from the

European working classes and the European Left, the radical Black intelligentsia was now compelled to seek the liberation of their peoples by their own means.[176] But some of the others with whom he was to be associated in the successor of the IAFE, the International African Service Bureau (1937), did not agree. When Padmore, for example, expressed his own reservations in *How Britain Rules Africa*, James leveled a withering criticism:

> It is on the future of Africa that the author, himself a man of African descent, is grievously disappointing. He heads one section, "Will Britain Betray Her Trust?" as if he were some missionary or Labour politician. In the true tradition of Lenin he insists on the right of the African people to choose their own development. But, astonishingly, he welcomes the appeal of "enlightened and far-sighted sections of the ruling classes of Europe with colonial interests in Africa" to co-operate with Africans. That is madness. How does the lion co-operate with the lamb?
>
> Africans must win their own freedom. Nobody will win it for them. They need co-operation, but that co-operation must be with the revolutionary movement in Europe and Asia. There is no other way out. Each movement will neglect the other at its peril, and there is not much time left.[177]

He had not forsaken the anticipation of an industrial proletarian revolution but he had become aware of the existence of a more vigorous Black opposition than that with which he was familiar in his own class.[178] In the crushing of the Ethiopian people he had seen the naked face of Western imperialism. More importantly, however, in Ethiopia, Spain, and the Caribbean, he had witnessed the capacities for resistance of ordinary Black people, the transformation of peasants and workers into liberation forces. Unlike Padmore, whose sojourn at the pinnacle of international Communism had left him uncertain, when he could no longer rely on that source, or Kenyatta and Williams, whose encounters with the imperial and capitalist metropoles so impressed them as to advise caution, James became convinced that successful armed rebellion among Black peoples was possible. The "colonial struggle and the metropolitan struggle" were identical on that score.[179] For a time, this view prevailed: armed rebellion among Blacks became the official position of the IASB. But after 1938, with James away in America on a lecture tour that would last for 15 years, that stand was modified by his associates:

> The work of the Bureau continued all through the war and in 1945 there came a sharp break with the theory. . . . The Bureau changed its position from the achievement of independence by armed rebellion to the achievement of independence by non-violent mass action. But to say that is one thing, to carry it out in practice is another. . . . To stake independence upon armed rebellion was therefore to have as a precondition the collapse or military paralysis of the metropolitan government. It was in other words to place the initiative for African struggle upon the European proletariat. . . .
>
> But by the end of the war the proletariat of Britain and France had not spoken.

Imperialism still held sway at home. Only a radical alteration in theory could form a basis for action. The perspective of armed rebellion was abandoned (though held in reserve) and non-violent mass action was substituted.[180]

While they pinned their hopes on the disintegrative force that war represented for the empires, on the resurrection of liberal ideology expressed by ruling classes made desperate by that war, and on the political consequences of the practical support given by colonials to the imperial countries during the war, James immersed himself in the American Trotskyist movement and the struggles of Black workers.[181] And he, too, became reconciled to nonviolent action:

> [A]s a result of the war, of revolutions and crises which had shaken contemporary society to its foundations for almost forty consecutive years, the bourgeoisie had lost its self-confidence in the face of a united mass movement. . . . [W]hen all is said and done the new political directive, breaking with the well-established ideas of the prewar period, is one of the great theoretical achievements of the present age, perhaps the first real break towards what the marxist movement requires today, the application of the traditional principles of marxism in complete independence of the stalinist perversion. It is to be noted that the theory did not reject armed rebellion, but held it in reserve in the event that the political and moral pressure envisaged failed to influence British imperialism.[182]

But "nonviolent mass action" threw the Black struggle back into the hands of the petit bourgeoisie, albeit a radical petit bourgeoisie. It was they who would mediate between the mass movement and the representatives of imperialism. And neither James nor any of the others ever came to terms with this theoretical error.[183] It was simply the case that the demand for the right of Black people to govern themselves (the position adopted at the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945) articulated by a radical intelligentsia speaking on behalf of the dominated would have historical consequences quite different from those that resulted from the Black masses seizing their liberation.[184]

Nevertheless, James's intervention had been significant. He had made a singular contribution to radical Black historiography when he and his comrades in the IASB were mapping out their contending positions in the last years of the third, and during the fourth decade of the century. It was then that Padmore had written *How Britain Rules Africa*, Eric Williams his *The Negro in the Caribbean*, Kenyatta his *Kenya: Land of Conflict*, and James *The Black Jacobins*. The first three had proposed national independence for African peoples but were addressed to the colonial powers. The fourth had not appealed. Instead, it was a declaration of war for liberation. "[T]hose black Haitian labourers and the Mulattoes have given us an example to study. . . . The imperialists envisage an eternity of African exploitation: the African is backward, ignorant. . . . They dream dreams."[185]

The theoretical frame for *The Black Jacobins* was, of course, the theories of revolution developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. James asserted that fact rather

frequently in the text. It was not, however, entirely the case. From Marx and Engels, he had taken the concept of a revolutionary class and the economic foundations for its historical emergence. But the slaves of Haiti were not a Marxian proletariat. No matter to James: the processes of social formation were the same:

> The slaves worked on the land, and, like revolutionary peasants everywhere, they aimed at the extermination of their oppressors. But working and living together in gangs of hundreds on the huge sugar-factories which covered North Plain, they were closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time, and the rising was, therefore, a thoroughly prepared and organized mass movement. (pp. 85–86)

Moreover, James seemed willing to challenge Marx and Engels on the very grounds they had laid for the sociological and political significance of early capitalism. While they had been content to locate the formation of the modern revolutionary proletariat at the core of capitalist industrial production, James was insisting that the sphere be broadened. "At the same time as the French [masses], the half-savage slaves of San Domingo were showing themselves subject to the same historical laws as the advanced workers of revolutionary Paris" (p. 243). Capitalism had produced its social and historical negations in both poles of its expropriation: capitalist accumulation gave birth to the proletariat at the manufacturing core; "primitive accumulation" deposited the social base for the revolutionary masses in the peripheries. But what distinguished the formations of these revolutionary classes was the source of their ideological and cultural developments. While the European proletariat had been formed through and by the ideas of the bourgeoisie ("the ruling ideas," Marx and Engels had maintained, "were the ideas of the ruling class"), in Haiti and presumably elsewhere among slave populations, the Africans had constructed their own revolutionary culture:

> [O]ne does not need education or encouragement to cherish a dream of freedom. At their midnight celebrations of Voodoo, their African cult, they danced and sang, usually this favorite song:

> Eh! Eh! Bomba! Heu! Heu!
> Canga, bafio te!
> Canga, Moune de le!
> Canga, do ki la!
> Canga, li!

> "We swear to destroy the whites and all that they possess; let us die rather than fail to keep this vow." The colonists knew this song and tried to stamp it out, and the Voodoo cult with which it was linked. In vain. (p. 18)

> Voodoo was the medium of the conspiracy. In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves traveled miles to sing and dance and practice the rites and talk; and now, since the revolution, to hear the political news and make their plans. (p. 86)

This was a complete departure from the way in which Marx and Engels had conceptualized the transformative and rationalizing significance of the bourgeoisie. It *implied* (and James did not see this) that bourgeois culture and thought and ideology were irrelevant to the development of revolutionary consciousness among Black and other Third World peoples. It broke with the evolutionist chain in, the closed dialectic of, historical materialism. But where James was to hesitate, Cabral, as we have noted before, would stride boldly forward:

> [N]ational liberation is the phenomenon in which a given socio-economic whole rejects the negation of its historical process. In other words, the national liberation of a people is the regaining of the historical personality of that people, its return to history through the destruction of the imperialist domination to which it was subjected.[186]

But James's effort to level Marxist theory to the requirements of Black radical historiography was not finished. Though he bore a great respect for the work and thought of Lenin, there too he suggested a more imaginative treatment. With Lenin's notion of a cadre of professional revolutionists, the beginnings of the vanguard party in mind, James went so far as to designate an entire stratum, describing in precise terms how it was formed: "The leaders of a revolution are usually those who have been able to profit by the cultural advantages of the system they are attacking" (p. 19). This was an admission of class pride that neither Lenin nor Marx or Engels had been prepared to make.[187] Though surely it was an inadvertent admission, one that revealed James's own class origins, it also reflected a certain historical clarity.[188] The petit bourgeois intelligentsia had played dominant roles in Marxist thought as well as in the Bolshevik victory in Russia. The theory and the ideology of revolution was theirs, and unarguably too, the Russian state. They had brought to the working-class movement their "superior knowledge and the political vices which usually accompany it," as James would say of Toussaint (p. 95).

In San Domingo, the revolutionary masses had found a most propitious figure in Toussaint L'Ouverture. He knew the enemy better than they. That had been one of his rewards as a functionary in the slave system.

> His post as steward of the livestock had given him experience in administration, authority, and intercourse with those who ran the plantation. Men who, by sheer ability and character, find themselves occupying positions usually reserved for persons of a different upbringing, education and class, usually perform those duties with exceptional care and devoted labour. In addition . . . [he had] read Caesar's Commentaries . . . read and re-read the long volume by the Abbe Raynal. . . . [H]e had a thorough grounding in the economics and politics, not only of San Domingo, but of all the great empires of Europe. . . . His superb intellect had therefore had some opportunity of cultivating itself in general affairs at home and abroad. (p. 91)

But in the end, Toussaint had also failed the revolution. James more than sympathized with some of Toussaint's failures: "Toussaint knew the backwardness of the labourers; he made them work, but he wanted to see them civilised and advanced in culture. . . . He was anxious to see the blacks acquire the social deportment of the better class whites with their Versailles manners" (p. 246). And he also believed that Toussaint was correct in thinking that the propertied whites who remained or returned to San Domingo were needed to help the former slaves to construct a modern state: "His unrealistic attitude to the former masters, at home and abroad, sprang not from any abstract humanitarianism or loyalty, but from a recognition that they alone had what San Domingo society needed" (p. 290). This last in almost direct contradiction to his beliefs 30 years later: "Slaves ran the plantations; those tremendous plantations, the great source of wealth of so many English aristocrats and merchants, the merchant princes who cut such a figure in English society (and French too, but we are speaking of English society)."[189] Yet others, even more recently, have agreed with the earlier James.[190] In 1938, however, James knew that the former slaves, Toussaint's contemporaries, did not agree. When they acted on those beliefs and rebelled against Toussaint because they were no longer willing to accept his egoistic compromises with the colonial bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist regime in France, Toussaint had them hunted down and executed (p. 285). That tragedy, James argued, was because Toussaint "explained nothing, and allowed the masses to think that their old enemies were being favoured at their expense" (p. 284). But more importantly, James insisted, Toussaint's failure had been the result of events beyond his control: "If he failed, it is for the same reason that the Russian socialist revolution failed, even after all its achievements—the defeat of the revolution in Europe" (p. 283). But James was quite aware that there was much that had been within Toussaint's range and much that he had botched. He seemed to sense that for all the importance that might be rightly placed on the counterrevolution in Europe and for all the genius that could be ascribed to Toussaint in the early periods of the revolution, there was still something that was terribly wrong in the man's make-up. Indeed, James admitted, Haitian leaders of much narrower experience and education than Toussaint would overcome difficulties that his psychology could not confront. And in an extraordinary series of paragraphs he tried to reconcile his admiration for the man, for the revolutionary masses that had constructed him (as I would argue), and these figures to whom history attached the completion of the Haitian revolution. These passages better than most reveal the sources of James's contradictions in 1938:

> [B]etween Toussaint and his people there was no fundamental difference of outlook or of aim. Knowing the race question for the political and social question that it was, he tried to deal with it in a purely political and social way. It was a grave error. Lenin in his thesis to the Second Congress of the Communist International warned the white revolutionaries—a warning they badly need—that such has been the effect of the policy of imperialism on the relationship between advanced and

backward peoples that European Communists will have to make wide concessions to natives of colonial countries in order to overcome the justified prejudice which these feel toward all classes in the oppressing countries. Toussaint, as his power grew, forgot that. He ignored the black laborers, bewildered them at the very moment that he needed them most, and to bewilder the masses is to strike the deadliest of all blows at the revolution. . . . The whites were whites of the old regime. Dessalines did not care what they said or thought. The black labourers had to do the fighting—and it was they who needed reassurance. It was not that Toussaint had any illusions about the whites. He had none whatever. . . .

Yet Toussaint's error sprang from the very qualities that made him what he was. It is easy to see to-day, as his generals saw after he was dead, where he had erred. It does not mean that they or any of us would have done better in his place. If Dessalines could see so clearly and simply, it was because the ties that bound this uneducated soldier to French civilisation were of the slenderest. He saw what was under his nose so well because he saw no further. Toussaint's failure was the failure of enlightenment, not of darkness. (pp. 286, 287, 288)

Alas, from no less an authority than James himself, we know this last defense of Toussaint was not without its element of rationalization. As Toussaint wasted away in his prison in the Jura mountains, writing his letters of supplication to the little emperor, his vision gave him away: "Despite the treachery of France he still saw himself as a part of the French Republic 'one and indivisible.' He could not think otherwise . . . there was a limit beyond which he could not go" (p. 364). We, of course, recognize James (and perhaps even his impressions of Padmore) in these assertions. We can see the declared identification of a Black revolutionary intelligentsia with the masses; the willingness to continue the submission to "scientific socialism" by denying the material force of ideology while indicating a bitter disappointment with the Communist movement; the patronizing attitude toward the organic leaders of the masses; and the ambivalent pride of place presumed for the Westernized ideologue. Moreover, it is clear that James was looking critically at his own class. Unlike his confederates, he was compelled to face up to the boundaries beyond which the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie could not be trusted. For that reason he was to insist often that the revolutionary masses must preserve to themselves the direction of the revolutionary movement, never deferring to professional revolutionists, parties, or the intelligentsia. But we shall return to that in a moment.

Coming to Terms with the Marxist Tradition

The year following the printing of Jacobins, James published A History of Negro Revolt. This was to be his last sustained statement on Pan-Africanism until the appearance of Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution. It was, though, a minor piece, summarizing in historical shorthand some of the occasions of Black rebellion in the

diaspora and Africa in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.[191] It would prove to be of some use three decades later but it was casually written, more a public lecture than a study. James was now at the center of the Trotskyist international movement,[192] and soon he was to be just as immersed in the American theater, stirring things up in New York, disputing with Trotsky over the Negro Question,[193] organizing share-croppers and tenant farmers in southeast Missouri.[194]

Ten years after *Jacobins*, James wrote a second masterpiece amid a crisis in which he was deeply involved. And on this occasion he found it necessary to frontally assault some of the principal figures of the Marxist movement. *Notes on Dialectics* was written in the late 1940s[195] a moment when the preoccupations of the Second World War had faded, leaving American Marxists free to ponder the changed circumstances they faced: the significance of postwar arrangements between the Soviet Union and the "Western powers"; the reactions of their country's working classes to the domination of the world economies by American capital; the orchestrated expulsions of Communists from the American labor movement; the convergent pressures on the Communist movement from the American government and the Soviet Union, and— for Trotskyists—the future of the Fourth International shorn of Trotsky, its unifying symbol.[196] By now James had become a prominent intellectual and organizer in the Socialist Workers' Party (swp), the American representation of the Fourth International. In this restricted arena it is fair to say he was being recognized for what he was: one of the leading Marxist historian/philosophers in the country. With Max Shachtman, however, he and others had withdrawn from the swp. In the early 1940s they formed the Workers' Party with 600 or so members.[197] Then, in 1942, a further split had occurred, a group centering around James and Raya Dunayevskaya, the Johnson-Forest tendency, had left the "Shachtmanites."[198] Later, in 1949 or so, the Johnson-Forest tendency would rejoin the swp only to become resolutely independent again two years later.[199] They required more:

> We had broken with Trotsky's analysis of the nature of the Russian state since the death of Lenin. . . . We came to the conclusion that a fundamental investigation still remained to be done, on Hegel's *Science of Logic* (with that of course had to be associated the smaller *Logic*, a section of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*).[200]

Notes on Dialectics was James's contribution: it was his logical and philosophical consideration and reconstruction of the history of the labor movement in relation to the formation of revolutionary action, parties, and revolutionary thought in the European experience. The grammar of the work, its logical structure, was grounded on Hegel's construction of the dialectic. It was at once an exposition of Hegel's philosophical method and the historical movement of the working classes. And when it was written its immediate purpose was to provide a rationale and a historical object for the political activity of his small organization: To preserve for his comrades the claim for the Leninism of an authentic socialism.[201] It was they who were seeking to contain a catastrophe, to rescue Marxism from its self-inflicted wounds (Stalinism and Trotskyism) thus preserving its theoretical and political core (historical material-

ism and the revolutionary proletariat). Their task was not an easy one. It was not just the political battle to be waged: a small organization in opposition to former (Trotskyist) colleagues, in opposition to Stalinism, the trade union bureaucracies, the apparatuses of the American state, and world capitalism. Those forces were more than balanced, they believed, since they were in the company of the proletarian masses. History and numbers were on their side. More decisive were the contradictions they hoped to rationalize. As Marxists they were compelled to juggle contending impulses. They were a radical intelligentsia contemptuous of the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie, in some sense themselves. They were revolutionary ideologues charged by their tradition to "criticize everything" while conserving the figures of Marx and Lenin. They were committed to the abolition of parties but their entire political history had been in association and contention with revolutionary parties. They were renegade bourgeois ideologists, trained in the ruling ideas of their time yet they believed in the imperative of penetrating the consciousness of the working classes in order to comprehend the proletariat's historical activity. And despite their sometimes feverish energies they were essentially contemplative didactics coupled with revolutionary action. James could not escape these contradictions any more than Grace Lee (Boggs) or Dunayevskaya. Neither could *Notes on Dialectics*. It contained an ideate from which James had no intention of departing but was compelled to leave behind. He supposed Hegel's dialectic would resolve the dilemma.

The delinquent premise was restated by James in the 1980 edition of the work: "What is then the beginning of the labour movement? We find the historical beginning in the French revolution *as Marx saw it*" (p. 10; my emphasis). This was the unchallengeable presupposition: Marxists had to begin where Marx had begun and as Marx had begun. It meant that the assumption made in Marx's vision of modern history had to persist in James's consideration of social revolution: the notion that implied that the proletariat constituted a class like the bourgeoisie. Like most Marxists, James was quite unwilling to contemplate that, as Cornelius Castoriadis has made clearer than anyone, since the appearance of the bourgeoisie was historically the origin of the category class it would be philosophically and historically impossible for the proletariat to recapitulate the social and ideological experience of the bourgeoisie. It could not become a class in those terms.[202] But there had to be limits within which the Johnson-Forest tendency was to remain. They had realized almost too late that as Trotskyists, without knowing it, they had flirted with the disintegration of Marxism: "[T]rotskyist thinking, persisted in, led the posing of the question of the disintegration of marxist theory, questioning whether we might not have to ask ourselves if it were valid" (p. 56). Their need to do things differently was to be a disciplined need. And in his consideration of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, and Marx, James made good use of his predecessors, holding strictly to the lights of the tradition. His critique, notwithstanding his fundamental deference, was true to form: internally consistent, devastatingly powerful, erudite, and logically near-flawless. Within its own terms James would take the philosophic discourse of the Marxian tradition to its most complete realization in the postwar years.

He began by assuring his comrades that their appearance, their work, and their politics, based on the evolution of state-capitalism and the proletarian impulse for an organizational form that transcended the revolutionary party, were anticipated in Hegel's *Science of Logic*: their's were the "new ideas" Hegel had anticipated. The opposition to them among Stalinists, Trotskyists, and Shachtmanites was corrupted by formalism and opportunism. Paraphrasing Hegel, James asserted:

> Imperceptibly the new ideas became familiar even to their opposers, who appropriated them and—though persistently slighting and gainsaying the sources and principles of those ideas—yet had to accept their results.
>
> We can see this is our whole development. The chief, or one of the most striking examples is our application of the law of value to the Russian economy. Today these God-damned scoundrels all turn up and say "of course"! But you could look through the literature of the Fourth International for pages and pages. I do not remember any statements to that effect. (p. 13)

He reminded them that Hegel had distinguished between vulgar empiricism, understanding, and Reason (dialectical thought), charging each with a certain value, a certain threshold of thought. The Dialectic was the ultimate realization of the Mind, of the Subject. Clearly, he suggested, Lenin had been capable of dialectical thought, capable of transcending through his thought the old categories (Second International) that he had inherited: "The Russian revolution of February caused violent changes in Lenin's categories. World War I set him revising the categories of the Second International" (p. 17). On the other hand, however, Trotsky had been limited to Understanding, a necessary and useful stage of thought but one that could end in its reduction to absolute categories: "He would have been able to lecture you on changing categories most profoundly. He talked about it all the time. But fixed and finite determinations held him by the throat to the end" (p. 18). Trotsky had been unwilling to recognize the true significance of Stalinism: "stalinism as a necessary, an inevitable, form of development of the labour movement. The workers are not mistaken. They are not deceived. Not in any serious sense of these words. They are making an experience that is necessary to their own development" (p. 30). Trotsky had been convinced that a labor bureaucracy (as had occurred with the old category: the Second International) would protect private property; Trotsky had been committed to the end to winning the debate with Stalin over the permanent revolution versus socialism in one country. While the Stalinists were practical and went about seizing and then preserving their power (and, incidentally, state property), Trotsky continued to defend himself in the most fixed terms: contending with his ghosts over who was closer to Lenin.

> Thus the debate, beginning with socialism in a single country, remained for ever and ever within the categories of leninism. Stalin said: whatever I do is leninism. Trotsky said no: it is not leninism. I am the genuine leninist. That was the setting. Stalin was not very serious about it. His actions were pure empiricism. Trotsky was

serious about this leninism and was caught in it and strangled in it. He was entirely wrong in every theoretical and practical conclusion that was drawn from the debate. . . . The debate was that socialism *could* not be built in a single country. Does anyone believe that Stalin or any of his people believe that what is in Russia is socialism? Only an utter fool can think so. What the debate was about was whether the state-property system would be maintained without a revolution sooner or later in the West. (p. 350)

And of course while Trotsky was preoccupied, fixed at the level of Understanding, he never possessed the energy nor the insight to realize that Stalinism . . . could only be understood by revealing its economic basis: "He did not see that the revolutionary Third International had succumbed to state capitalism aided by Russian imperialism. He never wrote about the economic changes, what he thought about it, if he did, he never thought of sufficient importance to set down. . . ." "Astonishing, isn't it?" (p. 37). Those who wished to continue with the struggles of the proletariat, to comprehend the emergence of Stalinism, could no longer afford to indulge Trotsky:

The new categories, the impulses, the instinctive actions, the strong knots formed, were observed, talked about, but always incorporated into the old shell; state capitalism or reformist international that would destroy private property and re-fuse to support the bourgeoisie in imperialist war, an anti-proletarian bureaucracy that throve on state property and would defend it to the last against private property, all the knots, impulses, etc. which drove these into the mind, were allowed in only in so far as they filled into the formed and finished categories which Lenin left. That is why what were the results of Reason in one generation become Understanding in another, and the negating, the transcending of the determinations into a higher unity cannot be done. (p. 34)

Trotsky had thus mistaken Stalinism for a workers' bureaucracy, he had been incapable of transcending the once powerful categories derived from the experience of the Second International (p. 59) in order to recognize the further maturation of the contradictions of a workers' movement in capitalist society. Hegel, of course, had anticipated Trotsky's error: consciousness discovering what "was truth only for the particular vision, criterion, standards with which it looked on the world" (p. 54).[203] Appearance had superseded Actuality:

But you and I are dialecticians. We know that stalinism today is the true state of the labour movement. It is revolutionary, repudiating parliamentarianism, private property, national defence, and national boundaries. It is however attached to an imperialism as patron and is bureaucratic and aims at totalitarian control of labour and then of capital. (p. 43)

. . . To know true reality, to understand the labour movement, is to know that at each stage it degenerates but splits to re-instate its self-identity, its unity, but that this unity comes from divisions within its own self. . . .

Stalinism is a bitter obstacle. But see it as part of a process. Through the process of its own development, the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative, the labour movement goes through all its experiences and reaches its completely realized self only by conquering them one after the other. And only at the end, when the labour movement finds itself fully realized will we see what it is in very truth. (p. 65)

Lenin had recognized the workers in Hegel's discussions of the Doctrines of Being and Essence. It could be seen that his note on the *Logic* contained his revolutionary program in formation (pp. 98–106). He had discerned the self-movement of the proletariat, the movement that was the working class's being. He comprehended that:

The essence of a thing is the fact that it must move, reflect itself, negate the reflection, which was nothing, become being, and then become nothing again, while the thing itself must move on because it is its nature to do so. . . . The essence of the proletariat is its movement to incorporate in itself experience of the evils of capitalism until it overcomes capitalism itself. (p. 78)

James insisted that Lenin would have understood that "The history of the Third International is the history of the supersession of leninism by stalinism," and that finally, "If the Fourth International is to supersede stalinism then it must 'contain' stalinism in its concept of itself. It begins from all the things that stalinism took over from leninism and kept. . . . The Other of stalinism is an international socialist economic order, embracing from the start whole continents" (p. 87). Because "this amazing, this incredible man" (p. 138) had understood the Soviets when they came in 1917[204] (but admittedly not in 1905), Lenin would know that in a movement dominated by the capitalist perversion of the revolutionary party he created:

There is nothing more to organize. You can organize workers as workers, You can create a special organization of revolutionary workers. But once you have those two you have reached an end. Organization as we have known it is at an end. The task is to abolish organization. The task today is to call for, to teach, to illustrate, to develop spontaneity—the free creative activity of the proletariat. The proletariat will find its method of proletarian organization. And, contradiction par excellence, at this stage the vanguard can only organize itself on the basis of the destruction of the stranglehold that the existing organizations have on the proletariat by means of which it is suffering such ghastly defeats. (p. 117)

Stalinism, the counterrevolution that had emerged from "arrested" Leninism (p. 150), would inevitably and spontaneously be opposed by the workers' movement because the "great masses or classes" only learned through "struggle against some concrete thing" (p. 93).

The proletariat itself will smash stalinism to pieces. This experience will teach it its final lesson, that the future lies in itself, and not in anything which claims to represent it or direct it. (p. 92)

James finished the work, harvesting all these materials. He culled them in order to present one of the most exciting historical constructions to be produced by a Marxist thinker. Patiently, deliberately, systematically, but always mediated by his lyrical and sometimes mischievous literary "voice," he distilled from 300 years of European history the processes and lineages of the contending forces within the proletarian movement: the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie and the working masses. The former, he maintained, made its first appearance in the English Civil War of the seventeenth century as radical democrats; the latter were the social basis for the revolutionary masses behind the French Revolution. However, each had undergone transformations through the long years between their appearances and the present (that is, 1948). These changes were the results not of years, but of capitalism. These two opposing historical forces had at last reached their final articulation in Stalinism and Fascism. In Stalinism, the petit bourgeoisie had organized the attempted destruction of the revolutionary proletariat. The petit bourgeoisie began by using the workers to destroy the bourgeoisie and then the suppression of the workers' movement had followed. In Fascism, the petit bourgeoisie had become the social instrument of the increasingly desperate bourgeoisie in the effort to destroy the same historical subject: the workers' movement. Together Fascism and Stalinism constituted the objective movement (centralization) of capitalist organization (p. 201). The continuing development of the organization of capitalist production and the bureaucratic administration of state capitalism had called forth a petit bourgeois class of enormous skill, responsibility, and ambitions. Within those same centuries, then, though it was possible to trace the maturation of the bourgeoisie and the working classes, *it was also necessary to recognize the transformation of the petit bourgeoisie. It was necessary because this strata had presumed the leadership of the proletarian movement and then betrayed it.* Now the radical intelligentsia at the service of the proletarian revolution—activists like those in the Johnson-Forest tendency—had to respond to these events. First it had to comprehend them, ceasing to identify the perversion of petit bourgeois leadership with the authentic forces of the revolution. Second, the "vanguard of the vanguard" had to assist the proletariat in the destruction of the "revolutionary proletarian" bureaucracy. The direction of the world was in the hands of the workers: "The proletariat will decide. The thing is to tell the proletariat to decide" (p. 181).

To the misfortune of *Notes on Dialectics*, it was an internal document. Thus for two decades its distribution was restricted, the more so since the movement to which it was addressed was small. It would not be widely read for 30 years. But, though James came to recognize it as his most extraordinary work, it did contain certain limitations. The most obvious problem stemmed from James's fascination for Hegel's mode of argumentation: the distillation of history into rich concentrates used solely for the grounding of abstract discourse. It was also the case that this history was exclusively European—an inadvertent but natural substantiation of Hegel's own assertion of where history could occur. James's style was also familiar in another way: the language was the combative one of Marxist exegeses (inherited from German philosophy)—a

dismissive tongue used to humiliate opposition. Its results were predictable corollaries: the absolute deprecation of the Fallen (Stalin, Trotsky, Shachtman, etc.) in contrast to oratory for True Thinkers (Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin). James relished the form and employed it consistently until he was able to rescue the tenor of his argument in the historical flourish with which he ended. Still, *Notes on Dialectics* was a remarkable achievement. It was a too rare example of a living, active, grappling Marxism. Its conceits were small ones given the company it kept. Though its author had not hesitated to assume the role of headmaster to Western Marxists, his grounds were substantial: the questions then being raised in the Marxist movement were so misconceived as inevitably to suggest abolition of the tradition itself. He had in many ways succeeded in anchoring Marx's thought in the twentieth century when to many it seemed that Lenin had accomplished the very opposite: its annihilation as a reference. He had shown a new direction when it seemed all such possibilities were at an end.

Our treatment of James must end here. However, his writing and politics continued. Deported from the United States in 1952, he returned to Britain, spent a few years at home in Trinidad only to return to the United States then Britain. Following *Notes on Dialectics*, he wrote *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1950). At Ellis Island, while awaiting action by the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization, he composed *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, a politico-literary critique of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre* that included observations on detention and his personal, conflict-ridden encounter with "American" Communist prisoners. Within the next ten years he was to publish *Facing Reality* (with Grace Lee and Pierre Chaulieu, 1958), *Modern Politics* (his 1960 lectures in Trinidad), *Beyond a Boundary*, a significant appendix to the reissue of *The Black Jacobins* (1963), and a stream of reviews, introductions, articles, and position papers the range of which is suggested in the recently published collections: *The Future in the Present* and *Spheres of Existence*. Of his major works, it was the first that would draw James into the orbit of radical thought in the 1960s and afterward. It was the Black diaspora, particularly the militant Black petit bourgeoisie that had grown impatient with American apartheid, which would rediscover *Jacobins*. First the book and then the author would help them to confirm their ideological struggle with bourgeois culture. The mass Black movement provided the compulsion. James astounded this new Black intelligentsia with his brilliant thought, his provocative analyses, and his grasp of Black history. He became once again "Nello" to intimates two generations younger than his contemporaries, he became the teacher they could honor, a living, absorbing link between themselves and a past of which most had only a vague notion (or, just as frequently, a profound expectation). But he also sometimes saddened them, pitching divisive battles in fields peopled only with Marxian phantoms.[205] When they had recovered him, he had again become accustomed to presenting himself as a "Black European."[206] Some came to understand something of what he expected of them. But he also learned: "[A] great deal of my time has been spent in seeing how much I failed to

understand when I was young and my whole life was toward European literature, European sociology. Now I'm beginning to see and it is helping me to write."[207] Perhaps his long-awaited autobiography will ultimately demonstrate just how permanently their reflective gift of the Black radical tradition has affected him. What he gave them is no mystery.

**RICHARD WRIGHT
AND THE CRITIQUE
OF CLASS THEORY**
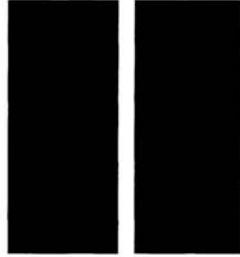
Marxist Theory and the
Black Radical Intellectual

In one sense the first systemization of Black radical historiography was constructed by figures such as G. W. Williams, J. J. Thomas, Du Bois, James, and Padmore for precisely the complex reasons suggested by James when he wrote on revolutionary leaders: they had directly profited from the "cultural advantages" of the system upon which they mounted their ideographic attack. As the heirs of Black petit bourgeoisies, they enjoyed in the order of things the intellectual beneficence of the ruling order from which they posited their critique. A less obvious process fueled their rebellion. Ambitious and accomplished in the very skills that were understood to qualify them for leading roles in bourgeois society—which "naturally" demarcated extraordinary individuals (dominators) from the ordinary populace—their loyalties to the existing order were contingent only on its consistency. Inevitably, when racial order subverted their experience of the "universals" of Western civilization, they were confronted with but two alternatives: to bitterly endure the cynically indulged illusion or to attempt its realization. Obviously when these figures chose the latter it was not a choice characteristic of their class. Still subject to what James had described as the inherent "political vices" associated with their social origins, their seduction by those aspects of Marxism that were owed to the sources of its genesis is understandable. Marxism's intellectual power and pedigree, its promise of a hidden truth, its open opposition to

an insidious social order, its alternative mapping of the historical origins of the ruling classes, which they had come to despise, and its identification with the underclasses, made it an almost irresistible companion. Moreover, Marxists were under no obligation to minimize what the total thrust of bourgeois thought was orchestrated to deny: that the "natural" social order tended toward instability and chaos. On the contrary, Marxian logic composed a historical order from the anarchic, wrenching social forces within the capitalist world system. Marxism was (and remains) a superior grammar for synthesizing the degradation of labor with the growing destabilization of capitalist production and accelerating technological development; the increasing resort to state coercion mediated by bureaucratic rationalism; and the strangulation of whole regions (most of them formerly colonies) through pricing mechanisms, market manipulation, monopolization of advanced technology, the international organization of production, international banking, military assistance, and the stultifying dependencies of monocultural economics. Marxism, too, implied that it was the particular privilege of the revolutionary intellectual to comprehend this deeper, extra-existential order. And in the generation of these Black intellectuals, with apparent finality Marxism was confirmed in its historical authority by the Russian Revolution.

This last identification, though, was to prove to be an ambiguous one. In the minds of Black intellectuals, within a quarter of a century, the significance of the Third International had substantially degenerated. For some, like Padmore, and later Cox, international Communism (Stalinism) was simply another deceitful Western invention; for others like James it was its own perversion; finally, for those who were to share Du Bois's experience, it seemed merely a convenient means of protest. However, detached from the Communist movement, Marxist theory could retain important capacities. Notwithstanding its weaknesses, there was in Marxism a critical discourse to which no bourgeois ideology adequately responded. Capitalism's global regularities of war, expanding poverty and exploitation, the concentration of wealth, and the extension of repression persisted. Bourgeois thinkers displaced these endemic phenomena with the notion of termed, resolvable dysfunctions. Marxists correctly declared they were no such things.

There was, however, much more to these radical Black intellectuals than their class origins and the contradictions they experienced consequent to the racial castes of Western civilization. More profoundly than "scientific" Marxism could suggest, they were an element of a historically emergent social force, the Black radical movement. And though intellectually disciplined in such ways as to oppose its conscious realization, their ideological nurturing as Blacks prepared them for its eventual recognition. It is possible to see, even in such Westernized intellects as James and Du Bois, that the historical force of the Black movement was the more powerful influence. Even their discovery of Western radicalism proved to be insufficient. As we have seen, it became necessary to both of them to attempt to bring Marxist theory to bear on a historical phenomenon for which its analytical vocabulary was inadequate. From the moments of these efforts, neither Du Bois nor James, nor Padmore nor Cox could sustain a commitment to orthodox Marxism.

But there were also others in whose work a similar contestation could be discerned; others emergent from Black societies and in search of an articulated opposition to Western racism and bourgeois society. One of these, Richard Wright, is of particular interest. Unlike those upon whom we have already focused, Wright was not of the petit bourgeoisie. His roots were in the Black peasantry of the American South. His encounter with Marxism and the Communist movement was largely unmediated by the cultural misdirections that accompanied the intellectual awakenings of middle-class Black men and women. His childhood and adolescence in Mississippi, subject to the most direct exposure to racist brutality and brutalization, provided him little appreciation for or expectations of bourgeois society and its culture.[1] He came to Marxism for reasons that were fundamentally different from those of our previous subjects. And when he withdrew, he was different too. His insights into his experience of the Communist movement and into Marxist thought suggest an alternative penetration into the relationship between European radical thought and the historical configurations of the Black movement.

The ambiguity surrounding Wright is, in part, a consequence of his own intellectual odyssey. More precisely it is a consequence of his public honesty about the voyage. It was a journey that took him from Marxism, and through Existentialism, and finally to Black nationalism—a journey that could be retraced biographically from his membership in the American Communist Party in the early 1930s to his death in France in 1960.

But another and equally important source for the undefined character of Wright's legacy is the several and remarkably extensive campaigns of vilification launched against him by the American Left, the American liberal intelligentsia and American bureaucrats. These ranged from the literary attacks on Wright by writers such as James Baldwin,[2] to the political assaults of figures like James Ford,[3] Ben Burns,[4] then editor of Ebony, the deliberately distorted reports in Time magazine on Wright and others,[5] the machinations of the Central Intelligence Agency,[6] and threats from once-powerful, but now almost forgotten anti-Communists like David Schine.[7] It appears to be a fair statement that though these distinct and, in some instances, opposing political factions had rather different interests in the destruction of Wright's influence on American politics and literature, they did concur on the desirability of the suppression of his work and ideas.[8]

In any case, the result was the same: Wright's self-imposed geographical exile was transformed into an intellectual and political isolation. Moreover, some of these same forces sought further retribution from Wright by filling his life in Europe and Great Britain with harassments of both petty and terrifying dimensions.[9] It was intended that Wright realize the full consequence of criticizing American domestic racial policies and attacking American foreign policy in the Third World.

Yet despite his detractors and their sponsors, despite the established and powerful political and cultural authorities of American society, some of Wright's work and ideas survived. The re-emergence of Wright's importance in American thought may appear at first ironical. So many of his critics are now rather thin shadows in history.

But, more accurately, it is the result of the social and historical contradictions of American capitalism and its particular social order.

In the midst of the Black consciousness and nationalist movements of the 1960s, the seemingly irresistible dictates of the market compelled the republishing of the *Outsider* (1965), *Native Son* (1966), *Black Boy* (1966), *Eight Men* (1969), and later, *American Hunger* (1977).[10] They were works that spoke to a generation that Wright did not live to see but had anticipated. Significant, too, was the emergence of younger and equally militant Black writers and playwrights (among them John A. Williams, Leroi Jones, Ed Bullins, Melvin Van Peebles, and Ishmael Reed). Much of their work would have fallen quite easily into what one American critic, Robert Bone, had called "the Wright School" ("For the Wright School, literature is an emotional catharsis—a means of dispelling the inner tensions of race. Their novels often amount to a prolonged cry of anguish and despair. Too close to their material, feeling it too intensely, these novelists lack a sense of form and of thematic line."),[11] except for the fact that Bone had already announced the death of that school 20 years earlier: "By the late 1940s the vein of literary material unearthed by Richard Wright had been all but worked out. The market for protest had become saturated."[12] It does appear that Bone was a bit premature.

More remarkable, however, than the sheer survival of Wright's work, is the theoretical and analytical power of his ideas. This achievement of Wright's, with the stimulus of historical materialism and psychoanalysis, fell much closer to an emergent European literature (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Koestler, Lukács, Marcuse, Kolakowski) in the post–Second World War period than to any American fashion. Like many European Left intellectuals, Wright was moving beyond classical Marxism and the Marxism inspired by Lenin in order to come to terms with a world constituted of material and spiritual forces historically unique. Wright's reach, consequently, can be said to be much longer than that implied by the terms employed by many of his American critics. He was never merely a "racial novelist," a "protest writer," or a "literary rebel."[13] Indeed, much of his work was a direct confrontation with the leading ideas and ideational systems of contemporary Western political and social thought. His arena was the totality of Western civilization and its constitutive elements: industrialization, urbanization, alienation, class, racism, exploitation, and the hegemony of bourgeois ideology. His work thus constituted an inquiry.

Wright's persistence in his investigation of Western society was an important factor contributing to the achievement of a certain consistency in his work. As artist, as essayist, as critic, as political activist, it is clear that he arranged and rearranged many times the elements making up the phenomenological display of Western development. He knew the names of Western experience but was less certain of what he knew of their nature and their systemic and historical relationships. There were questions to which he still had to find answers: was the working class a social reality? Could class consciousness supersede racism as an ideology? Was the party the vanguard of the proletariat? Was Marxism more than a critique of capitalism? These were some of the issues to which Wright had not found satisfactory answers in organized and organiza-

tional politics. Ultimately, it would be because of his particular skill for transforming theoretical abstractions and constructs into recognizably human experience that it became possible for him to make those distinctions between dogma and reality so important to his development.

Theoretically and ideologically, Wright came to terms with Western thought and life through Black nationalism. However, the basis for his critique of Western society was his experience of the historical formation of Black peoples in Africa and the diaspora, from the Gold Coast to the Mississippi Delta.[14] Psychically and intellectually he was drawn to attend those same forces that produced the critical inspections of W. E. B. Du Bois, George Padmore, and C. L. R. James. As Michel Fabre puts it:

> Wright's originality, then, is that he completely understood and often reiterated . . . that the situation of the Black in the twentieth century, and in particular during the crucial period from the Depression to the advent of Black Power, was exceptional. These years saw the awakening of the Third World and with it the enormous mutation of our civilisation. "The liberation of the colored peoples of the world is the most important event of our century," is a refrain that runs throughout Wright's work. The same message, delivered half a century before by W. E. B. Du Bois, did not have the same existentialist dimension.[15]

Wright had not created these forces that were transforming Western society, but it was his intention to give these events a meaning independent of those interpretations bounded by the interests of Western civilization as articulated by its intellectuals and ideologues.

Still there are some who have argued that Wright fulfilled little of his promise. Harold Cruse, among them, has written that Wright "was so ideologically blinded by the smog of Jewish-Marxist nationalism that he was unable to see his *own* clearly"; that Wright had not understood "that the classics of Marx and Engels were written not for the proletariat but for the intelligentsia,"[16] and, finally, that "He could not gather into himself all the ingredients of nationalism; to create values and mould concepts by which his race was to 'struggle, live and die.'"[17]

Here, then, are two of the several interpretations that attach to Wright's significance. The first places him within a tradition of radical Black thinkers. The second expels him from that same legacy. In the following pages we shall examine which of these two summaries of Wright's work is more appropriate.

The Novel as Politics

Richard Wright was by his work primarily a novelist. But as a novelist involved in social action, his novels were more than a complaint against or an observation of the human condition. Wright intended that his writing engage and confront a political reality of movement. He was a novelist who recognized that a part of his task was to come to terms with the character of social change and the agencies that emerged as attempts to direct that change. His early development consciously reflected this con-

cern, beginning with his 1937 essay, "Blueprint for Negro Writing." In this essay we see the first suggestions of a critical independence of thought in Wright.

> Perspective . . . is that fixed point in intellectual space where a writer stands to view the struggles, hopes, and sufferings of his people. . . . Of all the problems faced by writers who as a whole have never allied themselves with world movements, perspective *is* the most difficult of achievement.[18]

Wright was quite openly declaring that he meant his work to reflect a committed intellect, one informed by a political intention and the process of historical movement. He was also dedicating himself to the task that would occupy him for the remaining 23 years of his life: the location of his "perspective" in the complex of struggles for liberation in the Third World. As we shall see, what Wright ultimately discovered was a psychological and intellectual locus unlike anything his experience of Western radicalism and activism could encompass. Fortunately, a great part of his preparation for that discovery can be found in his novels.

When we consider Richard Wright's fictional and explicitly political work, three novels (*Native Son, The Outsider,* and "Island of Hallucination" this latter eventually published under the title *American Hunger*) and one collection of short stories (*Uncle Tom's Children*) stand out. Together, these works both chronicle and interpret Wright's experiences with American communism and political action. They also constitute studies of Marxism as a theory of history and social revolution, of the social and psychological development of the American working class, and of the historical and ideological development of American Blacks. Serious attention to these works should not be deflected by the form through which Wright sought to articulate his ideas. Indeed, it must be recognized that his works are uniquely suited to their tasks. Using this form, Wright could reconstruct and weight the extraordinary complexities and subtleties of radical politics as he and others had experienced it. His characters could live with and struggle through crises he had encountered. They could "test" the meanings and significances he had given to those experiences. His novels were consequently much more *authentic* documents than the conventional forms of history, biography, and political tract for they were constructed from lives with which he was intimate. In these novels, Wright could achieve his intention of weaving living consciousness into the impress of social theory and ideology.[19]

Wright had joined the American Communist movement in the early 1930s. This was a period that coincided with an intensification of the party's work among Blacks following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern's "resolution on the Negro Question" in 1928 and the beginnings of the Scottsboro trials in 1931. Wright left the party a decade later. During those years he worked in the movement in the various capacities of organizer, member of a Black party cell in Chicago, officer in the John Reed Clubs and writer for the Communist press. At first, his work for the party was to take place primarily in Chicago; later he was transferred to Harlem.[20] It was, of course, during this time that his writing was most directly influenced by the party. He proved to be

very good at it. By 1937, the year he had published "Blueprint . . .," he had become, in Daniel Aaron's words, "the Party's most illustrious proletarian author."[21]

Wright took this responsibility as a proletarian writer quite seriously. He was committed to the task of expressing working-class thought, consciousness, and experience. One recollection of this period is his first impression of the party: "The Communists, I felt, had oversimplified the experience of those whom they sought to lead. . . . [T]hey had missed the meaning of the lives of the masses."[22] Wright meant to put this right, the proletariat had to be allowed its own voice. It was just as clear to him that he carried a particular, racial responsibility toward the Black working classes:

> The Negro writer who seeks to function within his race as a purposeful agent has a serious responsibility . . . a deep, informed, and complex consciousness is necessary; a consciousness which draws for its strength upon the fluid lore of a great people, and moulds this lore with the concepts that move and direct the forces of history today. . . . [T]he Negro writer . . . is being called upon to do no less than create values by which his race is to struggle, live and die . . . because his writing possesses the potential cunning to steal into the inmost recesses of the human heart, because he can create myths and symbols that inspire a faith in life.[23]

As a Black writer, Wright was presuming that the intelligentsia had the obligation to construct the ideological and symbolic means through which an emerging Black movement would be formed. Still, the work of this intelligentsia had to be grounded in the culture of their people.

Working with these conceptions, Wright was clearly reflecting an earlier Marxian tradition, one in which Lenin had transformed a "renegade" petit bourgeoisie into a revolutionary vanguard.[24] (Wright appears to have always opposed the Stalinist anti-intellectualism that marked the Communist movement domestically and internationally in the 1930s.) But Wright was also mindful of a second and separate tradition that had emerged among Blacks in the United States during the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. At these historical moments from among the ranks of free Blacks, there had emerged an intellectually, economically, and politically elite class that had assumed leadership on behalf of the largely enslaved Black masses. This nucleus later contributed significantly to the formation of the Black middle class. The ethos of this class and its sociohistorical traditions had been given its most enduring name by W. E. B. Du Bois: the talented tenth.[25] Wright was thus suffusing two distinct and opposing traditions. But more important, even here, while he was ostensibly addressing Black intellectuals, he was also going about the work of re-creating his world in his own ideological terms.

Wright's Social Theory

Wright, in having constructed the character of Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*, has been attributed with a variety of achievements, intents, and concerns. Addison Gayle,

echoing many of his critical predecessors, argues that Wright created the archetypal stereotype of the Black man, thus releasing American consciousness from that particular beast of burden.[26] Elsewhere one finds *Native Son* understood as "a complement of that monstrous legend it was written to destroy. Bigger is Uncle Tom's descendant, flesh of his flesh, exactly opposite a portrait";[27] as a study in the psychology of the outcast;[28] and as a statement of the human predicament.[29] In other words, Wright's early work has been characterized by a variety of critics along a continuum ranging between a racially specific protest to a universal declaration. It might be useful, however, to add another and quite different dimension to *Native Son*—a dimension found in Wright's own consciousness of the work.

In 1944, upon his formal declaration of leave from the American Communist Party (the break occurred in 1942), Wright made a number of his other concerns quite clear. Some of them had to do with the reasons he first became a part of American radicalism.

It was not the economics of Communism, nor the great power of trade unions, nor the excitement of underground politics that claimed me; my attention was caught by the similarity of the experience of workers in other lands, by the possibility of uniting scattered but kindred people into a whole. . . . [H]ere at last, in the realm of revolutionary expression, Negro experience could find a home, a functioning value and role.[30]

Marxist propaganda suggested to him that Blacks need not be alone in their struggle for liberation and dignity. The specter of a world proletariat, united and strong, Black and white fascinated Wright.

Before that evening of his intellectual conversion he had looked upon the party as a white man's organization and therefore something to be distrusted, especially in its pretensions concerning Blacks. More important, until that moment he had dismissed as a personal fantasy, as a painful, frustrating dream, the organization of the poor and oppressed. Again, on that same evening—his first visit to a John Reed Club—Wright commented, "I was meeting men and women whom I should know for decades to come, who were to form the first sustained friendships in my life."[31] He had discovered not merely an important, historical vista but someone with whom to share it.

Still, beyond the social vision of Marxism and the fraternity of American communism, Wright's decision to become a part of this movement was motivated by one other element: the opportunity to transform himself from "passive" victim to active advocate.

Here, then, was something that I could do, reveal, say. The Communists, I felt, had oversimplified the experience of those whom they sought to lead. In their efforts to recruit masses, they had missed the meaning of the lives of the masses, had conceived of people in too abstract a manner. I would try to put some of that meaning back, I would tell Communists how common people felt, and I would tell common people of the self-sacrifice of the Communists who strove for unity among them.[32]

Wright perceived his task as providing to the movement a language and images that would give meaning to the abstracted proletariat of party ideology. This complex of motives—vision, fraternity, and task—might seem sufficient to explain to the readers of *Uncle Tom's Children, Lawd Today,* and *Native Son,* Wright's sociological and political preoccupations in his early works. Yet Wright, as we shall see, was to have a very different experience, which provided other and very different themes for the last of these three works.

Wright had entered the party naive of its history, its factionalism, and its purgative vocabulary.[33] As we have seen, he had not been convinced earlier of the sincerity of American Communists. This is somewhat surprising given the enormous vitality of the party's "Negro work" at the time, work that included the defense of the Scottsboro boys; the confrontation with conservative Black organizations; the organizing of Unemployed Councils and Tenant Leagues; the development of the Black Belt Thesis on self-determination and the organizing of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and, on the international level, the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers.[34] Though he was then a hospital worker, he had identified himself as a writer, and as a writer, he was categorized by those in the party's ranks as an "intellectual." This meant that Wright was to be subjected to the diffidence shown to intellectuals, but, more significantly among his Black comrades, that he was also to be held in suspicion for "petit-bourgeois tendencies"—that is, selfish interests—and worse: Trotskyism. The result was inevitable:

> Successive disillusionments had transformed his original enthusiastic and total dedication into wariness. His individualism was against him; he was at the mercy of leaders like Oliver Law and Harry Haywood, ostracized from unit 205 by certain black comrades and even denigrated.[35]

Invited to the party trial of another Black party member (one upon whose early experience in the South Wright had based his short story, "Big Boy Leaves Home"), Wright realized that the trial was also meant for someone else:

> The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I know that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason.[36]

He recognized among his Black co-workers an anger dammed up to the level of destruction of self. It was not an ideology that lay at the base of their need to physically violate errant comrades. Their dogmatism was an enveloping shield against egocide. Their conformity was a symptom of their desperate and collective need for each other. Wright would write later: "They're blind. . . . Their enemies have blinded them with too much oppression."[37]

This, then, is the crisis that informed the development of Bigger Thomas. *Native*

Son was the result of Wright's resolve to have his say, his revision of American Marxism as it emerged from the lives and practices of American Communists:

> I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo; and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human.[38]

In *Native Son*, Wright sought to display a more authentic, more historical, more precise image of the proletariat to which the party had committed itself. He had begun this task in *Lawd Today* and it came to fruition in the form of Bigger Thomas. Wright, hesitant at wrestling with Marxism on theoretical terms, pursued his critique of American Left ideology in his own terms: the novel. Bigger Thomas's lack of class consciousness—more precisely the odyssey of his development of consciousness—is deliberate and purposive. This was not simply a literary device, but a means of coming to grips with the abstraction and romanticization of the proletariat that had infected Western Communist ideology.

At the time of Wright's sojourn in the party (1934–42), the primary focus of the movement in Western Europe and the United States was the defeat of fascism. It was a fundamental tenet of party work that fascism was an instrument of the ruling class designed to meet the crisis of world capitalism embodied in the Depression. As such, fascism as an ideology was presumed to be alien to the working class. Earl Browder, as general secretary of the American Communist Party, had made this position abundantly clear in reports, speeches, and articles during the late 1930s.[39] As the official voice of the American Communist Party Browder had argued that the struggle of the movement was preeminently a political one:

> What is the message that this powerful voice of the Communist Party is giving to America? First of all, it is the message of the need for the great mass of the people, the workers and farmers, to organize for their own protection.[40]

Browder's strategy was a simple one: "The growth of the Communist Party is the greatest guarantee against reaction and fascism."[41]

Browder's leadership had positioned the party in support of the New Deal and Roosevelt's administration under the presumption that American workers were not ready to confront the issue of socialism.[42] In effect, the party pursued the contradictory aims of reform and revolution. This was in part a consequence, as Wilhelm Reich had pointed out with respect to the German Communist movement during the Weimar Republic, of failing to distinguish between the abstraction of class consciousness and its specific, historical form.[43] Just as critically, however, the party was committed by the instructions of the Comintern to a united front with its class enemies.

For Wright the question of the consciousness of workers and consequently that of political organization was more complex. It involved—as he was to write in defense of *Native Son*—"the dark and hidden places of the human personality."[44] In the essay, "How 'Bigger' Was Born," Wright had been more explicit:

the civilization which had given birth to Bigger contained no spiritual sustenance, had created no culture which could hold and claim his allegiance and faith, had sensitized him and had left him stranded, a free agent to roam the streets of our cities, a hot and whirling vortex of undisciplined and unchannelized impulses.

. . . I was fascinated by the similarity of the emotional tensions of Bigger in America and Bigger in Nazi Germany and Bigger in Old Russia. All Bigger Thomases, white and black, felt tense, afraid, nervous, hysterical, and restless. . . . [C]ertain modern experiences were creating types of personalities whose existence ignored racial and national lines of demarcation.[45]

Wright was attempting to come to terms with the psychological consequence of a historical condition of which the leadership in the Communist movement was only vaguely aware. Wright was insisting on the necessity for understanding the working class in their own terms. He was concerned with the ability of proletarian masses to reproduce themselves spiritually and culturally. If they could no longer re-create the social ideologies that had sustained them, it would not be possible for them to fulfill the historical role that Marxian theory assigned them. Moreover, the fragmentation of personality, social relations, and ideology that Wright observed and re-created was so total that its political and historical implications seriously challenged the presumptions of the Communist movement:

I felt that Bigger, an American product, a native son of this land, carried within him the potentialities of either Communism or Fascism. . . . Whether he'll follow some gaudy, hysterical leader who'll promise rashly to fill the void in him, or whether he'll come to an understanding with the millions of his kindred fellow workers under trade-unions or revolutionary guidance depends upon the future drift of events in America. But . . . Bigger Thomas, conditioned as his organism is, will not become an ardent, or even a Luke-warm, supporter of the *status quo*.[46]

He realized that no political movement that, for ideological reasons, presumed the progressive character of the working class would succeed.

Wright's novel, subsequently, was a refutation of radical dogma from the vantage point of Black experience. He sought first to re-create that experience, and in so doing to force a confrontation between it and socialist ideology. Bigger Thomas's character was specific to the historical experience of Blacks in the United States, but his nature was proletarian, that is world-historical. When Wright gave the consciousness of Bigger Thomas a nationalist character, he was addressing himself to both those aspects of his creation. He wrote that he was "confronted with that part of him that was dual in aspect . . . a part of *all* Negroes and *all* whites."[47] If the American revolutionary movement could not come to terms with the *appeals* of fascism, then it could not begin to understand the immediate *nature* of the working class.[48] He agreed with Marx that capitalism as a form of organization led to the destruction of social consciousness founded on noncapitalist social orders. He did not accept, however, the notion that this process led to a new ideological synthesis. The truer result, the

observed result, was "a world that existed on a plane of animal sensation alone."[49] The Nazi movement succeeded because it offered in the stead of an existential terror, a new, unambiguous social order, "the implicit, almost unconscious, or preconscious assumptions and ideals upon which whole nations and races act and live."[50]

Yet Wright's analysis did not end there. He had something more to say about the nature of revolutionary action. His analysis both underscored the absolute character of revolutionary commitment and also spoke to Marxian class analysis.

> I remember reading a passage in a book dealing with old Russia which said: "We must be ready to make endless sacrifices if we are to be able to overthrow the Czar." . . . Actions and feelings of men ten thousand miles from home helped me to understand the moods and impulses of those walking the streets of Chicago and Dixie.[51]

Wright recognized in his Bigger Thomases the desperation that was the precondition for the making of total and violent revolutionary commitments. He understood those commitments to be less ones of choice than of compulsion. The more total the degradation of the human being, the more total the reaction—"the *need* for a whole life and *acted* out of that need."[52]

He also refused to dismiss the Bigger Thomases as lumpen-proletariat or to distinguish them from the proletariat. In *Native Son* he actually anticipated a thesis on violence and the lumper-proletariat that would become better known later through the work of Frantz Fanon. For Wright, the violence of the lumper-proletariat was not only an objective force of revolution; violence could not be separated out from the formation of consciousness.

> "I didn't want to kill" Bigger shouted. "But what I killed for, I *am*."[53]

What, precisely, the Bigger Thomases would kill for, Wright could not answer. He had stated his thesis and it was now left to the "future drift of events" to make that determination, that is, the capacity of the American radical movement to develop a critical political theory. This, of course, was not to be the case.[54]

Wright had emerged from the Depression with a clear and powerful image of American society and world history. With the writing of *Uncle Tom's Children* and *Native Son* he had extracted from the misery of poverty and imminent social collapse an understanding of a systemic integration in which racism was a secondary, residual phenomenon. He had no reason to doubt that the disintegration of the capitalist world was really a promise of liberation—a promise that enveloped the whole of humanity. Yet he possessed few illusions about this process of disintegration. He knew, in social terms, even in human terms, that the immediate costs would be unparalleled violence, brutality, and vengeance. At first he hoped that this historical transformation would be surgical in its order. He believed in a conscious, deliberate, and magnanimous workers' movement. By the time he was writing *Native Son*, however, this ordered revolution had been replaced by a chaos consisting of the collective action of a brutalized human force. The destruction of capitalism would

come at the hands of the brute social force it had itself created. Still, Wright saw this brutalized mass as the *promise* of the future. Unlike Marx, Wright anticipated barbarism *and* socialism.

Blacks as the Negation of Capitalism

For Wright, it was not sufficient for Black liberation that his people come to terms with the critique of capitalist society. He had observed: "Marxism is but the starting point. No theory of life can take the place of life."[55] As a critique of capitalist society, Marxism was necessary, of course, but it was ultimately an *internal* critique. The epistemological nature of historical materialism took bourgeois society on its own terms, that is, presuming the primacy of economic forces and structures.[56] As such, the historical development from feudalism of the bourgeoisie as a class served as a logical model for the emergence of the proletariat as a negation of capitalist society.[57] Wright appeared quite early to have understood this thesis as a fundamental error in Marxist thought. Even as early as 1937, he had begun to argue that it was necessary that Blacks transform the Marxist critique into an expression of their own emergence as a negation of Western capitalism.

Though immersed in the American radical movement with its Eurocentric ideology, it had not taken Wright very long to reach the conclusion that the historic development of Black people in the United States constituted the most total contradiction to Western capitalist society:[58]

> The workers of a minority people, chafing under exploitation, forge organisational forms of struggle. . . . Lacking the handicaps of false ambition and property, they have access to a wide social vision and a deep social consciousness. . . . Their organizations show greater strength, adaptability, and efficiency than any other group or class in society.

Wright assumed that the alienation of Black workers from American society was more total than that experienced by the "white" working classes formed in Europe and America. This, indeed, was the more profound significance of Black nationalism, and one with which the Black intellectual had to come to terms:

> [T]he emotional expression of group-feeling which puzzles so many whites and leads them to deplore what they call "black chauvinism" is not a morbidly inherent trait of the Negro, but rather the reflex expression of a life whose roots are imbedded deeply in Southern soil. Negro writers must accept the nationalist implications of their lives. . . . [T]hey must accept the concept of nationalism because, in order to transcend it, they must *possess* and *understand* it. And a nationalist spirit in Negro writing means a nationalism carrying the highest possible pitch of social consciousness. It means a nationalism that knows its origins, its limitations, that is aware of the dangers of its position, that knows its ultimate aims are unrealisable within the framework of capitalist America; a nationalism whose reason for being

lies in the simple fact of self-possession and in the consciousness of the interdependence of people in modern society.[59]

Wright's argument and its language strongly suggest the elements within the party with which he was in ideological conflict. In using the phrase "black chauvinism"—its second element being a term used most frequently within the party as a more objective interpretation for what was commonly referred to as nationalism—Wright designated his first target: white Marxian ideologues. His second target, deracinated Black intellectuals, were addressed as the recipients of a new history. They had to be made to realize that Black nationalism was an initial and historically logical stage of a more profoundly universal consciousness.

Wright was arguing that American Blacks had been re-created from their African origins by an oppressive system of capitalist exploitation that had at one and the same time integrated them into the emergent organization of industrial production while suspending them from the full impact of bourgeois ideology. Perhaps Wright put this most succinctly several years later in *The Outsider* when Ely Houston, one of Wright's two spokesmen in the novel, observed:

> The way Negroes were transported to this country and sold into slavery, then stripped of their tribal culture and held in bondage; and then allowed so teasingly and over so long a period of time, to be sucked into our way of life is something which resembles the rise of all men. . . .
>
> They are outsiders and . . . [t]hey are going to be self-conscious; they are going to be gifted with a double vision, for, being Negroes, they are going to be both *inside* and *outside* of our culture at the same time. . . . Negroes will develop unique and specially defined psychological types. They will become psychological men, like the Jews. . . . They will not only be Americans or Negroes; they will be centers of knowing, so to speak. . . . The political, social, and psychological consequences of this will be enormous.[60]

Wright believed that racism, the very character of the system by which Black workers had been exploited, had mediated their internalization of the ruling ideas of American society. He went on to assert that, unlike the dominant sectors of European and Euro-American proletariats, the Black proletariat—historically from the legal and political disciplines of slavery to its peculiar condition as free wage labor—had developed a psychic and cultural identity independent from bourgeois ideology. This construction of Wright's pushed the insights of Du Bois[61] and others far beyond the critique of Black-white labor solidarity. What Wright was suggesting went even beyond the most extreme position in the 1930s of American radicals that Blacks were the vanguard of the American working class.[62]

Wright was asserting that the Black revolutionary movement, in the process of transcending a chauvinistic nationalism, was emerging as a historical force that would challenge the very foundation of Western civilization:

Reduced to its simplest terms, theme for Negro writers will rise from under-
standing the meaning of their being transplanted from a "savage" to a "civilized"
culture in implications. It means that Negro writers must have in their conscious-
ness the fore-shortened picture of the *whole*, nourishing culture from which they
were torn in Africa, and of the long, complex (and for the most part, unconscious)
struggle to regain in some form and under alien conditions of life a *whole* cul-
ture again.[63]

For Wright, it was at precisely this point, in the culture's ideational, conceptual, and
ideological extension, that the writer and other intellectuals are required. In the
construction of myths and symbols emergent from the experience of Black people,
the responsibility of the intellectuals was "to create values by which [their] race is to
struggle, live and die." This is precisely the task Wright was assuming sixteen years
later in *The Outsider*.

The Outsider as a Critique of
Christianity and Marxism

The Outsider was completed several years after Wright had left the American Com-
munist movement. It was received, however, as a further elaboration of Wright's
reason for his action.[64] Yet the novel's treatment of the party was less in the tradition
of Chester Himes's vitriolic *Lonely Crusade* or Ralph Ellison's satiric *The Invisible Man*
than in that of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*.[65] Though Wright did develop in
The Outsider a critique of the American Left's race politics and of Stalinism, his intent
was much broader, his object much more far ranging.

The novel is a parable. It is a moral, philosophic, and political exercise. Like the
myth in phatic groups, the purpose is to demonstrate the terrible consequence to the
human spirit as well as to social organization of a total exorcizing of social ideology.
In *White Man Listen*, Wright would declare:

I maintain that the ultimate effect of white Europe upon Asia and Africa was to cast
millions into a kind of spiritual void; I maintain that it suffused their lives with a
sense of meaninglessness. I argue that it was not merely physical suffering or
economic deprivation that has set over a billion and a half colored people in violent
political motion. . . . The dynamic concept of the void that must be filled, a void
created by a thoughtless and brutal impact of the West upon a billion and a half
people, is more powerful than the concept of class conflict, and more universal.[66]

Without myths, that is, without meaning, consciousness is set adrift into terror. The
desperation that is the condition of this degree of alienation (or Max Scheler's *ressen-
timent*, or Husserl's "crisis")[67] inevitably requires violence. Violence is the final, the
last possible form that social action may assume.

Moreover, Wright was demonstrating both the necessity and inevitability of ideol-

ogy *and* its arbitrariness. No matter what meanings ideologies systematize, they are always subject to the abuses of power. When ideology is used for the purpose of domination, it must be opposed, not by a counterideology but by the negation of ideology: theory. In short, he was making the case for the necessity for a critical commitment, the sort of commitment that achieves its purpose by extraction from the historical legacy: the culture of a people. Such a commitment is made possible only through a consciousness capable of re-creating meaning.

In *The Outsider*, Wright sought to subvert the two ideological and philosophic traditions at the heart of modern Western culture. First, he ridiculed the Judeo-Christian tradition by creating a protagonist whose very name is contradiction: Cross Damon—the demon Christ. Cross Damon has escaped Judeo-Christian morality through the recognition of its operative psychic force: a destructive, debilitating dread-guilt. Just as Marx earlier had recognized that religion (that is Judaism) "is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions,"[68] Wright had perceived the truer historical significance of Christianity among Blacks as not an instrument of domination but as a philosophic adaptation to oppression.

Moreover, he understood the resignation of Black Christianity as only one element in the culture of Blacks. In Black music, another more strident voice existed opposing that guilt:

> [T]his music was the rhythmic flauntings of guilty feelings, the syncopated outpourings of frightened joy existing in guises forbidden and despised by others. . . . Negroes had been made to live in but not of the land of their birth. . . . [T]he injunctions of an alien Christianity and the strictures of white laws had evoked in them the very longings and desires that that religion and law had been designed to stifle. . . . [B]lue-jazz was a rebel art blooming seditiously under the condemnations of a Protestant ethic. . . . Blue-jazz was the scornful gesture of men turned ecstatic in their state of rejection . . . the recreations of the innocently criminal.[69]

The forces of science and technology and the processes of the proletarianization of Black workers were orchestrating the supercession of Black Christian resignation by this second, derisively angry, consciousness.

Yet Wright was also critical of Marxism, the second and more modern radical Western tradition. It, too, was profoundly limited theoretically, and subject to the abuses of narrow political interests. Marxism had ultimately failed to come to terms with nationalism, with consciousness, with racism, with Western civilization, with industrialization, and with the history of Blacks. Wright had already demonstrated some of its limitations in *Native Son*. Daniel Aaron, commenting on Bigger Thomas's Communist lawyer, had observed, "Even Boris Max never really understands Bigger, and is frightened by Bigger's vision of himself."[70] Wright made this same point even more tellingly in *The Outsider*. Wright maintained that the purposes of Marxism as employed in American Communism were less analytical than political. The result was neither theory nor praxis but the achievement of power. Ironically, in the second

novel, it was the character of Hilton, also a party functionary, who spoke for Wright. Hilton, driven to candor by desperation, betrays the crude agreement upon which party support of Black liberation depended: manipulation. Wright (Cross) then reflects to himself:

> Did the average white American suspect that men like Hilton existed, men who could easily rise above the racial hatred of the mob and cynically make use of the defensive attitudes instilled in Negroes as weapons in their own bitter struggle for power?[71]

But Wright would instruct us never to expect to hear such revelations as Hilton's. He had heard them as a part of his experience, an experience that he would subject to the Marxian critique that was now also a part of his way of grappling with reality.

Marxism as an ideology and theory of history, Wright argued, was a product of a petit bourgeoisie, in particular, the intellectuals:

> You must assume that I know what this is all about. Don't tell me about the nobility of labor, the glorious future. You don't believe in that. That's for others, and you damn well know it. . . . You Jealous Rebels are intellectuals who know your history and you are anxious not to make the mistakes of your predecessors in rebellious undertakings.[72]

He was no longer convinced that Marxism as a theory, as a theory of history or social revolution, was correct but he did understand its seductiveness. He would write in 1960: "Marxist ideology in particular is but a transitory make-shift pending a more accurate diagnosis. . . . Communism may be but a painful compromise containing a definition of man by sheer default."[73] He suspected that Marxism, alike with Christianity as an ideology, masked "complexities of history and social experience." Its truer function was the social and intellectual cohesion of the petit bourgeoisie—a class very different from the proletariat:

> [O]ne minority section of the white society in or under which he lives will offer the educated elite of Asia and Africa or black America an interpretation of the world which impels to action, thereby assuaging his feelings of inferiority. Nine times out of ten it can be easily pointed out that the ideology offered has no relation to the plight of the educated black, brown, or yellow elite. . . . But that ideology does solve something. . . . [I]t enabled the Negro or Asian or African to meet revolutionary fragments of the hostile race on a plane of equality.[74]

Still, in this his most devastating criticism of Communism, Wright was relying on a notion of class struggle:

> These men who rise to challenge the rulers are jealous men. They feel that they are just as good as the men who rule; indeed, they suspect that they are better. They see the countless mistakes that are being made by the men who rule and they think that they could do a more honest, a much cleaner job, a more efficient job.[75]

Such was Wright's thesis on the development of Marxism as a class-specific ideology. And in some ways, he was echoing Marx's own but more mystical explanation of Marxism:

> Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hand . . . so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.[76]

By the early 1950s, Wright had come to his similar conclusion—one that we have seen he retained for the rest of his life—but with a different meaning: Marxist theory was an expression of petit bourgeois consciousness and its critique of bourgeois society and capitalism was most fundamentally addressed to that class's suffocation by the authority of the bourgeois ruling class.

Yet the opposition of Marxist theory to capitalist society was useful to Wright, *theoretically*. Indeed, the historical and revolutionary role that Wright assigned to Blacks had at its base a materialist dialectic. As previously indicated, Wright recognized Black nationalism as a product, in part, of both the objective necessities of capitalist development and accumulation, and its system of exploitation. As he turned toward the ideology of Black nationalism, he sought to comprehend its emergence in the contradictions of day-to-day experience:

> [E]very day in this land some white man is cussing out some defenseless Negro. But that white bastard is too stupid to realise that his actions are being duplicated a million times in a million other spots by other whites who feel hatred for Negroes just like he does. He's too blind to see that this daily wave of a million tiny assaults builds up a vast reservoir of resentment in Negroes.[77]

Thus Wright echoed another powerful contribution to the development of Marxism: Hegel's the Cunning of Reason.

But where Wright differed most with others who could employ a Marxist approach was in his characterization of the historical forces of ideology. Ideology was the special political instrument of the petit bourgeoisie. Wright was arguing that the renegades of this class that had served historically to produce the dominant ideas of the bourgeoisie, had themselves become contemptuous of the ruling class. The Jealous Rebels had declared, as Marx himself had written: "the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent."[78]

In his criticisms of Marxism, then, Wright was not entirely rejecting it but was attempting to locate it, to provide a sense of the boundaries of its authority. As a *theory* of society, he found it dissatisfying, indeed, reductionist. By itself it was insuffi-

ciently prescient of the several levels of collective consciousness. As an *ideology*, he recognized that it had never transcended its origins. It remained an ideology *for* the working classes rather than an ideology *of* the working classes. However, as a *method* of social analysis he found it compelling. He had not abandoned the conception of the relations of production as a basis for the critique of capitalist society nor the importance of the class relations of production. Still, the critique of capitalism was only the beginning of the struggle for liberation.

It is from this critical perspective that Wright joins with one of the few Black women he has sympathetically drawn, Sarah Hunter. When she cajoles her husband, Bob, the frightened and party-subservient Black organizer, she is speaking for Wright: "everywhere I've looked . . . I've seen nothing but white folks kicking niggers who are kneeling down." "I want to be one of them who tells the *others* to obey, see? Read your Marx and organize."[79]

From his experience in the American Communist Party, and from *his* reading of Marx, Wright had come to the conclusion that no people's liberation is the result of their abject surrender of critical judgment. Certainly it was not the prerogative of Black intellectuals to surrender the cultural heritage of their people: the emergent revolutionary consciousness of Black nationalism.

Very little remains then of the Wright that Harold Cruse presents to us. Perhaps, like Baldwin, Cruse had also felt the need "to kill the father." Doubtless, too, the explanation for Cruse's error is much more complex. But irrespective of the origins of Cruse's portrait of Wright, a closer reading of the central works written by Wright over a span of more than two decades reveals a most powerful and self-possessed Black thinker. Wright struggled toward a synthesis of Marxism and Black nationalist thought to match those of his colleagues, George Padmore and C. L. R. James. And together, their several works—along with those of Du Bois—are an extraordinary legacy to Blacks in the Western hemisphere and elsewhere. In them, one can discover an independent and richly suggestive critique of the modern world—a critique whose voice is the most authentic sounding of the brutal depths of Western civilization and its history. There lies, in those works, the beginnings of Black revolutionary theory. "[A]t the moment when a people begin to realize a *meaning* in their suffering, the civilization that engenders that suffering is doomed."[80]

CHAPTER

AN ENDING

12

The persevering reader perhaps even in spite of my efforts will by now have fathomed the concerns that have shaped the present study. But it is an important convention of the storyteller and the scholar to summarize the tale, to have the last word. It is a final opportunity for the narrator to get things right, to draw the moral or expose the hidden ironies. There is, indeed, something more to be said about what may be the significance of the argument and why it assumed the specific form that it did. As is my habit, I will now take up those subjects back to front.

The work was conceived as primarily a theoretical discourse. This may come as a bit of a surprise to some readers because for the most part I purposely eschewed theoretical language. Instead, I believed it necessary to refer the exposition of the argument to historical materials. Certainly this minimized the risk of reductionist abstraction. Most importantly though, it served the purpose of resurrecting events that have systematically been made to vanish from our intellectual consciousness. The work required a certain destructuring of American and Western historiography. For the realization of new theory we require new history. As has been pointed out in most of the West's intellectual traditions, the practice of theory is informed by struggle. Here the points of combat were threefold: an opposition to the ideas purporting to situate African peoples that have dominated European literature; a critique of a socialist intellectual tradition that, too infrequently, or casually, has interrogated its own bases for being; and a consideration of the import of the ambivalences with which Western-

ized Black radical intelligentsia first began the formulation of Black radical theory. The terrain was not made by choice but dictated by historical inheritance.

When the investigation into the conflicts extant between Western radicalism and the struggle for Black liberation was initiated, it was with the gnawing intuition that something known to be fundamental to the Western experience was being trivialized by the American radical tradition. Among my colleagues there was the sense that something so important as to challenge the very foundations of progressive politics and thought lay beyond the conceptualizations that admittedly had inspired formidable displays of progressive work and activity. Some knowledge, some aspect of Black consciousness was unaccounted for in the Marxist explication of the historical processes and source of the motives to which were attributed the social formations of the modern world. In its conceptually formidable reaction against irresponsible power, calculated social destruction, and the systematic exploitation of human beings, there seemed to us to be a discernible reluctance in Western radicalism, or to put it more strongly, a flight from the recognition that something more than objective material forces were responsible for "the nastiness" as Peter Blackman puts it. There was the sense that something of a more profound nature than the obsession with property was askew in a civilization that could organize and celebrate—on a scale beyond previous human experience—the brutal degradations of life and the most acute violations of human destiny. It seemed a certainty that the system of capitalism was part of it, but as well symptomatic of it. It needed a name as the philosopher Hobbes might say. It was not simply a question of outrage or concern for Black survival. It was a matter of comprehension.

The outrage, I believe, was most certainly informed by the Africanity of our consciousness—some epistemological measure culturally embedded in our minds that deemed that the racial capitalism we have been witness to was an unacceptable standard of human conduct. It was also the case that the source of our outrage characterized that conduct as inexplicable. The depths to which racialist behavior has fouled Western agencies transgressed against a world-consciousness rooted in our African past. Nevertheless, the sense of deep sadness at the spectacle of Western racial oppression is shared with other non-Western peoples. In these circumstances and in a certain sense only, Black survival must of course be taken as problematical. But its truer significance has been determined by received tradition.

I have said that the inquiry into what lay behind the sense of the inadequacies of the Marxian critique was compelled by the question of understanding. The encounter between African and European had been abrupt, not so much in historical terms as in philosophical ones. The Western civilization that burst forth from its medieval quarantine prosecuted its racial sense of social order, its feudal habits of domination, with a vengeance. By the ending of the Middle Ages, racialism was a routine manifestation, finding expression even in the more exotic mental recesses of the maniac and hysterical. For 400 years, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, while the capitalist mode of production in Europe engulfed agrarian and artisanal workers, transforming them over the generations into expropriated, dependent fodder for concentration in

factories, disciplined to the rhythms and turbulences of the manufacturing process, the organizers of the capitalist world system appropriated Black labor power as *constant* capital. Blacks were extracted from their social formations through mechanisms that, by design and historical coincidence, minimized the disruption of the production of labor. While vast reserves of labor were amassed in the Poor Houses and slums of Europe's cities and manufacturing towns and villages, in the African hinterland some semblance of traditional life continued to reproduce itself, sharing its social product—human beings—with the Atlantic slave system. For those African men and women whose lives were interrupted by enslavement and transportation, it was reasonable to expect that they would attempt, and in some ways realize, the re-creation of their lives. It was not, however, an understanding of the Europeans that preserved those Africans in the grasp of slavers, planters, merchants, and colonizers. Rather, it was the ability to conserve their native consciousness of the world from alien intrusion, the ability to imaginatively re-create a precedent metaphysic while being subjected to enslavement, racial domination, and repression. This was the raw material of the Black radical tradition, the values, ideas, conceptions, and constructions of reality from which resistance was manufactured. And in each instance of resistance, the social and psychological dynamics that are shared by human communities in long-term crises resolved for the rebels the particular moment, the collective and personal chemistries that congealed into social movement. But it was the materials constructed from a shared philosophy developed in the African past and transmitted as culture, from which revolutionary consciousness was realized and the ideology of struggle formed.

As we have commented, though rebellion might appear warranted to the Europeans who witnessed the uprisings of African peoples, the forms that Black resistance assumed were incomprehensible. Ultimately many such witnesses fell easily into whatever language was on hand to evoke mystery: the participants in Black resistance were seen as having reverted to savagery; were under the influence of satanic madmen; had passed beyond the threshold of sanity. To the Europeans charged with the responsibilities of preserving the sources of Black labor or control over that labor, the only effective response to Black rebellion was massive, indiscriminate violence and afterward the routine of brutality. More frequently than not, the logic of racial domination that had already endured for centuries invoked no alternatives. On this score it had always to be an unequal contest, not because of the superiority of weapons or the preponderance of numbers but because such violence did not come naturally to African peoples. The civilizations of Europe and Africa in those terms had also been very different. For far longer than a millennium, the history of Europe had amounted to an almost uninterrupted chronology of fratricidal warfare and its celebration. The museums of the civilization are the current testament to that preoccupation, its histories chilling accounts. In Africa, where the incident of state and imperial formations and total warfare were rarer, conflict could and was more frequently resolved by migration and resettlement. Eventually the penetration of Islam into Africa and the organization of the Red Sea and Mediterranean slave systems had

made some real difference but it was the scale of the Atlantic slave trade and the racial cacophony of European colonialism that would dictate the more profound adjustment to violence. And this too was misunderstood by the Europeans, translated as might be expected into the discourse of superior and inferior races. While the European ruling classes humbled their own workers by force and cultural hegemony, the points of contact between Europeans and Blacks were enveloped by violence.

The first forms of struggle in the Black radical tradition, however, were not structured by a critique of Western society but from a rejection of European slavery and a revulsion of racism in its totality. Even then, the more fundamental impulse of Black resistance was the preservation of a particular social and historical consciousness rather than the revolutionary transformation of feudal or merchant capitalist Europe. Why the pathology of race was so dominant a part of Western consciousness or what might be done to change that character was of less concern than how Black peoples might survive the encounter. This perhaps is part of the explanation of why, so often, Black slave resistance naturally evolved to marronage as the manifestation of the African's determination to disengage, to retreat from contact. To reconstitute the community, Black radicals took to the bush, to the mountains, to the interior.

Just as in Africa until the last quarter of the nineteenth century retreat had been a possible response of African peoples, it was similarly the case at the sites of slave labor. In the Caribbean islands as well as in Latin America and North America, Black peoples found means of disengagement. Away from the plantations, in the security of mountain retreats, on the continent toward the up-country sources of the great rivers that emptied into the ocean at the coasts, Black communities could be reestablished. And the very existence of such settlements enhanced the morale of those who remained in captivity. Over the generations, the successive depositions of new labor, the maroon settlements, and the legends of such communities further enriched the radical tradition. And each generation among the slaves contributed to the further broadening of Black consciousness and the ideology of the tradition. And while the trade itself expanded in response to the interactions of exchange, commodity-demands and surplus production in the world system, within the slave communities a Black people evolved. Manifest expressions of Black radicalism such as marronage, arson, the destruction of work tools, and even open rebellion were complemented by less overt forms. When separation was not possible, open revolts might fester; where rebellion was immediately impractical, the people prepared themselves through *obeah*, voodoo, Islam, and Black Christianity. Through these they induced charismatic expectations, socializing and hardening themselves and their young with beliefs, myths, and messianic visions that would allow them, someday, to attempt the impossible. Their history confirmed these processes; their fruition could be seen in the *papaloi* of the Haitian Revolution; the *obeah* men and women who crowd the trial records of slave rebellions in the Caribbean and elsewhere; the Muslim revolts in Brazil; the rebel preachers who appear at the center of resistance in Jamaica, Suriname, and North America. Through it all, of course, the perturbations of the world system constituted the parameters, the conditions of being of Black resistance.

In seventeenth-century colonial North America, marronage appeared first. But as the eighteenth century succeeded the seventeenth, marronage as the prevalent form of Black resistance became increasingly difficult, as merchant and manufacturing capitalists expanded plantation slavery, rationalized the structures of domination between the colonies, and defeated the native Americans. As slave communities formed, marronage was eventually superseded. By the middle of the eighteenth century, for the mass of Blacks the steady transfusion, via the Atlantic, of new Africans, the genius of Black Christianity, the construction of Creole dialects, the founding of Black and Seminole-like maroon communities, the flight to the Black quarters of southern cities, the plotting and actualizing of rebellions, and the construction of familial and communal relations in the slave quarters, were all a part of their preservation as an African people and the nurture of the Black radical tradition. On the other hand, the drift toward assimilation to the Europeans by a fraction of the Black population was of little importance. The crude racialism that walled American culture exacted a toll that only the most desperately alienated at the racial and psychological margins of the Black and white societies could be expected to pay. By the end of the century, new possibilities for Black radicalism arose with first the colonial rebellion and then the Haitian Revolution. Blacks fought with the English against the rebels and witnessed the more relevant resistance in Haiti. And well into the nineteenth century, the experience absorbed by Black participants in the rebellion of the colonial ruling class against its English superiors and the example (and the indirect if not direct assistance) of the Haitian revolutionists facilitated mass resistance as the dominant expression of Black radicalism. Like the Haitian slaves, disengagement was the ideological currency of the rebel American Blacks; the absolute rejection of American society and the persistent denunciation of racialism as a basis of civilized conduct. Before the Civil War, with slave production now more important economically than it had ever been as a direct result of the industrial revolutionizing of English manufacturing, the Black radical commitment was echoed by the ideologists of the slave rebellions and the Black refugees from slavery. It was given expression among the militant Black "abolitionists," in the assemblies of the emigration movement, and among Blacks such as the Chatham conventioneers who, with John Brown, planned the overthrow of the slave system. The evidence of the tradition's persistence and ideological vitality among the Black slave masses was to be found not only in the rebellions and the underground but as well in the shouts, the spirituals, the sermons, and the very textual body of Black Christianity. After the Civil War, in the wake of the years of fighting and the subsequent years of being victimized by terror and the manipulations of the industrial, financial, and plantocratic classes, streams of Black emigrationists sought again the safety of distance. In the late nineteenth century, like their migrating counterparts in South Africa, Brazil, and Cuba who desperately sought for distance from European settlements, American Blacks were convinced anew that their preservation as a people was at stake. The possibilities of that option, however, were already receding. New conditions, new resolves, and new stratagems were overtaking them.

The formal endings of slave systems of production in the nineteenth century

marked the beginnings of a profound reorganization of the capitalist world system. In Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, through the deepening penetrations of monopoly capitalism and the impositions of hegemonic colonialisms, slaves were displaced as a source of cheap labor power by peasants and migrant laborers. In Africa, whereas the slave trade had dislocated the reproductive cycles of certain social formations along the coasts of West and southern Africa, the "new imperialism" of monopoly capitalism demanded a more destructive form of appropriation and exploitation. The colonial state parasitized the peasants of the continent's agrarian hinterlands, transforming traditional economic sectors from the project of reproduction into the source and support of forcibly recruited labor and the sites of cash-crop monoculture and the extraction of minerals and raw materials. To the extent that wage labor expanded in Africa, its level of support was limited to maintenance and not reproduction of labor. In the New World there were also changes. The systems of reconstitution of Black communities were, as well, assaulted by forms of forced labor: peonage, share-cropping, and less than subsistence farming. Moreover, Black workers were subject to displacement from productive land and to publicly and privately organized campaigns of terror and intimidation. Ineluctably, resistance was propelled toward new forms, new consciousness, and new ideologies.

The anticolonial struggles that were increasingly mounted from the mid-nineteenth century on were the beginnings of the transformation of Black radicalism into an engaged confrontation with European domination. Indeed, it was as a response to the mass resistances to colonialism that the other human contradictions to which colonial domination was inherently vulnerable were catalyzed. The very nature of colonial dominance required the adaptation or creation of privileged strata among the dominated people. And from the conflict, which was inevitable between the native "bourgeoisie" and their colonial masters, a renegade intelligentsia was induced, one to which the idea of a total opposition, a nationalist confrontation and critique of Western society was necessary and natural. The experience of the Black petit bourgeoisies, their intimacy with European power, culture, society, and racism, and their contradictory relations to them, in time drew from their number nationalists and radical nationalists. While the nationalists generally confined their attentions to the struggles at home where their ambitions could most immediately be realized, the radical nationalists were really internationalists, settling into variants of Pan-Africanism or socialism. Invariably, some of the radicals would be ideologically attracted to the opposition movements gestated within Western society itself. Their ambivalence toward the Black masses, their social and psychological identifications with European culture made the analytical and theoretical authority of European socialism an almost irresistible political ideology. For some that proved sufficient. For others, however, the continuing formation of militant nationalist and workers' movements in the colonial world raised questions about the breadth and acuity of European socialists. And as mass Black radicalism adapted to the instrument of people's wars as the form of the anti-imperialist struggle, its revolutionary intelligentsia began the critique or relocation of socialist theory. For them, the struggles of the European working classes were

linked with the anti-imperialist movements of the nonindustrial world. The gulf between class struggle and anti-imperialist and nationalist activity began to be closed.

In the Caribbean and North America (where a racial politics analogous to that of colonialism had produced a complementary Black radical intelligentsia), when for much of the first half of the twentieth century the crises of monopoly capitalism struck the world system, a generation of these ideologues was already formed and ready to respond to the social upheavals in Europe, America, and the colonial world. Others affixed themselves to socialist movements after the rebellions of European workers had subsided and bourgeois democracy, the liberal representation of monopoly capitalism from its infancy, gave way in Italy, Germany, and Spain to the more openly repressive face of the fascist state. To the colonial and American Black radicals, the objections raised to fascism by liberal and socialist ideologues brought to the fore the parallels between colonialism and fascism and the ambivalence, hypocrisies, and impotence of the intellectuals in the metropoles of the European empires. Many of the leading activists among the Black intelligentsia, having previously committed themselves to drawing their nationalist struggles within the orbit of the socialist movement, found it necessary to move past their European comrades. It was both natural and historically logical that some would resurrect Pan-Africanism as a radical ideology and recognize further its potential as a radical theory of struggle and history. From the early 1930s on, a radical Pan-Africanism emerged. And in the work of Du Bois, James, and Wright, of Oliver Cox, Eric Williams, and George Padmore, the elements of its first phase were discernible.

When Du Bois and James set about the recovery of the history of the revolutionary Black struggle, they were driven from an implied to an explicit critique of Marxism. As Black men grown sensitive to the day-to-day heroism demanded for Black survival, they were particularly troubled by the casual application of preformed categories to Black social movements. It appeared to them that Western Marxists, unconsciously bound by a Eurocentric perspective, could not account for nor correctly assess the revolutionary forces emerging from the Third World. The racial metaphysics of Western consciousness—the legacy of a civilization—shielded their fellow socialists from the recognition of racialism's influence on the development and structures of the capitalist system, and conceptually pardoned them from a more acute inquiry into the categories of their own thought. Without some form of intervention, the socialist movement would be doomed to disaster.

The first initiative of Du Bois, who himself had been matured by his encounter with American Black nationalism, was to reassess the historical role of the industrial working classes. In the beginning he had intended a modest proposal: without the aid of the Black masses, no American working-class movement could succeed in overturning the capitalist ruling class. However, his investigation of the Black radical tradition of the mid-nineteenth century pushed his analysis further and deeper, beyond the presumptions of the revolutionary theory and politics of his time. Anticipating the more sustained expositions of Eric Williams and Oliver Cox, Du Bois became convinced that capitalism and slavery were related systemically; that monop-

oly capitalism had extended rather than arrested that relationship; and that the forces implicated in the dissolution of capitalism could emerge from the contradictions of that relationship. History provided his evidence. In the turbulence of the American Civil War and a social revolution carried through by the mobilized slaves and the white agrarian workers, it had been the manufacturing and industrial working classes that had hesitated, drawn to counterrevolution by racism and a short-sighted perception of their class interest. The class struggle had been distorted and a proletarian revolutionary consciousness among nineteenth-century American workers had been effectively interdicted by the ideological power of racism and the seductiveness of the bourgeois myth of social mobility. It was the slaves (in truth an enslaved peasantry) and other agrarian workers who had mounted the attack on capitalism. It was, Du Bois observed, from the periphery and not the center that the most sustained threat to the American capitalist system had materialized. The rebellious slaves, vitalized by a world-consciousness drawn from African lore and composing their American experience into a rebellious art, had constituted one of the crucial social bases in contradiction to bourgeois society. For Du Bois, the recovery of this last fact became as elementary to revolutionary theory as a recognition of the peasant masses whose revolts in Russia, Mexico, and China had rocked the ruling classes of the twentieth century. Just as important for him, however, was the realization that the racism of the American "white" working classes and their general ideological immaturity had abnegated the extent to which the conditions of capitalist production and relations alone could be held responsible for the social development of the American proletariat. The collective and individual identities of American workers had responded as much to race as they had to class. The relations of production were not determinant. Du Bois would pursue this issue politically but not theoretically. Nevertheless, it had become clear to him that in Marxist theory much uncertainty remained with respect to the significance that could be made of the historical appearance of the proletarian class under capitalism and the evolution of working-class consciousness.

In the reconstruction of the Haitian Revolution, James in his way reached even deeper into the Black radical tradition and into the issue of its resolution within Marxism. More an internationalist than even Du Bois, notwithstanding the latter's broad experience and wide concerns, James had intellectually absorbed the conflicting traditions associated with the cultural raison d'être of Victorian imperialism, the doctrines of Marxist-Leninism, and the nascent radical nationalism of colonial Trinidad. But as an ideologue of the Fourth International movement he had been led to a rigorous critique of them all and a rejection of any easy accommodation. Concurring with Du Bois's intuition that Western radicalism had indulged a tendency to peripheralize the antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles, James attempted a theoretical reconciliation of the Black and Western radical traditions. With the Russian Revolution in mind, he framed the Haitian Revolution against the Bolshevik model. But his attempt to lend Marxian authority to the slave revolutionists forced to the surface an unintended consideration. While he might suspend the disquieting realization that the revolution had occurred in the absence of those conditions and the particular

consciousness that Marxian theory determined necessary for a modern social revolu-
tion, he could not avoid a kindred problem: the reevaluation of the nature and the
historical role of the revolutionary petit bourgeois intelligentsia and its presump-
tions. For a decade after the appearance of *The Black Jacobins*, James would wrestle
with the social and ideological ambivalence of this "renegade" strata, eventually
articulating a critique of it as the source of leadership of the revolutionary masses. In
Haiti as well as in Russia, Lenin's theory of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" had
been shown to be insufficient. No revolutionary cadre, divorced from the masses,
ensconced in state bureaucracy, and abrogating to itself the determination of the best
interests of the masses, could sustain the revolution or itself. James would come to the
theoretical position that "in the decisive hour" (as Marx and Engels were wont to say)
it was only the consciousness and activity of the revolutionary masses that could
preserve the revolution from compromise, betrayal, or the ill-considered usurpation
of revolutionary authority. It was his study of the revolutionary masses of Haiti,
France, Russia and Africa, and his work in England, America and Trinidad rather
than the Bolshevik state that would persuade him of the actual fact of Lenin's dictum:
"every cook can govern."

But it was Richard Wright who was better placed than either Du Bois, James,
Padmore, Williams, or Cox to articulate the revolutionary consciousness of the Black
masses and to assess the cultural debilitation of Marxian politics. Wright had as his
vantage points his origins in the rural and urban Black working classes and his
experience of the American Communist movement. Unlike Du Bois who came to
Black cultural life from its margins and would stand at a distance to describe the
revolutionary ideas of the American slaves as a mixture of legend, whimsy, and art,
and unlike James whose appreciation of Black culture was often cerebral ("the me-
dium" is how James would describe the voodoo ideology of the Haitian revolution-
ists, and the calypso of the West Indian masses) when not single-minded (about
cricket and the novels of his age-mates and peers), Wright evoked in his writings the
language and experience of "ordinary" Black men and women. In this way he pressed
home the recognition that whatever the objective forces propelling a people toward
struggle, resistance, and revolution, they would come to that struggle in their own
cultural terms. Among Blacks, a culture of a mass conscious of itself had evolved from
African civilization, the centuries of resistance to slavery, and the opposition to a
racial social order. In the syncopations and the phrases, the scamp and the beat, the
lyric and melody of Black language, Black beliefs, Black music, sexual and social
relations and encounters, Wright's work reconstructed the resonances of Black Amer-
ican consciousness in its contests with reality. The quests pursued in his novels and
essays were set to the improvisational possibilities obtained in that Black culture's
collisions with its own parameters and those prescribed by the market forces and
labor demands of capitalism and by a racialist culture. From the measured discourse
of a Black culture he illustrated the limits of a socialist movement that persisted in too
many abstractions, too far removed, and was prey to the arrogance of racial paternal-
ism. Wright made it clear that the objections raised by Du Bois, Padmore, James,

Williams, Cox, and other Black radicals were grounded from below in the historical consciousness of the Black masses. In Wright's time, in part because of the various native and immigrant national and ethnic constituents making it up, the "white" working class had not yet obtained a collective historical and cultural integration of its own. As a class brought into being at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century by racial capitalism, to the extent that it existed, the workers' collective consciousness remained a racial one subject to the disciplining ideologies of the bourgeois class and responsive to what they had been led to believe was "American culture." While that was true, only a small fraction of the class was capable of an alliance with the Black liberation struggle. In the meanwhile, it became increasingly clear to Wright and his colleagues that the project of revolutionary change required reassessment and reconceptualization.

It is now a generation later. In the intervening years the Black radical tradition has matured, assuming new forms in revolutionary movements in Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. In the ideas of revolutionaries, among them Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, Augustinho Neto, Eduardo Mondlane, Marcelino dos Santos, Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Walter Rodney, and Angela Davis, Black radicalism has remained a currency of resistance and revolt. However, the evolution of Black radicalism has occurred while it has not been conscious of itself as a tradition. Doubtlessly there have been advantages to this. There have been no sacred texts to be preserved from the ravages of history. There have been no intellects or leaders whose authority secured ideological and theoretical conformity and protected their ideas from criticism. There has been no theory to inoculate the movements of resistance from change. But it, too, is certain that there have been disadvantages; partial comprehensions that it has now become imperative to transcend. The fractioning of African peoples is dysfunctional.

Meanwhile the clock of "modern times" is running down. Within Western culture, that is the very civilization that in recent centuries has dominated a quarter of the world and acquired so little consciousness in its experience with the rest, what once were but faint signs of breakdown are now in bold evidence. Not even the brilliant wizardry of high technological achievement can mute the rumblings from the degenerating mechanism. It is the occasion of opposition and contradiction and the moment of opportunity. That is because the times that mark the dissolutions of civilizations compound the maturations of both internal and external processes.

Physically and ideologically, and for rather unique historical reasons, African peoples bridge the decline of one world order and the eruption (we may surmise) of another. It is a frightful and uncertain space of being. If we are to survive, we must take nothing that is dead and choose wisely from among the dying.

The industrial nations are self-destructing. Others, too, of course, will be affected. But the racial mythology that accompanied capitalist industrial formation and provided its social structures engendered no truly profound alternatives. The social, ideological, and political oppositions generated within Western societies have proven unequal to the task. They have acquired historical significance only when they re-

ceived comfort in the consciousness of Third World peoples. There they mingled with other cultures, taking their place among social priorities and historical visions largely alien from their sites of origin. Such instances were the agrarian socialist revolutions among the Indian peasants of Mexico early in this century; the coterminous social revolutions and nationalist upheavals within the Russian Empire; the revolutionary peasant movements of China and India; and in the period following the Second World War, the national liberation movements of Madagascar and Cuba and on the continents of Africa and Central and South America. The critique of the capitalist world system acquired determinant force not from movements of industrial workers in the metropoles but from those of the "backward" peoples of the world. Only an inherited but rationalized racial arrogance and a romanticism stiffened by pseudo-science could manage to legitimate a denial of these occurrences. Western Marxism, in either of its two variants—critical-humanist or scientific—has proven insufficiently radical to expose and root out the racialist order that contaminates its analytic and philosophic applications or to come to effective terms with the implications of its own class origins. As a result, it has been mistaken for something it is not: a *total* theory of liberation. The ensuing errors have sometimes been horrendous, inducing in their wake dogmas of certainty characterized by desperation.

The Black radical tradition suggests a more complete contradiction. In social and political practice, it has acquired its immediate momentum from the necessity to respond to the persisting threats to African peoples characteristic of the modern world system. Over the many generations, the specificity of resistance—at best securing only a momentary respite—has given way to the imperatives of broader collectivities. Particular languages, cultures, and social sensibilities have evolved into world-historical consciousness. The distinctions of political space and historical time have fallen away so that the making of one Black collective identity suffuses nationalisms. Harbored in the African diaspora there is a single historical identity that is in opposition to the systemic privations of racial capitalism. Ideologically, it cements pain to purpose, experience to expectation, consciousness to collective action. It deepens with each disappointment at false mediation and reconciliation, and is crystallized into ever-increasing cores by betrayal and repression. The resoluteness of the Black radical tradition advances as each generation assembles the data of its experience to an ideology of liberation. The experimentation with Western political inventories of change, specifically nationalism and class struggle, is coming to a close. Black radicalism is transcending those traditions in order to adhere to its own authority. It will arrive as points of resistance here, rebellion there, and mass revolutionary movements still elsewhere. But each instance will be formed by the Black radical tradition in an awareness of the others and the consciousness that there remains nothing to which it may return. Molded by a long and brutal experience and rooted in a specifically African development, the tradition will provide for no compromise between liberation and annihilation.

The radical nationalist movements of our time in Africa and the African diaspora have come at a historical moment when substantial numbers of the world's Black

peoples are under the threat of physical annihilation or the promise of prolonged and frightening debilitation. The famines that have always accompanied the capitalist world system's penetration of societies have increased in intensity and frequency. The appearance of literally millions of Black refugees, drifting helplessly beyond the threshold of human sensibility, their emaciated bodies feeding on their own tissues, have become commonplace. The systematic attack on radical Black polities, and the manipulation of venal political puppets are now routine occurrences. Where Blacks were once assured of some sort of minimal existence as a source of cheap labor, mass unemployment and conditions of housing and health that are of near-genocidal proportions obtain. The charades of neocolonialism and race relations have worn thin. In the metropoles, imprisonment, the stupor of drugs, the use of lethal force by public authorities and private citizens, and the more petty humiliations of racial discrimination have become epidemic. And over the heads of all, but most particularly those of the Third World, hangs the discipline of massive nuclear force. Not one day passes without confirmation of the availability and the willingness to use force in the Third World. It is not the province of one people to be the solution or the problem. But a civilization maddened by its own perverse assumptions and contradictions is loose in the world. A Black radical tradition formed in opposition to that civilization and conscious of itself is one part of the solution. Whether the other oppositions generated from within Western society and without will mature remains problematical. But for now we must be as one.

ically burned, and there were numerous judicial murders by summary court martial" (p. 110). Craton, "Proto-Peasant Revolts?," op. cit. The literature of slave resistance and repression abounds in such cruelty. For the English public's reaction, see Bernard Semmel, *Jamaican Blood and Victorian Conscience*, Houghton Mifflin, Cambridge, 1963.

4. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, op. cit., p. 309.

5. Ibid.

6. See George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, op. cit., pp. 272–73, 296–97.

7. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, op. cit., p. 256; see also Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 109–10.

8. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove, New York, 1963.

9. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 9–11. Much of Genovese's argument (chap. 3) rests on the ideology of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Toussaint, however, was neither the initiator, the organizer, nor the ultimate and dominant ideologue of the slave revolutionaries or the colored revolutionists (see David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, op. cit., pp. 11, 171). And if it is true that Toussaint had achieved the status of a slaveowner himself before the revolution (David Geggus, "Haitian Divorce": review, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 December 1980), this provides a part of the basis for his attraction to French revolutionary bourgeois ideology (see James, *The Black Jacobins*, op. cit., pp. 91–93). In the present century, Amilcar Cabral has come closest to developing a comprehension of this phenomenon: see Cedric J. Robinson, "Amilcar Cabral and the Dialectic of Portuguese Colonialism," *Radical America* 15, no. 3 (May/June 1981): 39–57.

10. "Lawrence Vambe's two volumes of reminiscences [*From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, 1976], dedicated as they are 'To all of my fellow men who died in the cause of Freedom' . . . [draw] on his own memories of life in Chishawasha village when he was a child there in the 1920s to depict a society dominated by recollections of the resistances. . . . He describes how the men of the village would regularly discuss their memories of 1896 whenever a serious general problem confronted the village. . . . The risings of 1896, and the tragic readiness of all too many of the people to lose heart and go over to the enemy, form themes of Shona poetry." T. O. Ranger, "The People in African Resistance," op. cit., pp. 126–27.

11. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*, op. cit., p. 42.

12. Ibid., p. 18.

13. "The African [who] don't eat salt, they say they [be] come like a witch . . . those Africans who don't eat salt—and they interpret all things. And why you hear they say they fly away [it is because] they couldn't stand the work when the taskmaster then flog them; and they get up and they just sing their language, and they clapping their hands—so—and they just stretch out, and them gone—so—right back. And they never come back: Ishmael Webster. My grandmother had a grand aunt seventeen years old, and one day she in the kitchen, and she blew on her hand—toot, toot—and she disappear. She didn't eat salt and she went back to Africa: Elizabeth Spence." Monica Schuler, *"Alas, Alas, Kongo,"* op. cit., p. 93.

14. Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed*, New American Library, New York, 1965; for charisma, see Cedric J. Robinson, *The Terms of Order*, State University of New York, 1980, pp. 152–59.

15. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, op. cit., pp. 20–21, 108–9.

16. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*, op. cit., p. 159.

17. Ibid., p. 160; see also the discussion of religion and resistance in Olli Alho, *The Religion of the Slaves*, Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, Helsinki, 1976, pp. 224–34.

18. Amos Tutuola, *My Life in the Bush of the Ghosts*, Faber and Faber, London, 1954.

Chapter Eight

1. Eugene Genovese, "The Legacy of Slavery and the Roots of Black Nationalism," in Edward Greer (ed.), *Black Liberation Politics: A Reader*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1971, p. 43. According to George Rawick, Genovese was a member of the American Communist Party in his youth. Interview with Rawick, winter 1976. The original of Genovese's article appeared in *Studies on the Left* (6, no. 6 [November–December 1966]). In the same issue, Herbert Aptheker, one of the leading intellectuals in the American Communist Party and a major contributor to Black history, took Genovese to task, insisting that he recall that "the white radical historians followed and learned from Negro historians" and that: "There is no 'legend of armed black resistance to slavery.' It is not a legend—though the use of the word 'armed' is disarming. There is the fact of Negro resistance to enslavement—armed and unarmed, that is the great fact and it is not legendary at all." Greer, ibid., pp. 65–66. Genovese has subsequently rehabilitated himself in part (Genovese, 1974 and 1979) but his theoretical presumptions still remain suspect. See James D. Anderson, "Aunt Jemima in Dialectics: Genovese and Slave Culture," *Journal of Negro History* 61 (January 1976): 99–114; Edward Royce, "Genovese on Slave Revolts and Weiner on the Postbellum South," *Insurgent Sociologist* 10 (Fall 1980): 109–17; and David Gerber, "Can You Keep 'Em Down on the Plantation after They've Read Rousseau," *Radical America* 15, no. 6 (November–December 1981): 47–56.

2. See Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Harper and Row, New York, 1976, 2 vols.

3. See Isaac Deutscher's comments on Leon Trotsky's "On Optimism and Pessimism, the Twentieth Century, and Other Things," in his *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879–1921*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979, pp. 53–54.

4. C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, Hutchinson, London, 1963, p. 43.

5. For the global dimensions of the imperialist impulses of Europe's ruling classes, see E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, Harmondsworth Penguin, 1968; and Michael Barrett Brown, *The Economics of Imperialism*, Harmondsworth Penguin, 1974. Hobsbawm observes: "[W]ith certain exceptions, capitalism was only beginning to seize hold of the underdeveloped world from the middle of the nineteenth century on, and to engage in intensive capitalist investment there. Very little of the world was actually colonized, occupied and ruled from abroad, the major exceptions being India and what today is Indonesia. . . . In world history this era, stretching from the defeat of Napoleon to the eighteen-seventies, perhaps to the end of the century if you like, may be described as the age of British power. . . . At all events, the moment when world capitalism was entirely successful, confident and secure, was comparatively brief, the mid-Victorian period, which may possibly be prolonged towards the end of the nineteenth century." "The Crisis of Capitalism in Historical Perspective," *Socialist Revolution* 30 (October–December 1976): 81. For the part of Africa in this process, see George Padmore, *Africa and World Peace*, Frank Cass, London, 1972 (original 1937); and R. E. Robinson and J. A. Gallagher (with Alice Denny), *Africa and the Victorians*, Macmillan, London, 1961.

6. M. Perham, "British Native Administration," in *Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, Second Session, 27 June–8 July 1938*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1938, p. 50.

7. Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race*, Modern Reader, New York, 1970 (original 1948), p. 360. See also George Beckford, *Persistent Poverty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1972, pp. 39ff and 71ff.

8. For instances, see Wendell Bell, "Inequality in Independent Jamaica: A Preliminary Appraisal of Elite Performance," *Revista/Review Interamericana* (Summer 1977): 294–308; Carl Stone, *Class, Race and Political Behavior in Urban Jamaica*, University of the West Indies, Mona, 1973; C. L. R. James, "The West Indian Middle Classes," in *Spheres of Existence*, Allison and Busby, London, 1980, pp. 131–40, and his *The Black Jacobins*, Vintage, New York, 1963, pp. 36–44; Nell Painter, *Exodusters*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1976, pp. 15ff, 40ff; and David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979.

9. For examples, see J.-L. Miege, "The Colonial Past in the Present," and Rita Cruise-O'Brien, "Factors of Dependence," in W. H. Morris-Jones and George Fischer (eds.), *Decolonisation and After*, Frank Cass, London, 1980, pp. 43–44 and 283–309, respectively; Ian Scott, "Middle Class Politics in Zambia," *African Affairs* 77, no. 308 (July 1978): 321–34; Lillian Sanderson, "Education and Administrative Control in Colonial Sudan and Northern Nigeria," *African Affairs* 74, no. 297 (October 1975): 433; Cedric J. Robinson, "Amilcar Cabral and the Dialectic of Portuguese Colonialism," *Radical America*, May–June 1981, pp. 39–57; Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, Kenneth King (ed.), Oxford University Press, London, 1973, pp. 126–27; and C. L. R. James, "The West Indian Middle Classes," op. cit.

10. One inventory of the illegitimate or "shady" means by which Blacks have accumulated wealth is to be found in E. Franklin Frazier, *The Black Bourgeoisie*, Free Press, Glencoe, 1957; and his "Human, All Too Human: The Negro's Vested Interest in Segregation," *Survey Graphic*, January 1947, pp. 79–81.

11. See George Shepperson and Tom Price, *Independent African*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1958, pp. 242–55, 422–37.

12. This seems to have held true for even Black missionaries. Writing of Alexander Crummell, a prominent Afro-American missionary active in Liberia in the third quarter of the nineteenth Century, Wilson Moses observes: "For Crummell, as for most people afflicted with Anglophilism, English speaking culture was a perfectly adequate synonym for civilization. The English language was self-evidently superior, he felt, to any of the indigenous tongues of West Africa. On at least two occasions Crummell was ready to point out that 'among the other providential events the fact that the exile of our fathers from their African homes to America, had given us, their children, at least this one item of compensation, namely, the possession of the Anglo-Saxon tongue . . . and that it was impossible to estimate too highly, the prerogatives and the elevation the Almighty has bestowed upon us, in our having as our own, the speech of Chaucer and Shakespeare, of Milton and Wordsworth, of Bacon and Burke, of Franklin and Webster.'" Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850–1925*, Archon, Hamden, 1978, p. 66.

13. A. Victor Murray, "Missions and Indirect Administration," in *Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration*, op. cit., p. 53.

14. Arthur Mayhew, "Education in the Colonies," ibid., pp. 84–85.

15. Penelope Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa, 1920–40*, Frank Cass, London, 1978, p. 111.

16. Lucy Mair, *Native Policies in Africa*, George Routledge, London, 1936, pp. 168–69.

17. Owen Clough (ed.), *Report on African Affairs for the Year 1933*, Empire Parliamentary Association, Billings and Sons, Guildford, 1933, p. 15. "During the period of colonialism, policies were implemented, particularly in the period between 1920 and 1950, drawing a small segment of the African population into

the non-African orbit. Efforts were particularly made to train a cadre of doctors, lawyers, journalists, religious leaders and intellectuals such as teachers and university staff." Peter Gutkind, "The Emergent African Urban Proletariat," Occasional Paper Series, no. 8, Center for Developing Area Studies, McGill University, Montreal, February 1974, p. 55.

18. Elliot Skinner, "The Persistence of Psychological and Structural Dependence After Colonialism," in Aguibou Yansane (ed.), *Decolonization and Dependence*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1980, p. 74; see also Henri Grimal, *Decolonization: the British French, Dutch and Belgian Empires, 1919–1963*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, pp. 37–39. P. B. Harris suggested: "What colonial powers experienced (and for the large part did not like) was *elite* nationalism, that is a nationalism built around some powerful westernised African figure, an Nkrumah, a Kenyatta, a Leopold Senghor." *The Withdrawal of the Major European Powers from Africa*, Monographs on Political Science, no. 2, University College of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1969, p. 4.

19. See Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1961; Lerone Bennett, *Before the Mayflower*, Johnson Publications, Chicago, 1964; and Geiss, op. cit., pp. 32–35.

In Brazil and Cuba, the formation of Black petit bourgeoisies was retarded by a number of intervening factors. In Brazil, after the abolition of slavery and the organization of a republican government in the late nineteenth century, European workers were imported to provide the social base for industrialization, partly as a response to the failure of Blacks to appreciate the advantages of exchanging freedom for proletarianization. The liberal Brazilian sociologist, Florestan Fernandes, has lamented: "Seeing and feeling themselves free, the Negroes wanted to be treated like men or, as they saw it, like those who were masters of their own lives. A fatal lack of adaptation on the part of the Negroes and mulattos resulted. The attitude and behavior of the ex-slaves, who conceived of their freedom as being absolute, irritated white employers. The Negroes assumed that since they were 'free,' they could work when and where they pleased. They tended not to show up for work whenever they had money enough on hand to live for a while without working; they especially did not like to be remonstrated with, warned, or reprimanded." Fernandes, "The Weight of the Past," *Daedalus* 96 (Spring 1967): 563. Still, in cities like Bahia and Sao Paulo, a small Black petit bourgeoisie made an appearance at the turn of the century. However, since Black labor was already becoming incidental to Brazilian capitalists, that middle class was not encouraged or systematically nurtured. When they did produce reformist organizations like the *Frente Negra Brasileira* as happened between 1925 and 1935, those organizations were ruthlessly suppressed. It would not be until after the Second World War that a militant Black intelligentsia would re-emerge. See Florestan Fernandes, *The Negro in Brazilian Society*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1969, pp. 210–23; and Anani Dzidzienyo, "The Position of Blacks in Brazilian Society," *Minority Rights Group*, no. 7, London, 1979, pp. 2–11. In Cuba, the social and political bases for the Black petit bourgeois intelligentsia was undermined largely by the contradictions introduced by the revolutionary war against Spain at the end of the nineteenth century. The American military co-opted the revolution into the Spanish-American War. And during the American military occupation of Cuba, which began in 1898, the *Ejercito Libertador* (Liberation Army), three-quarters of which consisted of Black Cubans, was destroyed. See Lourdes Casal, "Race Relations in Contemporary Cuba," *Minority Rights Group*, no. 7, London, 1979, pp. 13–14, and Louis A. Perez, *Army Politics in Cuba, 1898–1958*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1976, pp. 3–9. Reviewing the Cuban censuses of the nineteenth century and the decline of the Black and mulatto population between 1887 and 1899, Kenneth Kiple cannot help but wonder whether still another war was in progress: "Did the unhappy results of Spain's policy of reconcentration fall most heavily on the blacks? Was the war itself more of a racial war than has been portrayed, with black pitted, for the most part, against white? Did the blacks in fact bear the brunt of the fighting?" Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774–1899*, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1976, p. 81. Lourdes Casal has fewer doubts about a later event in Cuban history that has remained equally obscure. In 1912, the anti-Black movement in part inspired by American influence in Cuba reached a culmination. The suppression of an association of Black voters, the *Partido de los Independientes de Color*, led to armed revolt and "the ensuing racial war, still insufficiently studied, led to a nationwide extermination of blacks of quasi-genocidal proportions." Casal, op. cit., p. 14. This was "the little war of 1912." Casal recalls as a child listening to the stories in her family: "A grand-uncle of mine was assassinated, supposedly by orders of Monteagudo, the rural guard officer who terrorized blacks throughout the island. Chills went down my spine when I heard stories about blacks being hunted day and night; and black men being hung by their genitals from the lamp posts in the central plazas of small Cuban towns." Ibid., p. 12. See also Thomas T. Orum, "The Politics of Colour: The Racial Dimension of Cuban Politics during the Early Republican Years, 1900–1912," Ph.D. diss., Department of History, New York University, 1975 (cited by Casal).

20. Alex Dupuy, "Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Nineteenth-Century Haiti," *Race and Class* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 24.

21. See David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, passim; and Imanuel Geis, op. cit., pp. 316ff.

22. For the founding and early years of these institutions, see Leslie Fishel, Jr. and Benjamin Quarles (eds.), *The Black American*, Scott, Foreshaw, Morrow, Glenview, 1970, pp. 160ff; and Arna Bontemps, *100 Years of Negro Freedom*, Dodd, Mead and Co., New York, 1961, passim. Some 75 years after the founding of the first "Negro College," Dean Kelly Miller of Howard University made the following assessment of their political relations: "Dean Miller divided Negro colleges into three types on the basis of the racial composition of their faculties. Lincoln (Pennsylvania) and Hampton were placed in the category of those under exclusive white control. Those with mixed directors and faculty included Fisk and Howard, and those wholly under Negro support and management were identified as Morehouse, Wilberforce, and Tuskegee." Cited by Robert Brisbane, *The Black Vanguard*, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1970, p. 103. Dean Miller's analysis would shortly be proved a bit naive. The year prior to his complaint (1926), student strikes and demonstrations at Fisk and Howard Universities had led to the installation of Black administrations. Lincoln too underwent some administrative changes during that year as a response to Black student and faculty complaints, though at Hampton, in 1927, the results were less satisfactory. Brisbane, op. cit., pp. 101–11. Despite these concessions, it is clear that a few years later when a Congressional investigation into Communism at Howard University took place, the control of this institution (and probably its sister colleges and universities) was still firmly in the hands of its political and financial benefactors, i.e., representatives and officials of American capital. See Michael Wreszin, "The Dies Committee," in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Roger Burns (eds.), *Congress Investigates*, Chelsea House, New York, 1975; and August Ogden, *The Dies Committee*, Catholic University Press of America, Washington, D.C., 1948, p. 87.

23. Interview with C. L. R. James, Binghamton, New York, Spring 1974.

24. See James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path From Communism to Pan-Africanism*, Präeger, New York, 1970, pp. 2–3; and C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 17–18.

25. Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1969, pp. 26–30.

26. See Gordon D. Morgan, "In Memoriam: Oliver C. Cox, 1901–1974," *Monthly Review*, May 1976, pp. 34–40.

27. "To me it was all in order and I took it philosophically. I cordially despised the poor Irish and South German, who slaved in the mills, and annexed the rich and well-to-do as my natural companions." W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater*, Constable and Co., London, 1920, p. 10. See also Francis Broderick, *W. E. B. DuBois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1959, pp. 2–6, for Du Bois's early racial ambivalence.

28. See Michel Fabre, *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, William Morrow, New York, 1973, pp. 4–30; and Addison Gayle, *Richard Wright: Ordeal of a Native Son*, Anchor/Doubleday, New York, 1980, pp. 2–5.

29. In the summer of 1953, Wright had traveled to the Gold Coast colony (now Ghana) to observe the beginnings of self-government scheduled for July of that year. His recollections of that journey were published as *Black Power* (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954). In that record, he recalled a conversation with the *Efiduasihene*, Nana Kwame Dua Aware II where he had declared: "I'm black, Nana, but I'm Western; and you must never forget that we of the West brought you to this pass. We invaded your country and shattered your culture in the name of conquest and progress. And we didn't quite know what we were doing when we did it. If the West dared to have its way with you now, they'd harness your people again to solve their problems. . . . It's not of me, Nana, that you must ask advice" (p. 288). I have remarked on Wright's identity crisis in the Gold Coast in "A Case of Mistaken Identity," paper presented to the African Studies Association Conference, Los Angeles, November 1979. See also Gayle, op. cit., pp. 238–44, for the reactions of Wright to his first encounter with Africa.

30. Interview with C. L. R. James, Binghamton, New York, Spring 1974.

31. "European socialism was born of the Agrarian Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which followed it. . . . These two revolutions planted the seeds of conflict within society, and not only was European socialism born of that conflict, but its apostles sanctified the conflict itself into a philosophy. . . . The true African socialist does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies. He does not form an alliance with the 'brethren' for the extermination of the 'non-brethren.' " Julius Nyerere, "Ujamaa—The Basis of African Socialism," in *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, Oxford University Press, Dar es Salaam, 1979, p. 11.

32. "The working class in a leading nation, therefore, has sufficient reason to walk arm in arm with its oligarchy against the world. On imperialist questions, we should ordinarily expect this class to be nationalistic, because a threat to the imperial position of the nation tends to become a threat to its own welfare. The class struggle thus goes on at home, as I have indicated, for a larger share of the national income. But it is a struggle that tends to stop at the water's edge where antagonisms with rival imperialists and exploited backward peoples begin. The working people of a leading capitalist nation are likely to rise up in wrath against those of their fellows who disclaim the imperialist actions of the government, regarding them as traitors." Oliver C. Cox, *Capitalism as a System*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1964, p. 194. Of Marxists, Cox declared: "Having accepted the fundamental Marxian postulates on the nature of capitalist society, Marxists cannot go back to Venetian, Hanseatic, Dutch or even early English imperialism for the

essential concepts of the components of that phenomenon. It thus becomes a crucially limiting position which entails procrustean operations in the handling of the facts of modern social change as they relentlessly impose themselves upon us. The rigid ideas concerning the role of industrial workers in modern revolutionary movements, and the earlier Marxian predictions giving precedence to the more advanced capitalist nations in the succession of socialist revolutions, are all derivatives of the theory." Ibid., p. 218.

33. Quoted by David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals, 1914–1960*, Macmillan, New York, 1964, p. 211.

Chapter Nine

1. For a sense of Du Bois's range of interests and activities, see the tributes published by John Henrik Clarke, Esther Jackson, Ernest Kaiser, J. H. O'Dell (eds.), *Black Titan: W. E. B. Du Bois*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1970; the essays in Rayford Logan (ed.), *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Profile*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1971; Daniel Walden (ed.), *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Crisis Writings*, Fawcett, Greenwich, 1972; and, of course, Broderick, op. cit.

2. The second native American intellectual whose name should be included in any study of American Marxist theorists is Sidney Hook. Apparently under the influence of Georg Lukács in his earlier years, Hook published *From Hegel to Marx* in the 1930s. As well, he contributed some useful essays in the attempt to extend knowledge of Marxian thought in the United States. (Cf. "Materialism," *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, vol. 10, New York, 1933.) However, he is best know to later generations for his anti-Communism. See Cristiano Camporesi, "The Marxism of Sidney Hook," *Telos* (Summer 1972): 115–28; C. L. R. James, "The Philosophy of History and Necessity: A Few Words with Professor Hook," in *Spheres of Existence*, op. cit., pp. 49–58; and for some clues to Hook's political disaffection, Daniel Bell, *Marxian Socialism in the United States*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967, pp. 139–40. Some 15 years earlier, Lenin had singled out Daniel De Leon for special mention; see *New York World*, 4 February 1919, p. 2; and Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left*, John Wiley, New York, 1979, pp. 449–51. Officially in the 1930s, the most prominent American Marxist thinker was Earl Browder, the General Secretary of the American Communist Party from 1930 to 1945: "During his leadership of the American C.I.," his closest friend in Moscow, Georgi Dimitrott, then General Secretary of the Communist International, described Browder as the leading Marxist in the English speaking world. From 1935 to 1945, Browder was praised and revered by the left in the United States almost as fervently as was Stalin in the Soviet Union. His published output would total perhaps two million words." Philip Jaffe, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, Horizon Press, New York, 1975, p. 17. For another insider's view of Browder, consult Joseph Starobin's *American Communism in Crisis, 1943–1957*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972, passim. Both Jaffe and Starobin were sympathetic to Browder (and wrote after his expulsion from leadership and his subsequent decanonization), and thus prove much more convincingly, though inadvertently, the case for his theoretical shallowness.

3. Since the phenomenon of the collective myth precedes by millennia the emergence of the modern state, and because Western thought has displayed this phenomenon as one of its enduring concerns, the relevant literature is massive. However, there are a number of works spanning a range of disciplines, intellectual traditions and even epistemologies to which one might refer, some are analytical while others are ideological. Each, though, is an attempt to provide proof or at least a demonstration of the thesis that social orders are accompanied by fabulous rationalizations. Among the analytical are Ernst Cassirer's *The Myth of the State*; Murray Edelman's *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*; Sigmund Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*; Petr Kropotkin's essay, "The State: Its Historic Role"; Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*; Wilhelm Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*; Cedric J. Robinson, *The Terms of Order*; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Among those that are less analytical and more ideological are: Robert Dahl's *Pluralist Democracy in the United States*; Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*; Samuel Huntington's *Social Order in Changing Societies*, Seymour M. Lipset's *The First New Nation*; and Plato's *Republic*.

4. The culture of imperialism makes for an interesting case study of the relationship between power and myth-makers. With respect to British imperialism, the following studies are useful; Brian Street, *The Savage in Literature*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975; Jonah Raskin, *The Mythology of Imperialism*, Dell, New York, 1971; and L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, New York University Press, New York, 1968. Street, in summarizing Curtis's discussion of Anglo-Saxonism, points out that Curtis showed "how the historians of the day (Kemble, Green, Stubbs, Freeman, Charles Kingsley and Froude) constantly referred to this racial heritage to explain current history and created genealogies of English royalty, English families, and English customs to support their claims. Popular fiction was able to give dramatic life to these claims by presenting them in terms of concrete characters, whose abilities and actions brought home to the reader just what it meant to be an Englishman. These qualities are brought into vivid contrast with the 'baser' actions and qualities of the 'inferior' races of the world." Street, op. cit., p. 19. See also Daniel A. Offiong, "The Cheerful School and the Myth of the Civilizing Mission of Colonial Imperialism," *Pan-African Journal* 9, no. 1 (1976): 35–54.

5. Ferdinand Lundberg's *Cracks in the Constitution*, Lyle Stuart, New York, 1980, is the latest contribution to the literature that examines the American "Founding Fathers." In his review essay of Lundberg, Gore Vidal observed: "The state legislatures accredited seventy-four men to the convention. Fifty-five showed up that summer. About half drifted away. Finally, 'no more than five men provided most of the discussion with some seven more playing fitful supporting roles.' Thirty-three framers were lawyers (already the blight had set in); forty-four were present or past members of Congress; twenty-one were rated rich to very rich—Washington and the banker Robert Morris (soon to go to jail where Washington would visit him) were the richest; 'another thirteen were affluent to very affluent'; nineteen were slave owners; twenty-five had been to college (among those who had *not* matriculated were Washington, Hamilton, Robert Morris, George Mason—Hamilton was a Columbia drop-out). Twenty-seven had been officers in the war; one was a twice-born Christian—the others tended to deism, an eighteenth-century euphemism for agnosticism or atheism." Vidal, "The Second American Revolution?," *The New York Review of Books*, 5 February 1981, pp. 37–38. With respect to the Constitution, Vidal maintains: "The Framers wanted no political parties—or factions. It was their view that all right-minded men of property would think pretty much alike on matters pertaining to property. To an extent, this was—and is—true." Ibid., p. 41. See also Charles Beard, "Neglected Aspects of Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 43 (April 1948): 222.

6. See Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised*, Vintage Books, New York, 1980.

7. "The removal of the Indians was explained by Lewis Cass—Secretary of War, governor of the Michigan territory, minister to France, presidential candidate: 'A principle of progressive improvement seems almost inherent in human nature.... We are all striving in the career of life to acquire riches of honor, or power, or some other object, whose possession is to realize the day dreams of our imaginations; and the aggregate of these efforts constitutes the advance of society. But there is little of this in the constitution of our savages.'" Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Harper and Row, New York, 1980, p. 130. Cass, like his predecessor in what was termed at the time "Indian removal," was responsible for the expropriation of millions of acres from native Americans, thus promoting "their interest against their inclination." Moreover, "Cass—pompous, pretentious, honored (Harvard gave him an honorary doctor of laws degree in 1836, at the height of Indian removal) claimed to be an expert on the Indians. But he demonstrated again and again, in Richard Drinnon's words (*Violence in the American Experience: Winning the West*), a 'quite marvellous ignorance of Indian life' " (ibid.). Of the official legend surrounding Andrew Jackson, one of Cass's predecessors, Zinn writes: "The leading books on the Jacksonian period, written by respected historians (*The Age of Jackson* by Arthur Schlesinger; *The Jacksonian Persuasion* by Marvin Mayers), do not mention Jackson's Indian policy, but there is much talk in them of tariffs, banking, political parties, political rhetoric. If you look through high school textbooks and elementary school textbooks in American history you will find Jackson the frontiersman, soldier, democrat, man of the people—not Jackson the slaveholder, land speculator, executioner of dissident soldiers, exterminator of Indians." Ibid., pp. 128–29.

8. See Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1971; Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Macmillan, New York, 1969; and David Bidney, "The Idea of the Savage in North American Ethnohistory," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15, no. 2 (1954): 322–27.

9. Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1971, p. 84.

10. For an excellent expose of the contemporary industry of pseudoscientific racism, see "Racism, Intelligence and the Working Class," published by the Party for Workers Power, Boston, n.d. (but after 1973); and Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*, Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, 1963.

11. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880*, World Publishing, Cleveland, 1969 (original 1935), p. 718. Thirty years after Du Bois, the controversy surrounding the "Dunning school" was still unresolved. In 1967, Gerald Grob and George Billias would declare: "Underlying the interpretation of the Dunning school were two important assumptions. The first was that the South should have been restored to the union quickly and without being exposed to Northern vengeance.... Secondly, responsibility for the freedmen should have been entrusted to white Southerners. The Negro, these historians believed, could never be integrated into American society on an equal plane with whites because of his former slave status and inferior racial characteristics." Gerard N. Grob and George A. Billias (eds.), *Interpretations of American History*, Free Press, New York, 1967, 1:472. On the other hand, Dunning et al. still had their apologists. Wendell Holmes Stephenson suggested: "Southern enthusiasts brought sectional history into better balance, but they, like their predecessors ['north-easterners'], neglected the role of the Negro, and very early in their careers closed their minds to anthropological scholarship." Stephenson, *Southern History in the Making*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1964, p. 250.

12. Du Bois, ibid., p. 723. In 1939, Francis Simpkins would echo Du Bois's judgment: "A biased interpretation of Reconstruction caused one of the most important political developments in the recent history of the South, the disfranchisement of the blacks. The fraud and violence by which this objective was first obtained was justified on a single ground: the memory of the alleged horrors of Reconstruction. Later, amid a flood of oratory concerned with this memory, the white rulers of the South, in constitutional

conventions of the 1890s and 1900s, devised legal means to eliminate the Negro vote. 'Reconstruction,' asserted the prime justifier of this act, 'was this villainy, anarchy, misrule and robbery, and I cannot, in any words that I possess, paint it.' These words of Ben Tillman were endorsed by all shades of white opinion from Carter Glass, Henry W. Grady, and Charles B. Aycock to Tom Watson, Hoke Smith, and James K. Vardaman." Simpkins in Grob and Billias, op. cit., p. 499. For Dunning's and Burgess's contributions to the development of American political science, see Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1959, pp. 26–31, 135–37; and Albert Somit and Joseph Tannenhaus, *The Development of (American) Political Science: From Burgess to Behavioralism*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1967, ch. 3. For an earlier lionization of Dunning, see Charles Merriam, "William Archibald Dunning," in Howard W. Odum (ed.), *American Masters of Social Science*, Holt, New York, 1927, pp. 131–45.

13. Quoted by Raphael Samuel, "British Marxist Historians," *New Left Review* 124 (March/April 1980): 28. Rainboro is also spelled Rainborough.

14. Zinn, op. cit., p. 247.

15. Nell Irwin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1976, pp. 15ff.

16. Douglas Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1980, p. 44.

17. "The new cause was defined as 'white supremacy'—which in practice allowed Southern whites to reduce the freedmen to an inferior caste, as they had attempted to do by enacting the 'Black Codes' of 1865. To further this cause in 1868, [John Van Evrie simply reissued his book *Negroes and Negro 'Slavery'* with a topical introduction and under the new title *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination*. [Josiah] Nott also entered the Reconstruction controversy. In an 1866 pamphlet he reasserted the 'scientific' case for inherent black inferiority as part of an attack on the Freedmen's Bureau and other Northern efforts to deal with the Southern race question," and so on. George Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971, p. 187. Of course the new cause was not entirely monopolized by "Southern whites," as the ambiguous phrase goes; see Lawanda and John H. Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," in Frank Otto Gatell and Allen Weinstein (eds.), *American Themes: Essays in Historiography*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1968, pp. 232–60. Forrest Wood also makes this clear in his study of the *post-bellum* period, *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968, pp. 30–36, though he is also capable of obfuscation on his own part: "The political exploitation of racism in the United States did not originate during the 1860s. But there was a difference between ante-bellum bigotry and the bigotry that followed the Emancipation Proclamation. Before the war there had been little reason for arousing hatred against Negroes because most of them had been slaves. Since, by law, they had been subordinate to whites, there had been little need to launch crusades for the purpose of keeping them in their 'place' " (p. 16). Implicit in Wood's casual absurdity is the assumption of Black passivity to oppression and more; the excision of the contradictions embodied in the exploitation of African and European labor; the dismissal of the political confrontation between agrarian capital and manufacturing capital in the late eighteenth century; the ignoring of the extensive period of rationalization of the slave trade; and the dropping of the Abolition movement from history. It was hardly the case, as Wood suggests, that the "Anglo-Saxon self-image was a sleeping giant that needed only to be aroused." Ibid., p. 16.

18. "Many of the most influential of our early university professors of American history were German-trained, and from their German professors they had taken over much of the Teutonic view of history. . . . This, of course, was a racist concept of history and it should be said that by no means all our historians accepted it. But many of them did." Wesley Frank Craven, *The Legend of the Founding Fathers*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1956, p. 175. "At the turn of the century the American public and the academic community in general, moved by both international and domestic social trends that emphasized the progress of Western Teutonism as opposed to the backwardness of the colored races, had come to believe the extreme theories of black inferiority, and had accepted the disfranchisement and social regimentation of Southern Negroes. The allegedly sordid spectacle of black participation in Reconstruction was advanced as public exhibit number one that Negroes were incapable of political sophistication; social scientists and fiction writers presented a formidable array of racist material that convinced a receptive white America of the innate cultural and moral inferiority of blacks." William C. Harris in his introduction to John R. Lynch's *The Facts of Reconstruction*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1970 (orig. 1913), pp. vi–vii.

19. For the earliest reactions of the Black petit bourgeoisie to racial fantasy and the Reconstruction, see the discussion of Charlotte Forten, Robert G. Fitzgerald, T. Thomas Fortune, John Wallace, and John Lynch in Daniel Savage Gray, "Bibliographic Essay: Black Views on Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History* 58, no. 1 (January 1973): 73–85; and Allen W. Jones, "The Black Press in the 'New South': Jesse C. Duke's Struggle for Justice and Equality," *Journal of Negro History* 64, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 215–28. Duke, the editor of the Black newspaper, the Montgomery *Herald*, was not above swinging his cudgel at the most vulnerable appendage of racist white males. In one of his last editorials in Montgomery he attacked a recent lynching of a Black man by suggesting that the lynchers ask themselves: "Why is it that white women attract negro men now more than in former days?. . . . There is no secret to this thing, and we greatly suspect it is

the growing appreciation of the white Juliet for the colored Romeo, as he becomes more intelligent and refined." Ibid., p. 221. Having made his point, he promptly left town.

20. W. Augustus Low maintains that William C. Nell, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, was the first Afro-American to produce "nonslave" historical accounts, but that George W. Williams "was regarded as 'the most eminent Negro historian in the world' in his day. His book, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of Rebellion, 1861–1865* (1888), for example, long remained distinctively in a class by itself." Low, "Historians," in W. Augustus Low and Virgil Cloft (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Black America*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1981, p. 440. Williams is also discussed in more detail in Earl(ie) E. Thorpe, *Black Historians*, William Morrow, New York, 1970. Geiss discusses William W. Brown's earlier work; Geiss, op. cit., pp. 107–8.

21. John E. Bruce, for instance, in his address to a Philadelphia audience in October 1877, "Reasons Why the Colored American Should Go to Africa," spoke as a committed journalist: "For centuries the colored race has not been highly educated. This has not always been the fact, and history, which shows what has been done proves what may yet be. The Africans held possession of southern Egypt when Isaiah wrote, 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' When the Queen of Sheba brought added wealth to the treasures of Solomon, and when a princely and learned Ethiopian became a herald of Christ before Paul the Hebrew, Cornelius, or the European soldiers were converted. The race to whom had been given the wonderful continent of Africa, can be educated and elevated to wealth, power and station among the nations of the earth." Philip S. Foner (ed.), *The Voice of Black America*, Capricorn, New York, 1972, 1:490. See also Moses, op. cit., p. 198.

22. George Washington Williams, *A History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880*, 2 vols., G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1883.

23. This paradigm was already being vented with respect to the African continent; see the discussion of Alexander Crummell in Wilson Moses, op. cit., pp. 59–82; and David McBride, "Africa's Elevation and Changing Racial Thought at Lincoln University, 1854–1886," *Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 4 (October 1977): 363–77.

24. In an essay published in 1903 entitled "The Talented Tenth," Du Bois went to great pains to establish the fact of the existence of an educated and propertied Black elite in the United States. In it, he briefly described the history of the 34 Black colleges and universities in existence at that time, and gave some indication of the status of their curricula; he reported on the total number of Black graduates from white and Black colleges from 1876 to 1899, and gave a representative sampling of their occupations, and an estimate of their property. See Julius Lester (ed.), *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W. E. B. Du Bois*, Vintage, New York, 1971, 1:391–95; and for the beginnings of a post-Reconstruction entrepreneurial class in the South, Manning Marable, *Blackwater*, Black Praxis Press, Dayton, 1981, pp. 53–68; and Moses, op. cit., pp. 89–90.

25. A useful instance demonstrating the psychological distance traversed by the Black middle class is given by Jeremiah Moses in his discussion of the Black women's club movement in the late nineteenth century: "The club movement among Afro-American woman (*sic*) had its beginnings in the early 1800s with the formation of groups in those cities of the United States where the black middle class was large enough to provide a membership. 'As a general rule,' says Fannie Barrier Williams, 'those who, in the proper sense, may be called the best women in the communities where these clubs were organized, became interested and joined in the work of helpfulness.' Mrs. Williams saw this as a refutation of the charge that 'colored women of education and refinement had no sympathetic interest in their own race.' " Moses, op. cit., p. 105.

26. See Marable, op. cit., pp. 60–61; and Du Bois's description of the "Tuskegee Machine," in the text, note 43.

27. Of the early Ku Klux Klan, Allan Trelease writes: "Klan membership throughout the South resembled that in Tennessee; it was drawn from every rank and class of white society. . . . The maintenance of white supremacy, and the old order generally, was a cause in which white men of all classes felt an interest." *White Terror*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1971, p. 51. "Leadership within the organization more clearly belonged to the professional and planter class which had governed the region before the Radicals displaced them politically, but their economic and social power was hardly affected." Ibid., p. 296. On the level of Federal law and Constitutionally guaranteed rights, the story was the same: "If by 1890 it had become clear to the American Negro that he could not expect to obtain justice and fair play through the regular political processes of the national and state governments it would soon become equally clear to him that he could not expect much more from the courts of the land and especially the United States Supreme Court." Brisbane, op. cit., p. 25.

28. One Black spokesman, William Hooper Councill, expressed a mistaken notion that has long survived him: "Councill had a grotesquely exaggerated idea of white racial solidarity. He assumed that the whites had a great sense of loyalty to and respect for one another, and especially for the weaker members of their race. 'I honor the white man because he honors himself,' said Councill. 'I honor him because he places his mother, sister, wife and daughter on a platform up among the stars, gets a thousand Gatling guns, and

decrees death to him who seeks to drag them down. I honor him because he throws his powerful arms around every little red-headed freckled-face, poor white girl and boy in the land and makes the way possible for them to rise in the world.' This, of course, was pure nonsense in an age characterized by the degradation of labor and the exploitation of women and children by the forces of free enterprise." Moses, op. cit., p. 76.

29. The first draft of this chapter contained the term "Teutonic" here but it was thought it might misdirect rather than clarify. Still, Moses indicates that both Crummell and Edward Wilmot Blyden, the Americo-Liberian born in the Virgin Islands, were quite conscious of Germanic models. Moses, op. cit., p. 281 n. 24.

30. Ibid., pp. 70–71.

31. Ibid., p. 198.

32. Ibid., p. 73.

33. Ibid., pp. 103–31. Du Bois discusses his own and the relationship of other Boston Black intellectuals to Mrs. Ruffin in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, International Publishers, n.p., 1968, pp. 136–37; he also discussed Margaret Murray, a classmate at Fisk and the third wife of Booker T. Washington, ibid., p. 112. See also for Margaret Washington, Bontemps, op. cit., pp. 137–38, 167.

34. "It was thinking on this order that led to the militarization of the black academic experience in such institutions as Hampton and Tuskegee, where not only were trades taught, but a thoroughgoing military-industrial organization of community life was enforced." Moses, op. cit., p. 75.

35. Ibid., pp. 214–15.

36. Ibid., p. 73.

37. The search for and designation of the seminal figure should have been by this time recognized as a frequently misconceived and reductionist venture. This seems particularly the case when ideas and ideology are the subject of investigation. Whether codified in a didactic or scholastic literature or manifest in social collectives, the elements of consciousness and thought are generally shared by force of circumstance, social and historical continuity, language, culture, and interest. Individual achievement may be seen as the culmination of a collective momentum marked by extraordinary circumstance (imagination, location, etc.). As such it is likely it is being replicated or in the process of coming into being elsewhere, either simultaneously or otherwise.

38. See Thorpe, op. cit.

39. "Blyden was one of a few Negroes to make a significant impact on the English-speaking literary and scholastic world in the nineteenth century. . . . Basically, his writings were designed to vindicate the Negro race. His major themes were: that the Negro race did have past achievements of which it could be proud, that it had special inherent attributes which it should strive to project in a distinctive 'African Personality,' that African culture—its customs and institutions—were basically wholesome and should be preserved; and finally, that Christianity had a retarding influence upon the Negro, while that of Islam had been salutary—his most controversial theme, and one on which he wrote at length." Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1912*, Oxford University Press, London, 1970, pp. 54–55; see also Moses, op. cit., pp. 42–45.

40. Moses, op. cit., pp. 134–36; see also August Meier, "The Paradox of W. E. B. Du Bois," in Logan, op. cit., p. 83; and Broderick, op. cit., pp. 52–54. The "Conservation of Races" is republished in the collection of writings edited by Julius Lester, Du Bois, *The Seventh Son*, op. cit., pp. 176–87.

41. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Seventh Son*, op. cit., p. 385.

42. *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois*, op. cit., pp. 236–37.

43. Ibid., p. 239. Robert Brisbane, who as a political scientist at Morehouse College should know this history intimately, supports Du Bois: "[Washington's] opinions were widely publicized and his patrons, which included philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie, Jacob Schiff, and Julius Rosenwald, contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to Tuskegee Institute. In time, it became difficult for any Negro college or institution to obtain funds from philanthropists if Washington withheld his approval. . . . [T]his point was . . . driven home to John Hope during his first years as president of Morehouse College." Brisbane, op. cit., p. 32.

44. "[W]hen placed in their historical setting, it is easy enough to explain how it was that the social philosophy of the Negro historians, sadly lacking in a grasp of the dynamic forces, turned out to be the rather naive Emersonian gospel of self-reliance, simple optimism and patient regard for destiny. Notwithstanding all that has been said, let us not be misunderstood. We have little quarrel with these chroniclers gone by. They served their day and in that day few men in America realized what was going on . . . when we see the story of the Negro since Emancipation as the record of the clashes and rationalizations of individual and group impulse against an American social order of an unfolding capitalism, within which operates semi-articulate arrangements and etiquettes of class and caste, we begin to understand." Reddick, "A New Interpretation for Negro History," *Journal of Negro History* 21, no. 1 (January 1937): 26–27.

45. Washington, in any case, was not bound by any manner of class courtesy when his political position was threatened. He manipulated the Negro press through those newspapers he subsidized or owned

(which included the *New York Age*, the *Washington Colored American*, *Alexander's Magazine* and the Washington *Bee*—see Brisbane, op. cit., p. 38), and had resort to more insidious methods: "Washington began plotting the destruction of the Niagara Movement from the very day of its inception. He planted spies and informers within the group and actually sought to encourage dissension and division. And through the use of his considerable influence over the editors and publishers of Negro newspapers, he was able to effectuate at least a partial blackout of news of the Niagara Movement within the Negro press." Ibid., p. 41. Du Bois characterized the method of the Tuskegee-fronted structure of domination "monstrous and dishonest." Du Bois, *The Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 247.

46. Du Bois, *The Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 238. Some of the care with which Washington and his image were treated by American capitalism is apparent in most biographies of the man, generally inserted as a demonstration of influence over the capitalists who subsidized him! They made certain that a steady stream of publications, lectures, and letters were seen to come from his hand by subsidizing "ghost writers"; Carnegie insured an income for life for Washington and his third wife; and they set beside him as his personal secretary, Emmett Scott, a man schooled in Black political patronage. See Bontemps, op. cit., and Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1972. That their solicitousness with respect to Washington as an instrument of domination of the Black petit bourgeoisie intelligentsia was substantially well placed is perhaps proven by the directions taken by the next generation of that strata. Twelve years after Washington's death in 1915, Black students were in revolt at Negro institutions of higher education. See Brisbane, op. cit., pp. 101–11. By the 1930s, the scientist, George Washington Carver, the "folk saint" of Tuskegee and a large part of the substantiation of Washington's rationalizations on race, was embittered enough by his experiences in the South and elsewhere in the country to send some of his best students to the Soviet Union and prescribe poisons for radical activist friends who might use them as the less painful death in confrontation with white mobs. Linda O. Hines, "White Mythology and Black Duality: George W. Carver's Response to Racism and the Radical Left," *Journal of Negro History* 62, no. 2 (April 1977): 134–46.

47. "Populism had put in the minds of blacks certain higher expectations of life, and these could not be beaten out by the boots of any Secret Nine or Red Shirts or other terrorist groups. Incorporated into the blacks' past by 1900 were not only the heady power given to them and protected for them by Reconstruction governments but the more sober experience of Populism. In the Populist movement black people got a sense of being equal participants in the political process, rather than mere recipients of federal favors; of gaining their ends by the power of the vote. Numbers of blacks had worked and socialized with white people of similar interests on a level of relative equality if not actual integration; had had the experiences of organizing and campaigning, of committee work, party politics, national conventions; of listening to and talking and reading about advanced economic ideas such as co-operatives and unions. They could not have come out of the movement unchanged in their hopes and goals." Florette Henri, *Black Migration*, Anchor Press, Garden City, 1976, pp. 10–11. For Populism, see Zinn, op. cit., pp. 280–89; Henri, op. cit., pp. 3–12; and C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1963.

48. See Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, pp. 106–8.

49. "In the 1880s, when data on lynching were first collected, reports showed more whites lynched than blacks; the figures for lynch victims from 1882 to 1888 showed 595 whites and 440 blacks. By 1889 the trend had reversed, and in the 1890s lynching of blacks soared as the ultimate expression of Jim Crow [segregation]" Henri, op. cit., p. 43. Henri continues, "Figures . . . show that of all Negroes lynched between 1889 and 1941, less than 17 per cent were even charged with rape. Murder and felonious assault were the most usual charges . . . with rape the second most frequent. Among other offenses for which blacks were lynched were . . . insulting a white woman, writing to or paying attention to white women, proposing to or eloping with a white woman . . . testifying in court for another black or against a white, practicing voodoo, slapping a child, throwing stones, rioting, introducing smallpox, or disobeying ferry regulations." Ibid. "From 1885 to 1927, according to figures published in the World Almanac, 3,226 Negroes were lynched in the United States. During the same period 1,047 white persons were lynched in the United States. From 1885 to 1889 Negro lynchings ranged from 71 to 95 per year. In 1891, 121 Negroes were lynched. From 1891 until 1895 Negro lynchings ranged from 112 to 155 (1892). Since 1901 there has been no single year in which as many as 100 Negroes were lynched." Scott Nearing, *Black America*, Schocken, New York, 1969 (orig. 1929), p. 206. For the use of racism in the destruction of the Populist movement, see Zinn, op. cit., p. 285; Henri, op. cit., pp. 9–10; and Woodward, *Tom Watson*, op. cit., chaps. 21–23.

50. Henri, op. cit., p. 51.

51. For opposition to the migration from Southern planters hit by the loss of significant portions of their cheap labor force, and for the remonstrations issued by Washington and other Black spokesmen to the migrants that the South was where they were at their "best," see Henri, ibid., pp. 73–79.

52. Trotter and George Forbes, graduates of Harvard and Amherst, respectively, in 1895, began the publication of the Boston Guardian in order to express their opposition to Booker T. Washington. This was in 1901, two years before Du Bois published his first public criticisms of Washington in his *The Souls of Black Folk*. Trotter and Forbes, along with their fellow Bostonians, Archibald Grimké and Clement Mor-

gan, established a formidable opposition to Washington, while in Chicago, the lawyers Ferdinand Barnett and E. H. Morris, and in Philadelphia, the physician Dr. N. F. Mossell, organized groups critical of the Tuskegee program in their communities. (See August Meier, "Radicals and Conservatives—A Modern View," in Logan, op. cit., pp. 42–44. "Meanwhile, at least as early as 1902, Washington had been utilizing his reservoirs of power to silence the opposition. He used personal influence to wean people away from the radicals, attempted to deprive opponents of their government jobs, where possible arranged to have his critics sued for libel, placed spies in radical organizations, employed his influence with philanthropists as an effective weapon in dealings with educators and others, deprived critics of participation and subsidies in political campaigns, and subsidized the Negro press to support him and to ignore or to attack the opposition." Ibid., p. 47. In July of 1903, Trotter and Forbes were finally able to arrange a personal confrontation with Washington at a meeting in Boston. The plan was to heckle Washington with barbed questions, aided by 30 or more others. Apparently the Boston police had been forewarned by Washington's attorney, William L. Lewis, and Trotter was arrested when he stood to address Washington. He was fined $50.00 and sentenced to thirty days in jail. Brisbane, op. cit., pp. 38–39, 253 n. 11. "The news of Trotter's imprisonment, in the summer of 1903, reached Du Bois at Atlanta University, where the latter was conducting classes in sociology. Like Trotter's other friends and followers, Du Bois became incensed. . . . It was here that Du Bois decided to abandon his efforts to improve the Negro's condition by 'Scientific study.' "Direct political and social action was to be the new strategy." Ibid., p. 39. Du Bois gave a similar account of these events; however, he put the events of the Boston meeting in 1905 and managed to suggest that the events that followed—namely the founding of the Niagara movement—were largely at his initiative rather than Trotter's. The Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 248–51. This tendency to reconstruct events with which he had been involved so that they revolved around himself is noted in Geiss (op. cit., pp. 232–33) and Brisbane, (op. cit., p. 253 n. 16). For examples of Trotter's critiques of Washington, see Francis Broderick and August Meier (eds.), Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1965, pp. 25–30.

53. According to Herbert Aptheker, the editor of Du Bois's papers, John Brown was Du Bois's favorite work, though he realized that his first historical monograph, The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870 (Schocken, New York, 1969 [orig. 1896]), was "in the conventional sense," his most scholarly. Aptheker, "The Historian," in Logan, op cit., p. 262. Kelly Miller's assertion that Trotter wove a "subtle net" around Du Bois (see Meier, op. cit., p. 75) may be evidenced in the joint communique that Trotter and Du Bois wrote for the Niagara movement in 1906, when they said of John Brown: "We do not believe in violence, neither in the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob; but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, that willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right." Du Bois, The Autobiography, op. cit., p. 251.

54. "A new theme in the pages of the Horizon and The Crisis was Du Bois's interest in the labor movement and in socialism. At one time he had viewed the white working class as the Negro's 'bitterest opponent.' By 1904 he had come to believe that economic discrimination was in large part the cause of the race problem, and to feel sympathetic toward the socialist movement. Three years later, he was writing favorably of the socialists in the Horizon. Elsewhere he advised the socialists that their movement could not succeed unless it included the Negro workers, and wrote that it was simply a matter of time before white and black workers would see their common economic cause against the exploiting capitalists. Though in 1908 Du Bois did not vote for the socialists because they had no chance of winning, in 1911 he joined the party. In a Marxist exegesis in the concluding pages of The Negro, Du Bois viewed both American Negroes and Africans, both the white workers and the colored races, as exploited by white capital which employed the notion of race differences as a rationalization of exploitation, segregation, and subordination. And he predicted that the exploited of all races would unite and overthrow white capital, their common oppressor." August Meier, "The Paradox of W. E. B. Du Bois," in Logan, op. cit., p. 82.

55. "The present world war is, then, the result of jealousies engendered by the recent rise of armed national associations of labor and capital whose aim is the exploitation of the wealth of the world mainly—outside the European circle of nations. These associations, grown jealous and suspicious at the division of the spoils of trade-empire, are fighting to enlarge their respective shares; they look for expansion, not in Europe but in Asia, and particularly in Africa." Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," in Clarke et al., op. cit., p. 280 (the original essay appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, May 1915, pp. 707–14.

56. See Du Bois, "Judging Russia," The Crisis 33 (February 1927): 189–90. Du Bois visited the Soviet Union in 1926, 1936, 1949, and 1959, visiting the Asian republics in his second and last trip. He was always critical of anti-Soviet propaganda and seems to have been hopeful that the revolution would succeed until his death. See Du Bois, The Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 29–43; and his criticism of the Nation's "wobblings in the case of Russia" in a letter to Freda Kirchwey, 13 December 1939, in The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, 2, Herbert Aptheker (ed.), University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1976, pp. 202–3.

57. Du Bois's work in the Pan-Africanist movement is best reconstructed by Geiss, op. cit., pp. 229–62; see also Richard B. Moore, "Du Bois and Pan Africa," in Clarke et al., op. cit., pp. 187–212; and C. L. R. James, "W. E. B. Du Bois," in James, The Future in the Present, Allison and Busby, London, 1977, pp. 202–12.

58. In his own treatment of *Black Reconstruction*, Herbert Aptheker, the Marxist thinker most intimate with Du Bois's work, characterized him "as an idealist—philosophically speaking—in key areas of his thinking." Aptheker, "The Historian," op. cit., p. 261. Aptheker seemed to believe that Du Bois came too late to the works of Marx and Lenin for them to have had a profound impact on his conception of history. George Streator, described by Aptheker as a leader in the student strike at Fisk University in 1925 who later was asked by Du Bois to join him on the staff of *The Crisis*, was one of Du Bois's most informed critiques on the Black Left. Streator wrote a number of scathing letters to Du Bois in 1935 on the subjects of Marxism and the capabilities of the Black middle class. See Aptheker (ed.), *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois*, op. cit., 2:86–96. Streator wrote in 1941, according to Francis Broderick, "that he doubted that 'with all his talents Du Bois ever did more than turn to those vivid pages where Marx hammered with telling effect against the English society that gained its wealth through the African slave trade. All the rest to Du Bois was just so much Hegel, and I doubt that Du Bois did much to Hegel when he was a student in Germany.' " Broderick, op. cit., p. 148 note. Certain passages in *Black Reconstruction* might appear to confirm Aptheker's assessment (e.g., "The political success of the doctrine of racial separation, which overthrew Reconstruction by uniting the planter and the poor white, was far exceeded by its astonishing economic results," p. 700); but a close reading of the study and the fact that Du Bois taught seminars on Marx in 1904 and 1933 and was himself a student of German philosophy would seem to discredit Streator's criticisms. See Aptheker (ed.), *The Correspondence*, op. cit., p. 76; Broderick, op. cit., p. 148; and Eugene C. Holmes, "W. E. B. Du Bois: the Philosopher," in Clarke et al., op. cit., p. 79. In deference to Aptheker, whose interpretations of Marx have also come under attack (see Paul Buhle, "American Marxist Historiography, 1900–1940," *Radical America*, November 1970, pp. 5–35; and James O'Brien et al., " 'New Left Historians' of the 1960s," *Radical America*, November 1970, pp. 83–84), *Black Reconstruction* is hardly an idealist exercise in historiography. In the work, and on innumerable occasions, Du Bois stresses the underlying economic bases for the dismantling of the experiment in reconstruction and for the reconciliation between industrial capitalists and the southern agrarian capitalists who commanded labor and land in the antebellum period. The racial consciousness that prevented the development of democratic structures in America had begun as a concomitant to the slave system but ultimately acquired the character of a material force. But all along, it was economic forces that led to the unification of the nation's ruling classes: "It was not, then, race and culture calling out of the South in 1876; it was property and privilege, shrieking to its own kind, and privilege and property heard and recognized the voice of its own." (*Black Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 630.)

59. The notion of American exceptionalism or "Americanism" emerged in the American Communist Party in the late 1920s as an explanation for the party's failures to attract a large following among American workers. The weakness of the party was attributed to the fact that unlike European capitalism, as Eugen Varga termed it, American capitalism was "still healthy." Since the "United States was an exception to the rule of capitalist decline," the Communist International's Eighth Plenum in 1927 suggested it "expected no great rise of the revolutionary labor movement 'in the nearest future.' " Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, Viking Press, New York, 1960, pp. 270–72.

60. Du Bois's lecture at the Rosenwald Conference was substantially reproduced in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 May 1933, pp. 2–3. C. L. R. James made a similar point while discussing direct democracy before a Trinidadian audience in 1960. In contrasting the modern world with Athens during its democratic period some 2000 or more years ago, James argued: "Athens was divided into ten tribes or divisions, and every month they selected by lot a certain number of men from each division. . . . And these went into the government offices and governed the state for that month . . . I doubt if you could take thirty or forty people today from anywhere and put them into some government, however small it might be, and ask them to run it. It is not because government is so difficult. The idea that a little municipality, as we have them all over the world today, would have more difficult and complex problems than the city of Athens is quite absurd. *It is that people have lost the habit of looking at government and one another in that way. It isn't in their minds at all.*" James, "What We Owe to Ancient Greece," in *Modern Politics*, bewick/ed, Detroit, 1973, p. 4.

61. Du Bois, op. cit.

62. In a letter to George Streator on 24 April 1935, Du Bois asserted: "I am convinced from wide contact with the working people of the United States, North, East, South and West, that the great majority of them are thoroughly capitalistic in their ideals and their proposals, and that the last thing that they would want to do would be to unite in any movement whose object was the uplift of the mass of Negroes to essential equality with them. . . . I regard with astonishment militarists who agitate against violence; and lovers of peace who want the class revolution immediately. It is quite possible that there have been times in the world when nothing but revolution made way for progress. I rather suspect that that was true in Russia in 1917. I do not think that it is true in the United States in 1935. But whether it is true or not, Negroes have no part in any program that proposes violent revolution. If they take part, they will make the triumph for such a program more difficult, and they will bring down upon the mass of innocent Negroes, the united vengeance of the white race. The result would be too terrible to contemplate. I am, therefore, absolutely and bitterly opposed to the American brand of communism which simply aims to stir up trouble and to make

Negroes shock troops in a fight whose triumph may easily involve the utter annihilation of the American Negro. I, therefore, attack and shall continue to attack American communism in its present form, while at the same time, I regard Russia as the most promising modern country." Aptheker (ed.), *The Correspondence*, op. cit., pp. 91–92. Streator, in his reply, agreed with Du Bois that "The CP of USA is led by stupid men." But, he continued, "it is nevertheless a working man's organization." He suggested Du Bois take more care in the future: "You attack American Communism, but you do not send any of your students out of Atlanta fired with the determination to work in the labor movement which you have talked about but never studied." "I can also attack the American Communist Party—get the distinction—but I can do my part in building the labor movement and in fighting Jim Crow in the labor movement." Streator to Du Bois, 29 April 1935, ibid., pp. 95, 94.

63. Du Bois's resignation from the NAACP and the editorship of *The Crisis* in 1935 was precipitated by his difficulties with the organization's executive secretary, Walter White, a man Du Bois did not trust or like. The substance of the quarrel, however, went far beyond personalities or administrative quirks. One factor was the impact that the emergence of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) as a mass organization had on Du Bois's thinking. As a spokesman for the NAACP, Du Bois had been critical, sometimes viciously so, of the leadership of the UNIA. (See his "Marcus Garvey and the NAACP," *The Crisis*, 35, February 1928, p. 51, cited in D. Walden (ed.), *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Crisis Writings*, op. cit., pp. 307–10). But even in the early 1920s, Du Bois was receptive toward the UNIA program: "[S]horn of its bombast and exaggeration the main lines of the Garvey plan are perfectly feasible. What he is trying to say and do is this: American Negroes can, by accumulating and administering their own capital, organize industry, join the black centers of the Atlantic by commercial enterprise and in this way ultimately redeem Africa as a fit and free home for black men. This is true. This is feasible." ("Marcus Garvey," *The Crisis* 21 (January 1921): 112–15, cited in Walden, ibid., p. 325.) By the early 1930s, Du Bois had shorn the program of what he took to be its distracting elements and was presenting it as the core of his own program for the economic progress of American Blacks. This "sanitized" version of the UNIA program would prompt Harold Cruse, 30 years later, to remark: Du Bois upheld the idea of a separate black economy as 'not so easily dismissed' because 'in the first place we have already got a partially separate economy in the United States.' Yet he remarked in 1940 that his economic program for Negro advance 'can easily be mistaken for a program of complete racial segregation and even nationalism among Negroes . . . this is a misapprehension.' It seems not to have occurred to Du Bois that any thorough economic reorganization of Negro existence imposed from above, will not be supported by the popular masses unless an appeal is made to their nationalism." Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, William Morrow, New York, 1967, p. 309. It was Du Bois's advocacy of a Black co-operative commonwealth that the leadership of the NAACP opposed. See Broderick, op. cit., pp. 169–75. (For Du Bois's program, see his *Dusk of Dawn*, Schocken, New York, 1968 [orig. 1940], pp. 197–220.) While Henry Lee Moon suggests that Du Bois had fallen back to a position similar to Booker T. Washington's, it is clear that this was not the case since Du Bois was consciously basing his plans on the presumption of the "collapse of capitalism." *Dusk of Dawn*, op. cit., p. 198. (For Moon's characterization, see Moon, op. cit., pp. 28–29.)

64. For the UNIA and the African Blood Brotherhood, see Theodore Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*, Ramparts, San Francisco, 1972 and the forthcoming publication of the Garvey Papers introduced and edited by Robert Hill, UCLA. For the Scottsboro case, see Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968.

65. "Before our leaders can essay this new task they have a vast lesson to learn." "Our professional classes are not aristocrats and our masters—they are and must be the most efficient of our servants." Rosenwald Conference, op. cit.

66. As we shall see, Du Bois argued that the roots of the Depression of the third decade of the twentieth Century were to be found in the responses of white labor to the freeing of the slaves. See *Black Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 30.

67. Rosenwald Conference, op. cit.

68. All quotations from *Black Reconstruction* are taken from the Meridian (the World Publishing Company) edition, 1969.

69. See Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1974, 2:20–29.

70. This is very close to a paraphrase of Marx's description of primitive accumulation in *Capital*, a work to which Du Bois alludes frequently in *Black Reconstruction*.

71. See Philip Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1973*, International Publishers, New York, 1976, pp. 4–16; and Robert Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970.

72. "[T]he white workingman has been asked to share the spoil of exploiting 'chinks and niggers.' It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class, that is exploiting the world; it is the nation, a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor." "Democracy in economic organization, while an acknowledged ideal, is today working itself out by admitting to a share in the spoils of capital only the aristocracy of labor—the more intelligent and shrewder

and cannier workingmen. The ignorant, unskilled, and restless still form a large, threatening, and, to a growing extent, revolutionary group in advanced countries." Du Bois, "The African Roots of War," op. cit., pp. 277, 281.

73. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, according to William Z. Foster (a historian who twice in his life headed the American Communist Party as its General Secretary), "There was much good will between the National Labour Union and the Colored National Labor Union, and if they could not establish closer working unity between Negro and white workers, this was due to their failure to overcome a number of serious obstacles. Chief among these was the NLU failure to combat the employers' Jim Crow policies in industry. The white workers tended to oust Negro workers from the skilled trades, to refuse to work with them in the shops, and to bar them from the trade unions. This white chauvinist trend which was to wreak such havoc in the labor movement in later decades, was already manifest among unions in the NLU." Foster, The Negro People in American History, International Publishers, New York, 1954, p. 351. A journalist observing the 1869 convention of the NLU wrote: "When a native Mississippian and an ex-confederate officer, in addressing a convention, refers to a colored delegate who has preceded him as 'the gentleman from Georgia' . . . when an ardent and Democratic partisan (from New York at that) declares with a rich Irish brogue that he asks for himself no privilege as a mechanic or as a citizen that he is not willing to concede to every other man, white or black . . . then one may indeed be warranted in asserting that time works curious charges." Quoted by Zinn, op. cit., pp. 236–37. See also Foner, Organized Labor and the Black Worker, op. cit., pp. 30–63 for the history of NLU, the CNLU, the Knights of Labor and other unions; and Herbert Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America," in Julius Jacobsen (ed.), The Negro and the American Labor Movement, Anchor Books, Garden City, 1968, pp. 119–20.

74. See Du Bois, "Organized Labor," in Julius Lester (ed.), The Seventh Son, op. cit., 2:301–2. The editorial originally appeared in The Crisis, July 1912.

75. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The German Ideology, in Robert C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader, W. W. Norton, New York, 1972, p. 128.

76. See Richard Lichtman, "The Fascade of Equality in Liberal Democratic Theory," Socialist Revolution, January 1970, pp. 85–126.

77. In 1925, one Black Marxist took stock of his society: "The slow growth of Marxism among negroes has been wholly due to the inability both of the social democrats and the Communists to approach the negro on his own mental grounds, and to interpret his peculiar social situation in terms of the class struggle. To-day the American negro has evolved his own bourgeoisie, even though as yet but petty. And more and more the lines sharpen in the conflict between the white and black bourgeoisies. The negro petty bourgeoisie rallies the negro masses to him in his struggle against the more powerful white bourgeoisie, and the negro masses are permeated with the belief that their social degradation flows from the mere fact that they are markedly of a different race, and are not white. . . . The negro is revolutionary enough in a racial sense, and it devolves upon the American Communist Party to manipulate this racial revolutionary sentiment to the advantage of the class struggle." James Jackson, "The Negro in America," Communist International, February 1925, p. 51. This was not the James E. Jackson who was active in the American Communist Party in the 1940s and later, and who edited The Daily Worker, for a time; this was L. Fort-Whiteman, described by the editors of the Communist International as "an emigrant [presumably to Great Britain] of the oppressed negro race." Ibid., p. 53. George Streator put the same thought to Du Bois, but much more simply: "There is no such thing as a Negro loving his race in the matter of capital investment and profit." 8 April 1935, in Aptheker (ed.), The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois, op. cit., 2:90.

78. Rosenwald Conference lecture, op. cit.

79. During the first decade after the Russian Revolution, the crises confronting the Soviet Union and the world Communist movement were dramatized by leadership struggles in Russia and in the Comintern's national parties. In Russia, Lenin's long and increasingly incapacitating illness, and finally his death (1924) released the brake: "Although factions had existed in Lenin's lifetime, these had been transitory and their members had frequently changed sides. [By 1925] the emerging alignment represented hardened positions based on conflicting programs and slogans and was unresponsive to compromise or individual maneu-ver. . . . Above all, the sharp division among Russian leaders stemmed from the policy decisions, on socialism in one country and the interpretation and implementation of NEP. . . . Within the Politburo Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky assumed the left position Bukharin, Aleksei Rykov, and Mikhail Tomsky, the right; and Stalin, the center, although he invariably allied himself with the right." Helmut Gruber, Soviet Russia Masters the Comintern: International Communism in the Era of Stalin's Ascendancy, Anchor/Doubleday, Garden City, 1974, p. 21. Gruber discusses the policies in question and the political develop-ments, ibid., pp. 20–25, 175–200; see also Fernando Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform, Part I, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1975, pp. 46–102. For the American factions in the leadership struggle, see Benjamin Gitlow, I Confess, E. P. Dutton, New York 1939, pp. 493–570; Theodore Draper, American Communism and Soviet Russia, Viking Press, New York, 1963, chaps. 16, 17, and 18; and for the political destinies of many of the participants, Daniel Bell, Marxian Socialism in the United States, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967, pp. 133–34 n. 220. For Black American Communists and the

leadership disputes, see Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, Liberator Press, Chicago, 1978, pp. 176–91. For examples of the discipline and opportunism shown by many leading Black Communists toward frequent changes in the party's "line" see William Nolan's polemically anti-Communist but often informative work, *Communism versus the Negro*, Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1951, passim; and Harry Haywood, *For a Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question*, Liberator Press, Chicago, 1975.

80. Du Bois mentioned Engels only rarely, and then he seemed to be entirely wedded to the phrase "Marx and Engels," suggesting an earlier critic of whom Marx had complained: "What is strange, is to see how he treats the two of us as a singular: 'Marx and Engels says.'" Letter to Engels, 1 August 1856, cited by S. S. Prawar, *Karl Marx and World Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976, p. 1. Marxist-Leninism, the conventional designation of the Comintern's theories and policies in the post-Lenin period is identified with the dogma and politics of Stalin rather than with Lenin. More recently, it is frequently termed "Stalinism." See Perry Anderson, *Considerations of Western Marxism*, Verso, London, 1979, pp. 19–21.

81. See Georg Lukács, "Class Consciousness," in *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin Press, London, 1971.

82. *The Writings of Leon Trotsky*, Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1964, 6:336.

83. Engels suggested that those who followed him and Marx—the Marxists—were subject to dogma and reductionism. For instance, Engels expressed his exasperation with "economistic" Marxists in his letter to Joseph Bloch in 1890, see Robert C. Tucker, op. cit., p. 642.

84. "The Marxist orthodoxy of the Third Communist International introduced considerable changes in the theory of class among socialists. Instead of deriving its theory from an examination of the actual division of social and technical labor within capitalist production, there was a tendency to regard the working class within a single dimension. The ideal typical revolutionary class was the factory and transportation manual worker, that is, the famous 'industrial working class.' Workers in basic industries, those which produced means of production were the critical base of revolutionary class action since they occupied the central position within the production system." "Part of the difficulty in the Old Left notion of the working class inheres in the broad two-class scheme of Marx himself . . . the concept of the great schism between bourgeois and proletarian constituting the structure of capitalist society found in the Manifesto was abstracted from concrete circumstances and transformed into dogma by the Marxism of both the Stalin era and the Social Democrats alike." Stanley Aronowitz, "Does the United States Have a New Working Class?," in George Fischer (ed.), *The Revival of American Socialism*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971, pp. 188, 189. In the same volume, Paul Sweezy took on those critics of Marx's theory of revolution who "note that the proletariat of what has become the most advanced and powerful capitalist country, the United States of America, has never developed a significant revolutionary leadership or movement." "Workers and the Third World," ibid., pp. 154–68. Sweezy's position was that of these critics and the earlier American Marxists who had relied on industrial workers for revolution had neither read Marx carefully nor realized the true dimensions of capitalism: "In Marx's theory of capitalism, the proletariat is not always and necessarily revolutionary. It was not revolutionary in the period of manufacture, becoming so only as a consequence of the introduction of machinery in the industrial revolution. The long-run effects of machinery, however, are different from the immediate effects. If the revolutionary opportunities of the early period of modern industry are missed, the proletariat of an industrializing country tends to become less and less revolutionary. This does not mean, however, that Marx's contention that capitalism produces its own gravediggers is wrong." "If we consider capitalism as a global system . . . we see that it is divided into a handful of exploiting countries and a much more numerous and populous group of exploited countries. The masses in these exploited dependencies constitute a force in the global capitalist system which is revolutionary in the same sense and for the same reasons that Marx considered the proletariat of the early period of modern industry to be revolutionary." Ibid., p. 168. See also Daniel Bell, op. cit., pp. 106–16.

85. See Franz Borkenau, *World Communism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1971, pp. 64–65, 84–93; and Bell, op. cit., pp. 102–6.

86. See Gruber, op. cit., chaps. 1 and 2; and Borkenau, op. cit., chaps. 6, 7, and 8.

87. This is the more popular rendering of the phrase found in Marx's "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," which began: "Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy." In Tucker, op. cit., p. 23.

88. "International socialism was in fact motivated by conflicting impulses and its policy was characterized by ambiguities which socialists at the time preferred to ignore. They found refuge in short-term solutions and compromises, thereby avoiding the issues that would have forced them to take a stand. 'The International's total inability to oppose the war' had its roots in the organization's many contradictions in the foundations and in the theoretical weaknesses of a preventive strategy that determined the concrete forms of socialist attitudes and policies. Based on the majority's view of imperialism, on an interpretation which the facts belied, the International's pacifist strategy was characterized by marked contradictions: an awareness of new stages in the evolution of capitalism; an appreciation of the immediacy of the threat and a basic optimism as to the outcome of the crisis that ignored the possibility of a universal clash. The

International's activities on the world scene were therefore haphazard and dictated by the seriousness of the crises. Neither the equation 'war = revolution' nor the alternative 'war or revolution' was in the minds of the leaders of the International." "It is impossible to say whether the leaders of the International were the captives of their own myths or whether their reaction was the classical manifestation of that characteristic trait of the Second International: reformist practice screened behind verbal radicalism." Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, London, 1972, pp. 220–21.

89. See Borkenau, op. cit., pp. 161–70. For details on the rules of eligibility for the Comintern, see Nolan, op. cit., pp. 4–5.

90. Nolan, op. cit., p. 4.

91. Nathan Glazer, *The Social Basis of American Communism*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1961, pp. 25–26.

92. Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, Viking, New York, 1963, p. 31.

93. Glazer, op. cit., p. 22.

94. See David Brody, *Steelworkers in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1960, chap. 1. Even the militant Wobblies had difficulty with ethnic loyalties, see Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, Quadrangle/New York Times, New York, 1969, pp. 24–26, and esp. pp. 350–58.

95. Gabriel Almond, *The Appeals of Communism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965, pp. 141–47. Almond's study shared with many of those works written and published in the early 1950s—particularly those included in the Fund for the Republic series edited by Clinton Rossiter (David Shannon's *The Decline of American Communism*; Theodore Draper's *The Roots of American Communism* and *American Communism and Soviet Russia*; Daniel Bell's *Marxian Socialism in the United States*; and Nathan Glazer's *The Social Basis of American Communism*)—a degree of precautionary concern for the extent to which American Jews might be identified with radicalism in the highly repressive ambiance of McCarthyism. George Rawick, who worked as a research assistant for Bell, Glazer and Shannon while employed by the Fund, commented: "Nathan Glazier started with a thesis . . . the attempt of a whole group of people around the American Jewish Committee and elsewhere to so to speak 'clean up' the Red taint from the Jewish community. And that was a particular concern of Professor Glazer, it was a particular concern of Moshe Dechter (?) who worked in the same office, it was a particular concern of Daniel Bell. . . . They started out with a thesis . . . and the politics of that thesis and the politics of the fund for the Republic was very simple: We were going to do on the Liberal and anti-Communist Left, do it ourselves before McCarthy and the others got to do it, so we could prove that we had cleared our own house." "One of the things which constantly went on during this period—much more important than the publishing of the books—is that all the people who worked as part of this project were constantly engaged in the process of rehabilitation of people leaving the Communist Party, including Earl Browder." Interview with Rawick, Winter 1976. Almond's contribution was to transpose political issues into psychodynamic or psychopathic phenomenon. See for instance his treatment of "Alice," pp. 282–84.

96. "The Second Congress of the Comintern issued an ultimatum to force the unification of the American Communist and United Communist parties. When this did not help, the Comintern, in the spring of 1921, sent a delegation to the United States, consisting of Charles E. Scott (the party name of Carl Jansen or Charles Johnson, a Lettish Communist, formerly of Roxbury, Massachusetts), Louis C. Fraina, one of the American delegates to the Second Congress, and Sen Katayama, the Japanese exile who had become a Comintern official. This delegation brought the warring parties together into the Communist party of America in May 1921." Draper, *American Communism*, op. cit., p. 25; see also Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 148–281; for the pre-unification period, see Gitlow, op. cit., chap. 1.

97. "The most startling and significant aspect of the American Communist movement in 1919 was its national composition. For the Communist party, the Russian members represented almost 25 per cent of the total, and the entire East-European membership accounted for over 75 per cent. The English-speaking members represented only 7 per cent with the Michigan group and 4 per cent without it. Though the percentage of English-speaking members was higher in the Communist Labor party, it could not have been very high if 90 per cent of both parties came from the foreign-language federations." Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., p. 190.

98. In the late 1930s, Gitlow, one of the founding members of the American Communist movement and a "Communist candidate for Vice-President of the United States in 1924 and 1928," would write: "The determination of the Russian Federation to control the movement out of Russian nationalist considerations certainly characterized its early phases. When better contact was established with Soviet Russia and the Communist International, the Russian heritage was not cast off, the Party did not become more American, but instead more Russian." Gitlow, op. cit., p. 57.

99. See Bell, op. cit., pp. 108–11; Melech Epstein, *The Jew and Communism*, Trade Union Sponsoring Committee, New York, n.d., pp. 252–53; Arthur Liebman, op. cit., chap. 8; and Glazer, op. cit., chaps. 2, 3, and 4.

100. Florette Henri, op. cit., pp. 63–64; Theodore Vincent, having had some professional experience of

his own with a Black press (the Los Angeles Herald Dispatch), suggested: "[T]he UNIA press was virtually the only free press available to black people in the 1920s and 1930s. Other black publishing concerns were usually tied to white money." Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement*, Ramparts Press, San Francisco, 1972, p. 255.

101. Henri, ibid., pp. 89–90; and Vincent, ibid., p. 36.

102. "For a short time in the early 1920s, the Garveyites held together an unprecedented black coalition which included cultural nationalists, political nationalists, opponents of organized religion (atheists, separatists, or simply reformers), advocates of armed rebellion, pacifists, women's liberation fighters, participants in Democratic and Republican machine politics, a smattering of left-wingers, many who wanted no contact with whites, and a small but significant number who wanted the UNIA to cooperate with integrated civil rights organizations to end discrimination and segregation." Vincent, ibid., p. 20. See also Tony Martin, *Race First*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1976.

103. The modification of capitalism that could be found in the UNIA ranged from retail businesses to co-operatives. Garvey, himself, had strong hostilities toward capitalists on the grande bourgeois scale and often seemed to publicly move toward a tentative commitment to socialism. "Much of Garvey's hold on the masses was due to ideas not very different from some espoused by communists. Despite his firm espousal of the race-first principle, for example, there was a persistent class component to Garvey's thinking. As against the white race, he saw the need for intraracial solidarity but within the race he demonstrated quite clearly that he identified with the oppressed masses against those with pretensions to more exalted status." Tony Martin, op. cit., p. 231.

104. "Garvey was exceedingly pessimistic about the future of the heavily outnumbered black man in the western hemisphere. Beyond the boundaries of the mother continent, he could see only "ruin and disaster" for his people. Consequently, he asked that Africa's scattered and abused children be restored to her. Garvey claimed that the 'legitimate, moral and righteous home of all Negroes' was Africa, but he did not favor an immediate wholesale exodus from the New World. . . . Not all blacks were wanted in Africa anyway. 'Some are no good here and naturally will be no good there.' Unwanted were the indolent and dependent." Robert Weisbord, *Ebony Kinship*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1973, pp. 55–56.

105. Weisbord has indicated, in part, the extent to which the American and British governments colluded to destroy the UNIA's influence among Black Americans, inhabitants of the West Indies and Africa. Ibid., pp. 57–82. Robert A. Hill in discussions with this author has traced J. Edgar Hoover's sly obsession with the emergence of a "Black messiah" to his acquaintance with the UNIA in the 1920s. Hoover, as a young bureaucrat in the Department of Justice was instrumental in delaying Garvey's return to the United States from Central America in 1922.

106. Until quite recently, the most serious work on the UNIA and other Black radical movements during the 1920s and 1930s was done by governmental agents: "There are two anthologies of black radical publications of the World War I period; ironically, they were both compiled by right-wing government agents. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer's 'Radicalism and Sedition among the Negroes as Reflected in Their Publications' was published in 1919; and 'Revolutionary Radicalism: A Report of the Joint Legislative Committee of New York Investigating Seditious Activities' appeared in 1920." Vincent, op. cit., p. 254.

107. According to Weisbord, Du Bois may have gone a bit further in his opposition to Garvey. Garvey suspected Du Bois had helped to sabotage the relations between the UNIA and the Liberian regime. Weisbord suggests that this might have been the case, and that Du Bois may have been acting on behalf of both the American and British governments. Weisbord, op. cit., pp. 70–72.

108. Quoted in Jervis Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1973, p. 132.

109. Claude McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1968 (orig. 1940), p. 143.

110. Vincent, op. cit., p. 19. Martin's work, *Race First*, has already been cited. Robert A. Hill, editor of the Marcus Garvey Papers at UCLA, is currently preparing the publication of what should stand as the definitive collection of UNIA documents.

111. For the Brotherhood, see Vincent, op. cit., pp. 74–85 and passim; Martin, op. cit., pp. 237–46; Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 322–32; and Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, op. cit., pp. 148–49; Draper and Vincent, though both were in personal contact with Briggs give different birthplaces for him—Nevis and St. Kitts, respectively. Theman Taylor's unpublished biography of Briggs (1981) should clarify several such discrepancies.

112. See Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 122–31.

113. Vincent, op. cit., pp. 75–76.

114. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., p. 324.

115. Ibid., p. 506 n. 26.

116. Though the identity confusion of the early period of the Brotherhood ultimately came to be resolved through its "Race Catechism" (see Vincent, op. cit., pp. 46–47) and the CPUSA's "Black Belt Thesis," other contradictions, specifically programmatic ones, persisted. Briggs, himself, represents an interesting instance of the individual significance of the social contradictions of the United States and the West Indies.

Briggs was phenotypically European. Though once he and Garvey became political enemies Garvey would accuse Briggs of being a white men "passing" for a Black, this ironically was put to some good use by the UNIA. "Passing" as white, Briggs bought a ship for the UNIA in 1924. This was a part of an attempt by Briggs to reconcile the UNIA, the Brotherhood, and the CPUSA. This was three years after the Brotherhood had been expelled from the UNIA by convention vote. Briggs, reportedly, was quite sensitive about his complexion, which may account, in part, for his severe speech impediment and the difficulty he encountered earlier in locating a people with which to identify. Theodore Vincent described the Brotherhood as the "first left-wing Black nationalist organization and one of the first organizations to consider seriously a separate Black republic in the Southern United States." Ibid., p. 74. Draper, on the other hand, characterized it as "a small propagandist organization typical of the 'New Negro' period." *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., p. 325. These are fundamentally different reconstructions. For example, Vincent begins his identification of the Brotherhood with a long description of its role in the 1921 race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He stresses the role that the organization played in defending the Black community of that city and the pride with which the Brotherhood identified its participation in late 1921. (The ABB at first seemed to deny any role: "The African Blood Brotherhood, which is believed by the authorities in Tulsa, Okla. to have fomented the race riot in that city, yesterday issued a formal statement denying that this organization or members of its Tulsa branch were in any way the aggressors in that Tulsa disturbances.... 'An article in *The Times* of June 4 implies responsibility on the part of the African Blood Brotherhood for the unfortunate bloody occurrences in Tulsa, Okla. This organization has no other answer to make save to admit that the African Blood Brotherhood is interested in having negroes organized for self-defense against wanton attack.' " *The New York Times*, 5 June 1921, p. 21. Then, according to Vincent, several months later the ABB began to appeal to prospective members on the basis of its role: "What Other Organization Can Match That Brave Record?" Vincent, op. cit., p. 75. Draper, to the contrary, argues that the ABB "attracted national attention once in 1921 when it was falsely charged with responsibility for starting the " 'race riots' in Tulsa, Oklahoma." Draper, ibid., p. 325. Draper finds it difficult to accept evidence of the Brotherhood's involvement in active struggle as opposed to propaganda. He goes on to describe the programs and aims of the Brotherhood: "a liberated race; absolute race equality—political, economic, social; the fostering of race pride; organized and uncompromising opposition to Ku Kluxism; rapprochement and fellowship within the darker masses and with the class-conscious revolutionary white workers; industrial development; higher wages for Negro labor, lower rents; a united Negro front." Ibid. This catalogue of purposes, however, does not make clear the emphasis found within the ABB for the establishment of a Black nation. Nor does it clarify the role that Briggs's notion of self-determination played in the formulation of nationalism in the American Communist Party.

117. Draper, ibid., p. 323.

118. For Thorne, see Robert A. Hill, "Zion on the Zambezi: Dr. J. Albert Thorne, 'A Descendant of Africa, of Barbados,' and the African Colonial Enterprise: The 'Preliminary Stage,' 1894–97," paper presented at the *International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain*, Institute of Education, University of London, 28–30 September 1981.

119. See Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 123–24: "They espoused 'economic radicalism,' an oversimplified interpretation of Marxism which, nevertheless enabled them to see the economic and social roots of racial subjugation. Historically, theirs was the first serious attempt by Blacks to adopt the Marxist world view and the theory of class struggle to the problems of Black Americans."

120. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 328, 508 n. 42.

121. Ibid., pp. 343–46.

122. *Martin*, op. cit., p. 239.

123. Tony Martin discusses Garvey's reaction to the report of Lenin's death in January 1924: "Garvey's first response was a telegram to the all Soviet Congress which said in part, 'To us Lenin was one of the world's greatest benefactors. Long life to the Soviet Government of Russia.' This was followed by a lengthy speech at Liberty Hall entitled, 'The Passing of Russia's Great Man,' in which he called Lenin 'probably the greatest man in the world between 1917 and the hour of 1924 when he breathed his last.' He expressed the view also that the whole world was destined ultimately to assume Russia's form of government. He presumed that the UNIA's message of condolence would be treated with respect, even though 'unfortunately, we have not yet sent an ambassador to Russia.' He explained that Lenin represented the class that comprised the majority of mankind." Martin, op. cit., p. 252. For Garvey's antipathy toward American Communists, see ibid., pp. 253–65.

124. See Milton Cantor, *The Divided Left: American Radicalism, 1900–1975*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1978, p. 30; Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 315–16. R. Laurence Moore summarized the history of American socialism and Blacks in the early period: "American socialists at the turn of the century appeared ready to champion the cause of economic and social justice for Negroes when all other elements in American society were turning increasingly against the former slaves." "Unhappily what happened subsequent to the 1901 convention quickly called this progressive and brave commitment into question. The Negro resolution [of 1901] which to many in the party seemed a natural declaration for

an organization dedicated to the brotherhood of all workers was never reaffirmed. At the 1904 convention the party rejected attempts to write a similar document; and through 1912, the year the socialists mustered their greatest strength in a national presidential election, the Negro problem was not again even discussed on the floor of a national convention." Moore, "Flawed Fraternity—American Socialist Response to the Negro, 1901–1912," *The Historian* 32, no. 1 (November 1969): 2–3. Draper's summary of the early American Communists and Blacks is almost identical: "The Negroes counted least of all in the early Communist movement. Not a single Negro delegate seems to have attended either [the Communist or Communist Labor parties' conventions]. So little was the Negro problem in the Communist consciousness that the Communist Labor program had nothing at all to say about it. The Communist party's program connected the 'problem of the Negro worker' with that of the unskilled worker. The basic analysis was inherited from the Socialist movement: 'The Negro problem is a political and economic problem. The racial oppression of the Negro is simply the expression of his economic bondage and oppression, each intensifying the other.' The American Communists did not depart from this traditional Marxist attitude until the next decade. In this area, as in so many others, the American Communists at first followed in the footsteps of the historic Left Wing." Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., p. 192.

125. The most analytically imaginative treatment of this issue is Harold Cruse's, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, William Morrow, New York, 1967, pp. 147–70. Cruse argues that in the first three decades of the movement, the party's most successful period, ethnic nationalism defeated the attempt at Americaniza-tion: "It evidently never occurred to Negro revolutionaries that there was no one in America who possessed the remotest potential for Americanizing Marxism but themselves. Certainly the Jews could not with their nationalistic aggressiveness, emerging out of Eastside ghettos to demonstrate through Marxism their intellectual superiority over the Anglo-Saxon *goyim*. The Jews failed to make Marxism applicable to anything in America but their *own* national-group social ambitions or individual self-elevation. As a result, the great brain-washing of Negro radical intellectuals was not achieved by capitalism or the capitalistic bourgeoisie, but by Jewish intellectuals in the American Communist Party" (p. 158). As Cruse, himself, suggests, Melech Epstein, a leading Jewish intellectual in the movement from the 1920s to 1939 (see Glazer, op. cit., pp. 205–6 n. 86), inadvertently confirms Cruse's reconstructions, see Epstein, op. cit., chaps. 30 and 31. Arthur Liebman also complements Cruse's views: "The attitudes and values that Jews and non-Jews held about themselves and each other, on the whole, proved to be significant impediments to the development of a 'successful' Left in the United States. Given the long-engrained tradition of ethnic antagonisms in a society where ethnic communities were and continue to be placed in the roles of rivals for scarce and desirable goods, services, and positions, no political movement in this country could be free from the debilitating tensions emanating from these ethnic rivalries. The problem of the Left was greatly exacer-bated in this regard because of the highly prominent and visible role of the Jews within it. The vicious cycle of anti-Semitism and Jewish chauvinism and defensiveness, divisive element emanating out of America's cultural and political history, proved to be especially onerous burdens for the Left in America." Liebman, op. cit., pp. 534–35.

126. See James Jackson (Lovett Fort-Whiteman), op. cit., p. 52. George Padmore was still using the phrase "Zionism" to refer to the UNIA when he wrote *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, op. cit., pp. 65–82. For Jews in the early American Communist Party, see Glazer, op. cit., pp. 42, 147–48; Liebman, op. cit., pp. 58–60; Gitlow, op. cit., pp. 157–61; and Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 188–93.

127. See Tony Martin, op. cit., pp. 249ff.

128. "Lenin was a mere name which had appeared so infrequently in the American Socialist press that scarcely a handful of non-Russians would have been able to identify him." "Lenin's name seems to have been mentioned for the first time in America in an article on 'The Evolution of Socialism in Russia' by William English Walling in the *International Socialist Review* of July 1907 . . . But Walling was far ahead of his time, and Lenin dropped completely out of sight for several more years. The next time, in the *New Review* toward the end of 1915, Lenin was listed as one of the signatories of the Zimmerwald Manifesto. Some excerpts from the pamphlet *Socialism and War* by Lenin and Zinoviev were published in tale *International Socialist Review* of January 1916, with favorable comment. It seems likely that this was the first American publication of anything written by Lenin." Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 72–73. "The earliest meeting of Lenin with an American of which we have any knowledge is the one in 1905 with Arthur Bullard, a journalist." "There is evidence in the Lenin archives in Moscow that would indicate that many other American workers had heard of Lenin and his activities before 1917. On December 1, 1913, the editorial board of *Appeal to Reason*, the *biggest* Socialist newspaper ever published in the United States, sent Lenin '16 two-page leaflets and eight 32-page pamphlets [which] comprise our list of publica-tions to date.' A working-class club in New York City, on March 30, 1914, sent 'the sum of 1437 kronen and 90 heller ($292.61), which is a contribution from the Workmen's Circle to the Russian Social-Democratic Party (Bolshevik)' to Lenin, then in exile in Cracow, Poland. Late in 1915, the Socialist Propaganda League, a left-wing group in Boston, sent Lenin a copy of its manifesto." Foreword from Daniel Mason and Jessica Smith (eds.), *Lenin's Impact on the United States*, reprinted in Philip Bart et al. (eds.), *Highlights of A Fighting History: 60 Years of the Communist Party, USA*, International Publishers, New York, 1979, p. 342.

129. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., p. 321.

130. V. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder, Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967, 3:351.

131. For the context of Lenin's retreat from theory, see Claudin, op. cit., pp. 46–102; Roger Pethybridge, *The Social Prelude to Stalinism*, Macmillan Press, London, 1977, pp. 40ff; and Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 248–51. See also Almond, op. cit., pp. 27ff, for an antagonistic appraisal of the pamphlet as a party manual.

132. V. Lenin, *The State and Revolution, Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1969, 3:281.

133. See V. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," *Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, pp. 41–47.

134. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism*, op. cit., p. 350.

135. *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International, July 12, 1921*.

136. See Alfred Meyer, *Leninism*, Praeger, New York, 1962, passim; and Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism*, Oxford University Press, London, 1934, and especially the introduction to the French edition by Georges Haupt, Grasset, Paris, 1967.

137. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 320–21.

138. Claude McKay, *A Long Way from Home*, Harcourt Brace and World, New York, 1970 (orig. 1937), p. 177.

139. See McKay, ibid., p. 180; and Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 25, 67, 165–66.

140. Rose Pastor Stokes, "The Communist International and the Negro," *The Worker*, 10 March 1923. For Stokes, see Vincent, op. cit., p. 82 note.

141. Stokes, ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. See Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 66–67, 217.

144. Jane Golden died on the day of Haywood's arrival in Moscow. Ibid., pp. 153–55.

145. Ibid., pp. 229–30.

146. For Nasanov, see Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 170, 344–50; for Katayama and Nasanov in Russia, see Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 218–19. For Haywood's early opposition to Black nationalism, see ibid., pp. 134–38.

147. Draper, ibid., p. 349.

148. George Charney could recall that even in the late 1940s, the question was still unresolved in some party circles: "The debate at the conference was animated, especially on the part of a number of young Negro intellectuals who had emerged into recent leadership. They were men of brilliant capabilities, trained in the youth movement in the South, some of them war veterans who, stationed in India, had become avid students of its struggle for national independence. They spoke eloquently in support of the doctrine of self-determination. They used Stalin's 'classic' on the national question as their authority, as had Harry Heywood (*sic*), Cyril Briggs, and others who had represented the first Negro cadre in the party a generation ago. We never fully resolved whether this thesis originated in the Comintern and was applied to the U.S., or whether it was originally inspired by the early Negro nationalist groupings in the party and grudgingly accepted by the Comintern." Charney, *A Long Journey*, Quadrangle, Chicago, 1968, p. 193.

149. Pogany is consistently portrayed as an opportunist whose enunciation of the Comintern's "self-determination" fine was the first inkling of the position the American Party received in 1928. Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 256–68; and Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 347–49. The phrase, however, was implied by William Z. Foster in his *Toward Soviet America*, Hyperion Press, Westport, 1932, pp. 300–306.

150. Unrepentant Zionists like Melech Epstein found this intolerable; see Cruse, op. cit., pp. 164–68.

151. Marx and Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe*, Paul Blackstock (ed.), Free Press, Glencoe, 1952, pp. 99–100.

152. Engels, *The Role of Force in History*, International Publishers, New York, 1977, pp. 29–30.

153. See Chapter 1 for Marx and Engels on nationalism.

154. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 349–50.

155. J. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," cited in Draper, ibid., p. 344.

156. Draper, ibid., p. 355; and Haywood, *For a Revolutionary Position on the Negro Question*, op. cit., passim.

157. Stalin was a Georgian, and, according to Isaac Deutscher, began the development of his political consciousness as a Georgian nationalist; see Deutscher, *Stalin*, op. cit., p. 6

158. For whatever they are worth, see the figures produced in Glazer, op. cit., pp. 174–75. More useful is the excellent work of Mark Naison.

159. See Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974, pp. 168–69.

160. See Philip Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, op. cit., pp. 6–10.

161. Raphael Samuel, "British Marxist Historians I," op. cit., pp. 22–26.

162. Ibid., p. 23.

163. Perry Anderson, op. cit., pp. 3–4, 50–53.

164. See Claudin, op. cit., passim.

165. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 19–20.

166. Milton Cantor, op. cit., p. 135.

167. Anderson, op. cit., p. 69.

168. See ibid., for one recent treatment of the divergence in Marxian thought. Also note that Anderson has restricted his survey to Western and Central Europe.

169. See Robert Tucker (ed.), *Marx-Engels Reader*, op. cit., for the appropriate references to *The Holy Family* (pp. 104–6); *The German Ideology* (pp. 111–64), and *The Communist Manifesto* (pp. 331–62).

170. See Marx's discussion of the French petit bourgeoisie in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Tucker, ibid., passim.

171. Engels, *The German Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 29.

172. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 611.

173. For Lenin's sense of the peasantry, see George Lichtheim, *Marxism*, Praeger, New York, 1973, p. 334, or Meyer's *Leninism*, op. cit.; for Trotsky, see Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, op. cit., pp. 155–58.

174. Cited in Hamza Alavi, "Peasants and Revolution," *The Socialist Register*, 1965, p. 247.

175. Ibid., p. 249.

176. See Meyer, op. cit., pp. 126–43.

177. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, op. cit., pp. 123–24.

178. Engels, *The German Revolutions*, op. cit., pp. 33, 131.

179. Du Bois, "The Negro and Radical Thought," in Moon, op. cit., pp. 265–68. This essay originally appeared in *The Crisis* as an editorial in July 1921.

180. "The Problem of Problems," address to the Ninth Annual Convention of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 27 December 1917, published in Philip Foner (ed.), *W. E. B. Du Bois Speaks*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1970, p. 266.

181. Du Bois, "Judging Russia," in Moon, op. cit., p. 273; editorial in *The Crisis*, February 1927.

182. "The record of the Negro worker during Reconstruction presents an opportunity to study inductively the Marxian theory of the state. I first called this chapter 'The Dictatorship of the Black Proletariat in South Carolina,' but it has been brought to my attention that this would not be correct since universal suffrage does not lead to a real dictatorship until workers use their votes consciously to rid themselves of the dominion of private capital. There were signs of such an object among South Carolina Negroes, but it was always coupled with the idea of that day, that the only real escape for a laborer was himself to own capital." *Black Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 381 note.

183. Du Bois, "Judging Russia," op. cit., p. 273.

184. Du Bois, "A Pageant in Seven Decades," Convocation, Atlanta University, in P. Foner (ed.), *W. E. B. Du Bois Speaks*, op. cit., pp. 65–66.

185. "Karl Marx and the Negro," in Daniel Walden, op. cit., p. 399; editorial in *The Crisis*, March 1933.

186. "Marxism and the Negro Problem," in Moon, op. cit., p. 292 (orig. appeared in *The Crisis*, May 1933).

187. Alfred Meyer, op. cit., p. 169.

188. The response to *Black Reconstruction* was mixed. (See Jessie Guzman, "W. E. B. Du Bois—The Historian," *Journal of Negro Education* [Fall 1961]: 377–85.) On one side, Du Bois was praised for his lyricism and scholarship and for having written a book that defied description by its grandness. Some of his critics, however, argued it was not history. With the American Communists, the range was more narrow. Abram L. Harris, a Black Marxist sociologist, critiqued Du Bois for an immature application of Marxism as well as for racialism. (See Harris, "Reconstruction and the Negro," *New Republic*, 7 August 1935, pp. 367–68.) Ben Stolberg entitled his review "Black Chauvinism," (*The Nation*, 15 May 1935, pp. 570–71) and would have agreed with Harris on the advisability of instructing Du Bois in Marxism. The official party view was presented by James S. Allen (or Sol Auerbach), for a time the head of International Publishers, the party publishing house. Harold Cruse writes of Allen's reaction: "Between 1932 and 1937, James S. Allen was commissioned to write four books and pamphlets on Negro affairs. The last one was *Reconstruction—The Battle for Democracy*. What inspired this hurriedly written Marxist study was the appearance, in 1935, of W. E. B. Du Bois's classic work on the same period . . . the most definitive study ever to be written on Reconstruction from the Negro point of view. A good part of the foreword to Allen's book is given over to a Marxist criticism of 'Du Bois in his praiseworthy *Black Reconstruction*' and his 'errors.'" *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, op. cit., p. 163. Allen's task was to resurrect the working class movement from the criticisms that Du Bois had voiced in his attempt to analyze that movement's historical weaknesses. Allen's work quickly replaced that of Du Bois within the party nexus. He and others also successfully screened American Marxism from Du Bois's theoretical revisions. (See Paul Buhle's comments in "American Marxist Historiography, 1900–1940," *Radical America*, November 1970, pp. 5–35.) Thus the Left

picked at Black Reconstruction until nothing remained but the narrative of Black legislative achievement. The work of Herbert Aptheker, the leading Communist scholar on Negro Movements, began under this discipline. (See George Charney's comments on Aptheker's made-to-order work on the Hungarian Uprising, Charney, op. cit., p. 295.) The force of Du Bois's work was more than the ideologues of American Marxism required and, on the other hand, more than American academic history could accept. More than two decades would pass before *Black Reconstruction* would again receive serious attention in either circle. By that time, Du Bois was nearing his nineties and the American Communist Party had been reduced to a sect. By the third decade, the shadow of Du Bois lay across American historiography.

Chapter Ten

1. Hollis Lynch, writing while his historical judgment seemed to match that of his subject too closely, opened his study of Edward Blyden with the declaration that: "The nineteenth was probably the most humiliating century in the history of the Negro race." Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1912*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1970, p. 1. Lynch's justification rested on the persistence of the African slave trade "despite the well-intentioned efforts of the British to stop it and the legal prohibitions imposed upon it by European and American nations" (ibid.); and Negro phobia: "[P]erhaps the greatest wrong inflicted on the Negro race in the nineteenth century was the successful building up of a myth that the Negro was inherently inferior to other races" (ibid., pp. 2–3). But even more debilitating to Lynch's comprehension of the period was his consistent belittling of Black resistance. Both the Haitian Revolution and the resistance to the Confederacy by Afro-Americans were submerged in Lynch's mind by fortuitous locations and developments. Of the first, he was satisfied to write: "West Indian Negroes were fortunate in being the first in the New World to gain their emancipation" (ibid., p. 2). And of the second, he claimed: "So entrenched was slavery in the southern United States that it took the Civil War (1861–1865) to bring about its downfall" (ibid., p. 1). Indeed, Lynch's depiction of "the Negro world in the nineteenth century and the making of a race champion," entirely devoid of any reference to collective Black radicalism, revolves around the dilemma of the Black petit bourgeoisie (the "free Negro") during the eras of slavery and the postemancipation. For them, no doubt, the period was an unpleasant one.

2. "It was . . . the absence of a manufacturing infra-structure after Independence, the development of essentially feudal relations in agriculture, the struggles of the peasantry to remain landed and self-subsistent, the growth of a landed rural middle class, the creation of a prebendary state bureaucracy, the inability of any of the dominant warring factions of the ruling class to achieve a decisive and long-lasting political and economic hegemony, and the penetration and dominance of foreign capital, which would seriously block all attempts at the capitalist transformation and development of Haiti during the nineteenth century." Alex Dupuy, "Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Nineteenth Century Haiti," 1981 (unpublished paper).

3. W. David McIntyre, *Colonies into Commonwealth*, Blandford Press, London, 1974, pp. 152–53.

4. For the Morant Bay Uprising in Jamaica in 1865, see Bernard Semmel, *Jamaican Blood and Victorian Conscience*, Houghton Mifflin, Cambridge, 1963; and Peter Abrahams, *Jamaica*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1957, pp. 74–127.

5. McIntyre, op. cit., pp. 169–72; and Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, Viking Press, New York 1978.

6. The Liberal Party, while in power, "had evacuated Afghanistan and the Transvaal, and had abandoned Cordon at Khartoum to a death they refused to avenge. They had gone further and attempted to break up the Empire. They wished to consolidate the Empire by granting the Irish Home Rule." Elie Halevy, *Imperialism and the Rise of Labour, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, Ernest Benn, London, 1961 (orig. 1926), 5:10; see also McIntyre, op. cit., pp. 124–28.

7. Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, Methuen, London, 1974, p. 66.

8. Halevy, op. cit., p. 11.

9. "[A]n entire section of the Liberal leaders, the followers of Lord Rosebery, were imperialists, and during the three years of Liberal government the Foreign Office had pursued an imperialist policy." Halevy, ibid., p. 8.

10. "For the inhabitants of these islands at the beginning of this century the British Empire was for better or worse what Lord Curzon described as 'a great historical and political and sociological fact which is one of the guiding factors in the history of mankind.' Most of them (at least outside Ireland) seem to have thought it to be for the better. . . . They would have been brought up in the nursery on the patriotic verse of Robert Southey and Thomas Campbell. At school their minds would have been moulded by men with the robust and simple-minded patriotism of Charles Kingsley and of William Johnson Cory, that vehement enthusiast who taught so many future members of the ruling class at Eton, not least among them Lord Rosebery and Lord Esher. From schools . . . this generation passed to universities where they came in contact with professors like John Ruskin: Ruskin, who told the audience at his Inaugural Lecture as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford in 1870 that it must be the task of Englishmen 'still undegenerate in race; a

race mingled of the best northern blood,' to 'found colonies as fast and as far as she is able formed of her most energetic and worthiest men;—seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea.' If they were historians, they would be introduced to the works of Carlyle and Froude, who spread the same message." Michael Howard, "Empire, Race and War," *History Today* 31 (December 1981): 5. See also, Brian Street, *The Savage in Literature*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975; Jonah Raskin, *The Mythology of Imperialism*, Delta, New York, 1971; V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Humankind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1969; and Halevy, op. cit., pp. 18–22.

11. Halevy, op. cit., pp. 11–12.

12. "The peons [backwoodsmen of mixed Spanish-Amerindian-African descent from Venezuela], the African immigrants, and the black ex-soldiers, and their descendants, were important groups in the island's peasantry in the nineteenth century. But the peasantry in Trinidad originated with the withdrawal of ex-slaves from the sugar plantations after 1838. Perhaps around 7,000 ex-slaves left the estates to become stallholders. Of these, about five-sixths became owners of between one and ten acres of land, growing chiefly provisions and cocoa, and often giving casual labour to the estates during crop." Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870–1900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p. 138. Brereton's study has been of particular use in the following descriptions of nineteenth-century Trinidad. See also Donald Wood, *Trinidad in Transition: The Years after Slavery*, Oxford University Press (for the Institute of Race Relations), London, 1968, pp. 49ff.

13. The decline of sugar production in Trinidad during the 1840s and 1850s was also attributable to the neglect of the road systems that connected the plantations and ports in western Trinidad. This neglect was connected to the movement of ex-slaves—an attempt by the planters to keep their labor close by. Thirty years after emancipation, the new governor, A. H. Gordon (appointed in 1866) and his surveyor-general were confronted with the results: "During his early excursions Gordon saw at first hand the state of the roads. Everywhere he found neglect. As he was travelling on the main highway to San Fernando a rotten bridge collapsed beneath his party." "Gordon's response was prompt. . . . The Surveyor-General planned an ambitious programme of new roads, not without opposition from some planters who feared that an improvement in communications might drain off labourers from the estates." Wood, op. cit., pp. 268, 269.

14. Ibid., p. 63.

15. Ibid. Brereton reports: "Victorians were preoccupied with the need for 'steady industry,' 'reliable labour,' by the non-white races of the Empire—usually for a European employer. As the London *Spectator* said, steady industry was 'in English opinion, the single virtue, except reverence for white faces, to be demanded of black men.' The 'lazy nigger' myth performed a useful role: it justified the exploitation of black labourers by the planters, and the neglect of independent peasant cultivators by the government." Brereton, op. cit., p. 148.

16. For a fuller treatment of the attempt to recruit immigrant labor from the West Indies, Africa, the United States, and China, see Wood, op. cit., chaps. 4 and 8. Of the liberated Africans, J. J. (Jacob) Thomas (who will be discussed in the text) "listed the principal tribal groups sent to Trinidad as the 'Mandingoes, Foulahs, Houssas, Calvers, Gallahs, Karamenties, Yorubas, Aradas, Cangas, Kroos, Timnehs, Veis, Eboes, Mokoes, Bibis, Congoes.' " Brereton, op. cit., p. 134.

17. See Wood, op. cit., pp. 107–10.

18. Ibid., p. 158.

19. Brereton, "The Experience of Indentureship: 1845–1917," in John La Guerre (ed.), *Calcutta to Caroni: The East Indians of Trinidad*, Longman Caribbean, Trinidad, 1974, p. 32.

20. Ibid., p. 26.

21. J. C. Jha, "Indian Heritage in Trinidad, West Indies," *Caribbean Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 1973): 30. "Conditions like these were part of the fabric of life but the Mutiny depressed them even further. Many of the Bengal army were Brahmins and Rajputs from Oudh and the North-West Provinces; the campaign ebbed and flowed over their homelands and battles were fought in districts which were centres for colonial emigration. Sharp fighting took place, for example, in Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Arrah, and Allahabad; the 17th Native Infantry had risen in Azamgarh in the first months of the troubles; and Cawnpore and Lucknow were bitterly besieged. But worse for the peasantry than pitched battles and the sieges of towns were the mopping-up raids and skirmishes in the villages; for them it was more like an episode in the Thirty Years' War than a disciplined nineteenth-century campaign." Wood, op. cit., p. 148. See also Hibbert, op. cit., for other details of the atrocities committed by the British and the rebellious sepoys.

22. See Jha, op. cit., passim. Hindus dominated Muslims almost 9:1.

23. Extracted from a colonial petition of August 1919, requesting the permanent stationing of a white garrison in Trinidad, and cited by Brinsley Samaroo, "The Trinidad Workingmen's Association and the Origins of Popular Protest in a Crown Colony," *Social and Economic Studies* 21, no. 2 (June 1972): 213.

24. Ibid., p. 206.

25. Wood, op. cit., pp. 152–53. "The *Tazia* procession (Husain or Hose) was the biggest festival in which

Hindus also participated. In fact, from 1850s this festival became the annual demonstration of Indian national feeling which culminated in the Hose Riots of San Fernando in 1884. A big flag is raised at the start of the ceremony and the *tazias* (replicas of the tombs of Hasan and Husain, grandchildren of prophet Mohammed) are led by specially trained moon dancers to the accompaniment of drum beating and 'gatka' (stick) fighting. In the past fire rod dancing was also done, twirling a twelve foot pole with flaming rags secured to either end. Even non-Indians have been taking part in the procession." Jha, op. cit., p. 31. For the attitudes of Afro-Creoles and East Indians toward one another, see Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., pp. 188–90.

26. One prominent member of the colored middle class, Dr. Stephen Moister Laurence wrote in his memoirs concerning the language of British colonials: "When however we analyse the term 'native' in relation to racial origin as well as place of birth, we discover the true explanation of many a mistake made alike by British people in general and the Colonial Office in particular. This special class division must have begun long ago when the East—that is, India—was *the* Colonial possession. Naturally, there were but few English, and these were mostly constantly back and forth, so that the whole Indian people were referred to as natives. This was perfectly correct, because they were both of pure Indian stock and of Indian birth. This justified use of the term 'native' would be extended to the entire East, and also to Africa." "But when one turns to the West Indies the whole question takes on a very different complexion, and calls for handling from a very different angle." "If, instead of presuming that these factors in the West Indies had the same significance or insignificance as in the East, British authorities had acquainted themselves with the difference, then Downing Street [the Secretary of State for the Colonies was once located there as well as the Prime Minister] at least—not to mention religious authorities—would have made fewer mistakes and most likely scored more numerous successes than recorded history has established." "The Trinidad Water Riot of 1903: Reflections of an Eyewitness," edited by L. O. Laurence, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 15, no. 4 (December 1969): 13–14.

27. See Samaroo, op. cit., p. 206.

28. Wood, op. cit., p. 127.

29. Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 148.

30. Ibid., p. 164.

31. Ibid., chap. 8; see also D. V. Trotman, "The Yoruba and Orisha Worship in Trinidad and British Guiana 1838–1870," *African Studies Review*, 19, no. 2 (September 1976): 1–17; and J. D. Elder, "The Yoruba Ancestor Cult in Gasparillo," *Caribbean Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (August 1970) (cited by Brereton).

32. Brereton, ibid., p. 162.

33. Wood, op. cit., p. 136.

34. Ibid., pp. 157–59. "[B]y late 1870s the Indians in Trinidad had some good horses which won prizes in races, and the best kept cows and between 1885 and 1909 they acquired 69,087 acres of land." Jha, op. cit., p. 30; see also Winston Dookeran, "East Indians and the Economy of Trinidad and Tobago," in John La Guerre, op. cit., pp. 69–83 for the persistence of poverty among East Indians.

35. Wood, op. cit., p. 276. These crops were developed by enterprising East Indians early on to substitute for imports of the foods familiar to the Indian diet.

36. See Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., pp. 191–92.

37. Chinese immigration was halted in 1866 by the Kung Convention. See Wood, op. cit., pp. 160–67 for details of the Trinidad episode.

38. "The French Creoles dominated the white Creole elite. These were mainly whites of French descent, but the term was generally understood to include people of English Irish, Spanish, Corsican, and even German descent, born in the island, and almost invariably Roman Catholic. People born in Europe, but resident in Trinidad for many years, and linked by marriage to this group, were also by courtesy considered to be French Creoles." Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 35. Trinidad had served as a receptacle for French emigre aristocrats in the West Indies who fled Haiti and other French possessions in the wake of the French and Haitian revolutions.

39. Ibid., p. 204.

40. See Wood, op. cit., chap. 14.

41. This process is described in Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 47.

42. See Laurence, op. cit.; and Samaroo, op. cit.

43. Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 63.

44. Ibid., p. 86.

45. Ibid., translation mine.

46. Ibid., p. 99.

47. Ibid., p. 97.

48. Wood, op. cit., p. 249.

49. For Thomas's background, see Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., pp. 91–96.

50. Quoted in C. L. R. James, "Discovering Literature in Trinidad: The 1930s," in *Sphere of Existence*, Allison and Busby, London, 1980, pp. 241–42.

51. Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., pp. 94–95.

52. Ibid., pp. 92–97.

53. *Geiss*, op. cit., pp. 176ff. Williams's pan-Africanism was also anticipated in Thomas's experience: "J. J. Thomas wrote in 1889 that he was 'familiar since early childhood with members of almost every tribe of Africans . . . who were brought to the West Indies.'" Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 134. For his enumeration, see note 235.

54. "J. J. Thomas was one of those who expressed strong race pride. He was only too conscious of the extent of self-contempt and self-hatred among his fellow blacks in the West Indies. He saw how the values of white superiority had been internalised, with disastrous results. One factor in this process, in his view, was the education of young West Indians by white teachers. He thought their influence was 'to a very great degree subversive of the national sentiment,' by which he meant racial consciousness." "There were individually brilliant blacks. But there had to be 'some potential agency to collect and adjust them into the vast engine essential for executing the true purposes of the civilised African Race.'" Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., pp. 104, 106.

55. Ibid., p. 94.

56. Both H. Sylvester Williams and R. E. Phipps raised the issue of the place of the West Indian middle classes in the governing of their societies at the Pan-African Conference in London in 1900; Geiss, op. cit., pp. 187, 193.

57. James, *The Case for West-Indian Self Government*, Hogarth, London, 1933, pp. 10–11. Colonial officials, apparently, were not the only ones who might be shocked by the discovery of "civilized" west Indians. Dr. Stephen Laurence observed: "Perhaps the best resume and the most fitting comment on this question is the reply said to have been given to her Majesty Queen Victoria at her Jubilee [in 1897] by the late Mr. Emmanuel Mzumbo Lazare [Emmanuel Mzumbo Lazare, a solicitor and conveyancer, born in Trinidad in 1864], himself of pure African stock: 'Do you speak English in Trinidad?' asked her Majesty. 'Madam in Trinidad we are all English.'" Laurence, op. cit., p. 15.

58. James, ibid., p. 31.

59. Richard Small, "The Training of an Intellectual, the Making of a Marxist," in Paul Buhle (ed.), *C. L. R. James: His Life and Work*, a special issue of *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 13. James's paternal grandfather was the pan boiler, his maternal grandfather, Josh Rudder, was the engine driver. See James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 17–19, 22–25. Both grandfathers had achieved positions normally reserved for whites in the nineteenth century. Rudder, especially, achieved an expertise with locomotives that still put him in occasional demand even in his late retirement. He jealously husbanded his knowledge from whites. On one instance, having performed one of his miracles, James described the old man's reaction. "An enthusiastic crowd, headed by the manager, surrounded Josh, asking him what is was that had performed the miracle. But the always exuberant Josh grew silent for once and refused to say. He never told them. He never told anybody. The obstinate old man wouldn't even tell me. But when I asked him [one] day, 'Why did you do it?' he said what I had never heard before. 'They were white men with all their M.I.C.E. and R.I.C.E. and all their big degrees, and it was their business to fix it. I had to fix it for them. Why should I tell them?'" Ibid., p. 25.

60. Brereton, *Race Relations*, op. cit., p. 134.

61. Ibid., p. 167.

62. Small, op. cit., p. 13.

63. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 25–26.

64. Small, op. cit., p. 13. "The game of cricket, therefore, in a real sense mirrored life in general in West Indian society, where a similar dichotomy existed. Whites were represented in the top echelons of West Indian Society, out of all proportion to their numbers in the population. They led and non-white West Indians were expected to follow. Decisions with respect to who should play, on which grounds test matches in the West Indies should be played, amount of entrance fee for games and hence profits, continued to be made by the whites." Maurice St. Pierre, "West Indian Cricket—A Socio-Historical Appraisal, Part I," *Caribbean Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 1973): 8.

65. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 13. See also J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

66. Samaroo, op. cit., pp. 206–7.

67. For an account of the founding of the British Labour Party during the first three years of the present century, see Halevy, op. cit., pp. 261–81.

68. Samaroo, op. cit., p. 210.

69. McIntyre, op. cit., p. 132.

70. Ibid., pp. 133–34.

71. George Padmore, *Africa and World Peace*, Frank Cass, London, 1972, p. 235. For details of the African and Black troops used by the colonial powers in the nineteenth as well as the twentieth century (until the late 1920s), see Padmore, *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, Sun Dance Press, Hollywood, 1971, pp. 111–20. Elsewhere, Padmore had quoted General Smuts of South Africa on the French use of troops: "*During*

the first year of the war 70,000 black troops were raised in French West Africa. By 1918 Black Africa had furnished France 680,000 soldiers and 238,000 labourers in all. We have seen what we have never seen before, what enormously valuable material lay in the Black Continent." Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, Doubleday, New York, 1972, p. 98.

72. See Padmore, *Negro Toilers*, op. cit., pp. 117–19, for figures. Harry Haywood was a veteran of the French campaigns and describes the experience of Black American troops in France in Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 53–78. See also W. E. B. Du Bois's treatment in "The Black Man in the Revolution of 1914–1918," and "An Essay Toward a History of the Black Man in the Great War," in *The Seventh Son*, Julius Lester (ed.), op. cit., pp. 107–15 and 115–57, respectively.

73. Samaroo, op. cit., pp. 211–12. James was underage but he attempted to volunteer for the war effort (but in the Merchants' and Planters' Contingent): "Young man after young man went in [to the volunteers' office], and I was not obviously inferior to any of them in anything. The merchant talked to each, asked for references and arranged for further examination as the case might be. When my turn came I walked to his desk. He took one look at me, saw my dark skin and, shaking his head vigorously, motioned me violently away." "What matters is that I was not unduly disturbed." James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 40.

74. Samaroo, ibid., pp. 210–11. A more profound interpretation is provided by Fitz A. Baptiste: "The war produced a price spiral for commodities and the British Caribbean, the commodity producer par excellence, tried to cash in on the boom as best they could. Some statistics for Jamaica reveal that, despite the effects by 1917/18 of the British blockade and the German submarine warfare on Allied trade, export values were maintained, even though there were falls in volumes, owing to the general spurt in prices for commodities, especially cocoa and coffee." "While a factor in this was clearly sheer exploitative greed by the merchant categories in the colonial society, a more fundamental cause was the enforced shift of dependence for imports from Britain to the United States and to Canada as the blockade and the Battle of the Atlantic began to register themselves in the Caribbean. . . . The extraordinarily high percentage for imports from the United States [for Jamaica, 67.6 percent] clearly reflected some of the distortions effected by the war and which were still continuing into the post-war years." Baptiste, "The United States and West Indian Unrest: 1918–1939," Working Paper No. 18, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1978, pp. 5–6.

75. Samaroo, ibid., pp. 211–16. "There were disturbances in British Honduras in July 1919 and again in 1920; in Jamaica on two occasions in 1918 and also in 1924; in Trinidad in late 1919/early 1920; in St. Lucia in February, 1920; and in the Bahamas in December, 1922. The list may well be shown to be longer." Baptiste, op. cit., p. 7.

76. See Small, op. cit., p. 16; and W. F. Elkins, "A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: The Revolt of the British West Indies Regiment at Taranto, Italy," *Science and Society* 34 (Spring 1970): 99–103 (cited by Small).

77. Samaroo, op. cit., p. 219; and James, *The Black Jacobins*, op. cit., appendix, pp. 403–4. A very different experience for Blacks in the various theaters of war was their own interaction: the discovery of their mutual oppression. Claude McKay recalled his own experience in London during the war: "One club was for colored soldiers. It was situated in a basement in Drury Lane. There was a host of colored soldiers in London, from the West Indies and Africa, with a few colored Americans, East Indians, and Egyptians among them . . . I went often and listened to the soldiers telling tales of their war experiences in France, Egypt and Arabia. Many were interested in what American Negroes were thinking and writing." McKay, *A Long Way From Home*, op. cit., p. 67.

78. McIntyre, op. cit., pp. 209–10. In his dispatches to Washington, the Acting American Consul, Henry D. Baker, wrote from Port of Spain in December 1919 of the racial concerns he shared with Trinidad's colonial officials: "[M]ention was made of an interview between the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago and the manager of the General Asphalt Company [where a strike was expected and Baker had in place 'a trusted coloured employee'] in the course of which the Governor allegedly stated that the Colonial Government had no confidence in the local police force which was predominantly black and advised the asphalt and oil companies to establish a white militia. As if to show that he meant business, the Governor provided 25 rifles and 11 rounds of ammunition for use by the militia. That by itself, is a remarkable index of the racist reaction of the authorities, backed by the expatriate and local white interests, to what was clearly perceived as a 'black power' movement." Baptiste, op. cit., p. 12. Baker recommended to Washington: "intervention, preferably at the invitation of the British authorities, but, 'in the threatened massacre of white people,' to use his own words in a separate message, without it." Ibid., p. 13.

79. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 71.

80. Ibid., pp. 70–71.

81. Of the many recollections James has published of his friendship with Padmore, perhaps the most poignant is the brief: "[W]e were boys together, and used to bathe in the Arima River, underneath the ice factory." James, "Discovering Literature in Trinidad: The 1930s," op. cit., p. 238, see also James Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, op. cit., pp. 2–3.

82. Hooker, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

83. Ibid., p. 16.

84. Ibid., p. 31.

85. Small, op. cit., p. 17; see also James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 117.

86. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 116.

87. "The ex-British colonials have got to break away from parliamentarism. I did it through becoming a Marxist." Alan J. MacKenzie interview with James, "Radical Pan-Africanism in the 1930s," *Radical History Review* 24 (Fall 1980): 71.

88. Ibid.

89. For the publication of James's first major works including the novel, *Minty Alley*, see Robert A. Hill, "In England, 1932–1938," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 19–27; and E. Elliot Parris, *"Minty Alley,"* ibid., pp. 97–98.

90. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 118–19.

91. See Basil Wilson, "The Caribbean Revolution," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 47–54.

92. Halevy, op. cit., pp. 211–12.

93. Stuart MacIntyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain, 1917–1933*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, p. 23.

94. "This sour creed, imported from abroad, which refused to set before its adherents an ideal which made appeal to the heart but was content to prove by scientific arguments, or what purported to be such, the approach of a complete upheaval of society, at once violent in its methods, and beneficient in its effects, repelled many of those Englishmen who for the past twenty-five years or more [before 1884] had been approaching Socialism by other routes. In agreement with the Marxists to denounce a social order based on the unhappiness of the majority and the war of all against all, they did not share the Marxian interpretation of history. They did not invite the working classes to use violence. The formula of the class war was absent from their vocabulary. Neither Ruskin, the man whose spirit inspired British Socialism, nor William Morris himself, though he professed a species of anarchist Communism, was in the strict sense a revolutionary. England had passed through two revolutions—the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century, the industrial revolution of the eighteenth—and their dark shadow still lay over the land. Without recourse to violence, Socialism must teach the nation the art of being good, and happy, the cult of beauty." Halevy, op. cit., pp. 221–22. Halevy's prejudice is his own, but the fact of the limited impact of Marxism in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is generally established. See, for example, David Smith, *Socialist Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century British Novel*, Macmillan Press, London, 1978, pp. 4–10.

95. See Stanley Pierson, *Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1973, pp. 67–68.

96. Stuart MacIntyre, op. cit., p. 17.

97. For the Fabians, see Pierson, op. cit., pp. 106–39; and Halevy, op. cit., pp. 105–6 for Fabian imperialism.

98. Pierson, ibid., pp. 137–38.

99. Stuart MacIntyre, op. cit., p. 65.

100. Neal Wood, *Communism and British Intellectuals*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1959, p. 23; and MacIntyre, op. cit., pp. 4–11.

101. See L. J. MacFarlane, *The British Communist Party*, MacGibbon and Kee, Worcester and London, 1966, chap. 7.

102. "From the middle of 1924 until the General Strike, the party's membership doubled, largely as a result of its work in the industrial and trade union fields. During the miners' struggle of 1926 membership rocketed to over 10,000, only to start on a decline which became sharper as the party adopted a more and more uncompromising attitude towards the Labour Party and the trade unions. By the end of the twenties the membership had fallen back to 3,200, roughly the same figure as in the period 1922 to mid-1924. The adoption of the 'new line' was the main factor which accelerated the rate of decline after 1928." MacFarlane, ibid., p. 286; see also Wood, op. cit., p. 23.

103. Wood, op. cit., p. 51.

104. Ibid., pp. 27–28.

105. Stuart MacIntyre, op. cit., p. 19; see also Raphael Samuel, "British Marxist Historians I," *New Left Review* 120 (March–April 1980): 23–24.

106. "A British radical intelligentsia, comparable to the long-established continental intelligentsias, did not appear until the nineteen-thirties. In the main British intellectuals had always been Liberal or Conservative. Then between 1928 and 1933 a change occurred in their outlook. Just before the opening of the new decade, G. D. H. Cole sensed 'a disquieting insecurity' among young intellectuals. Their pursuit of pleasure ceased to be satisfying. A new seriousness came to the fore in the place of the former joie de vivre. Increasing attention was given to politics. Whereas sex and aesthetics had been the major topics of conversation, now everybody began to talk politics. As time passed the politics of the intellectual moved leftward to socialism and communism. What began as a political awakening became a great radicalization." Wood, op. cit., p. 37. For the impact of this movement on English historiography, see Eric Hobsbawm,

"The Historians' Group of the Communist Party," in Maurice Cornforth (ed.), *Rebels and Causes*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1978, pp. 21–47.

107. See Stuart MacIntyre, op. cit., pp. 47–65; Alan McKinnon, "Communist Party Election Tactics: A Historical Review," *Marxism Today* 24, no. 8 (August 1980): 20–26, Henry Pelling, "The Early History of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1920–29," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., vol. 8 (1958): 41–57; John Strachey, "Communism in Great Britain," *Current History*, January 1939, pp. 29–31; and Hugo Dewar, *Communist Politics in Britain: The CPCB from its Origins to the Second World War*, Pluto Press, London, 1976, chaps. 7–10.

108. See Folarin Shyllon, "The Black Presence and Experience in Britain: An Analytical Overview," paper presented to the International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain, University of London, 30 September 1981, p. 7; and Geiss, op. cit., p. 201.

109. In the post–World War I years, American and British officials worked closely to orchestrate the access of Black British colonials to the English-speaking metropoles: "According to U.S. immigration records, the United Kingdom used up 43.9 per cent of its quota between 1925 and 1929; 22.6 per cent between 1930 and 1934; and a mere 4.4 per cent in the 1936/40 period. This left room, technically, for considerable emigration to the United States from the British colonies in the Caribbean. However, this never occurred or, to be more direct, was never allowed to happen. Through the issuance of visas, and the requirement of substantial bonds, the United States, with the tacit approval of the British metropolitan and colonial authorities, exercised an extremely tight control over the flow of British West Indians. The result was a sharp decline in the numbers of British West Indians entering the United States after 1925. In comparison to the average of thousands a year up to and including 1924, the average for the rest of the 1920s and for the 1930s became hundreds a year. In 1932, for example, a mere 113 British West Indians entered the United States." Baptiste, op. cit., pp. 19–20. Recall that this was a period of Black political movement in the United States in which West Indians had played prominent parts: that is, the UNIA, the CPUSA, the student movements at Black colleges and universities, the ABB, and so on.

110. See Ian Duffield, "The Dilemma of Pan-Africanism for Blacks in Britain, 1760–1950," paper presented to the International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain, op. cit., pp. 7–8. (Duffield's unpublished doctoral thesis, "Duse Mohamed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism, 1866–1945," Edinburgh University, 1971, is generally accepted as the definitive work on Mohamed Ali Duse.) See also Geiss, op. cit., pp. 226–27.

111. The histories of these organizations have been reviewed in Geiss, op. cit., chaps. 14 and 17; see also Nigel File and Chris Power, *Black Settlers in Britain, 1555–1958*, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1981, pp. 72–77.

112. For Padmore, Chris Jones, and Arnold Ward, see Hooker, op. cit.; and MacKenzie, op. cit.; for Dutt and Saklatvala, see MacFarlane, op. cit.; information on Blackman has been obtained from interviews with him in London, December 1981. Geiss maintains that as early as 1898 the Liberal Party was having discussions about the possibility of a Black man standing for Parliament to represent "the Crown Colonies and Protectorates, West Africa, West Indies, etc. etc." Geiss, op. cit., p. 178.

113. See Geiss, op. cit., pp. 347–53; and Hooker, op. cit., pp. 48–49.

114. The most sympathetic interpretation of the actions taken by Stalin and the Comintern is that the dismantling of much of the propaganda apparatus in support of "world revolution" and national liberation struggles in the colonies was necessary in exchange for trade, entrance into the League of Nations for the Soviet Union, and the establishment of a loose antifascist front of "collective security" with the imperialist and capitalist states. The alternative, it continues, was the prospect of a German war, tacitly approved by those ruling classes in England, France, and America for whom the Sixth Congress of the Comintern had expressed resolute hostility. Padmore, who early in 1933 had spent several months imprisoned by Nazi authorities in Hamburg, either was unimpressed with this rationale (a certain incredulousness was warranted; less than a year later, on January 26, 1934, Stalin, at the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU, dismissed the threat of fascism to the Soviet Union and reminded his party that the USSR had established "the best relations" with fascist Italy. Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, op. cit., 1:176–77), or was no longer capable of loyalty to a world movement led by a leadership characterized by Claudin (who was himself expelled from the Spanish Communist Party in 1965 after 32 years of active membership) as suffering from "a deep-going sickness: atrophy of the theoretical faculties, bureaucratization of the organizational structures, sterilizing monolithicity, unconditional subordination to the manoeuvres of Stalin's camarilla." Ibid., p. 166. Padmore's most credible statement—he was later seldom capable of the "political objectivity" regarding the Soviet Union with which he prided himself here—indicated a "betrayal of the fundamental interests of my people" (Hooker, op. cit., p. 31). Franz Borkenau suggested that a strong contributing factor to the Soviet Union's rapprochement to the imperialist powers were the struggles internal to the Soviet administration, Borkenau, *World Communism*, op. cit., pp. 388–93. Geiss maintains that "most coloured communists or fellow-travellers left the movement" at this time. He cites Padmore, Kouyaute, and Kenyatta as examples, Geiss, op. cit., p. 338. My own research suggests otherwise. Discussions with Afro-American veterans of the Spanish Civil War have indicated that even the

revelation of Soviet aid to Italy during the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia (William Nolan in his *Communism Versus the Negro*, op. cit., pp. 135, 245 n. 90, cites articles in the New *York Times*, 8 and 10 September 1935), did not deter them. James Yates told me: "We didn't get a chance to go to Ethiopia much as many of us would have liked to gone. But when Ethiopia was invaded and Italy overran it, those same troops left there and went to Spain. This was a time and a chance for especially the Blacks to volunteer and get back at the fascists that had invaded Ethiopia." Interview, 26 April 1978, Binghamton. Harry Haywood has maintained the same position. Interview, Spring 1977, Binghamton; and see also his *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 448–49, 459–60, and chap. 18.

115. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 114.

116. "When the war ended the black community in Britain was quite large, perhaps as numerous as 20,000 souls, and with the closing down of war factories they flocked to dockside areas, particularly Cardiff and Liverpool. During the war, black sailors had earned good money in the merchant navy, but with the demobilization of white sailors who had been serving in the Royal Navy, the blacks fell on hard times as they were discarded to make way for the demobilized whites. Blacks were expelled from jobs they had held for years just to make places for white men." "Resentment at blacks competing for jobs with white workers, and reaction to black men marrying white women, finally erupted into racial violence in 1919. Race riots swept such British cities and towns as Liverpool, Cardiff, Manchester, London, Hull, Barry, and Newport, Mon. Reporting the Liverpool incidents *The Times* of 10 May 1919, pointed out that the war had increased the black men in Liverpool until they then numbered about 5,000." Folarin Shyllon, op. cit., p. 8.

117. In Berlin and Paris, American Blacks, for example, Ethel Waters and Josephine Baker, joined French colonial dependents; in Britain, the prize-fighter Jack Johnson, and Paul Robeson, were contemporaries of Learie Constantine and the Sierra Leone actor, Robert Adams.

118. See Makonnen, op. cit., p. 133; Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, op. cit., p. 95; and James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 128–29.

119. Interview with Mrs. Veronica Sankey, 20 July 1980, Brighton; Edward and Veronica Sankey founded the Sankey Printing Company in Ikeja, Nigeria.

120. Makonnen, op. cit., p. 152.

121. Ibid., p. xvii.

122. See Geiss, op. cit., pp. 355, 387–90.

123. "I became a bona fide member of the publishers' association, and proceeded to bring out a number of pieces that needed publicity. There was a pamphlet by Kenyatta [*Kenya: Land of Conflict*], and a kind of Socratic discussion between Nancy Cunard and George Padmore on the black man's burden [*White Man's Duty*], and a manuscript by Eric Williams [*The Negro in the Caribbean*]." Makonnen, op. cit., p. 145.

124. Ibid., p. 123.

125. Ibid., p. 159.

126. Ibid., p. 124.

127. Ibid., p. 126. In Africa, "Europeans who attempted to live native style quickly went to pieces. Some missionaries who tried this approach failed wretchedly. Many white men who let their standards fall in the bush took to drink and self-despair, and some became so deranged they sought refuge from the immensity of the continent, like wild animals, in lairs under rocks or in caves. 'Going *shenzi*,' it was called." Jeremy Murray-Brown, *Kenyatta*, Fontana/Collins, London, 1974, p. 47. Murray-Brown maintains that Kenyatta while living in Britain was driven by similar strains, but resolved them by discovering a sacred tree in his garden in Storrington, and "maintained communion with the spirits of his people through libations and prayers." Ibid., pp. 214–15.

128. Makonnen, ibid., p. 155.

129. Ibid., p. 124.

130. See Julian Symons, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved*, Faber and Faber, London, 1975, chaps. 5–10; Douglas Hill (ed.), *Tribune 40*, Quartet Books, London, 1977, pp. 1–24; Neal Wood, op. cit., pp. 53–63; and David Smith, op. cit., pp. 48–56.

131. Symons, ibid., pp. 56–57; and Smith, ibid., pp. 48–49.

132. Symons, ibid., p. 56.

133. Douglas Hill, op. cit., p. 3.

134. On Spain, Julian Symons recalled: "The rebels [under Franco] were being armed with German and Italian guns and rifles, so that the British Government's declaration in favour of a policy of non-intervention was in effect support of the rebellion." "The policy of non-intervention, Stephen Spender said, was 'more grotesquely, obviously and dangerously a support of interference by the Fascist powers than was the arms embargo in the Abyssinian conflict a present of munitions and victory to Italy.'" Symons, op. cit., pp. 107, 108.

135. See Folarin Shyllon, op. cit., p. 9. Presumably, Shyllon is relying on the unpublished Ph.D. thesis authored by Ian Duffield; see note 110.

136. Wayne Cooper and Robert C. Reinders, "Claude McKay in England, 1920," *New Beacon Reviews*, Collection One, 1968, pp. 3–21 (reprinted from *Race*, ix, 1967). Cooper and Reinders recount: "McKay

escaped arrest but his 'big black grin' [McKay's description] did not prevent the Home and/or Foreign Office from preparing a dossier on him. In 1930 McKay wrote to Max Eastman that the English government prevented him from visiting Gibraltar (McKay was still a British subject) and that a French official in Fez told him that the 'British Secret Service had me listed as a propagandist.' Two years later McKay was having trouble with the British Consul in Tangiers and was prevented from entering British territory—including his home island of Jamaica. And in the following year he complained to Eastman that 'those dirty British bastards working respectably in the dark' were blocking his re-entry into the United States." Ibid., p. 12.

137. See Hooker, op. cit., pp. 23, 43.

138. "In the Caribbean colonies, a clamp was placed on radicals. Butler spent much of the war locked up. In Jamaica, Bustamante was also interned for a while under the wartime defence regulations. Despatches from the American Consul in Kingston tell how the Colonial Government, in the face of local reactions, took advantage of the power vested in it by the Defence Regulations to detain persons who were noted as 'bitter critics' of British colonialism. One of those detained was Wilfred A. Domingo who was described as 'a native of Jamaica who for some years has been resident in New York from which place he has taken an active part in Jamaican politics.' He was removed from a ship taking him from the United States to Jamaica before it actually docked at Kingston and placed in an internment camp. . . . It is not inconceivable that the news that he was on his way to Jamaica was sent to the British authorities by the American and British intelligence networks in the United States. Intelligence was one facet and an important one of the developing Anglo-American wartime collaboration in Caribbean defence, with the Americans in the senior role." Fitz A. Baptiste, op. cit., pp. 45–46.

139. For a recent evaluation of British Marxist intellectuals, see E. P. Thompson's collection of essays, *The Poverty of Theory*, Merlin, London, 1978; and Perry Anderson's sometimes specious rejoinder, *Arguments Within English Marxism* Verso, London, 1980.

140. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 122.

141. Richard Small, op. cit., p. 17.

142. Robert A. Hill, "In England, 1932–1938," op. cit., pp. 23–24. Hill also provides a defense of James's Trotskyism: "[A] large body of Trotsky's followers, not just in France but throughout the European working-class movement, were genuine Leninists who, while not willing to tolerate Stalin's betrayal, went with Trotsky because he seemed to offer a possibility of sustaining the revolutionary political principles of Lenin. The cadres whom James became associated with in the Trotskyist movement were bearers of the political thought and practice of Lenin and Bolshevism at its prime. *Most of them could be classified as Trotskyists only secondarily*. From them James gained an immense knowledge of the internal make-up of the revolutionary socialist movement and the special role which outstanding workers came to play in its development" (ibid., p. 23). This interpretation of Trotskyism (and Hill indicates a debt to the work of Franz Borkenau—see Borkenau, op. cit., p. 396) is only partially sound. It implies, correctly, the cult of personality with which Stalinists were comfortable, and frequently attached to those they opposed (the history of the Communist movement in Western countries is replete with "deviations" known by the suffix "-ite"), but it also displaces Stalin and Trotsky with Lenin by the same logic ("bearers"). I can only guess at what "outstanding workers" means, and if I have surmised correctly it suggests one of the fundamental flaws in James's thought, one which will be explored in his treatment of the Haitian Revolution. Finally, James, in his "Notes On Dialectics" (Allison and Busby, London, 1980), a manuscript that Hill had a great deal to do with preserving, provides a much more historical interpretation of Trotskyism, one which places that "phenomenon" within the history of the progressive development of the working classes. That, too, I shall attempt to demonstrate later in the text.

143. Sylvia Wynter, "In Quest of Matthew Bondsman: Some Cultural Notes on the Jamesian Journey," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 54.

144. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 34.

145. Ibid., p. 47. For Thackeray, see Margaret Forster, *William Makepeace Thackeray: Memoirs of a Victorian Gentleman*, Quartet, London, 1980.

146. James, ibid., p. 37.

147. See J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981. Mangan believes that Arnold's role has been overdone, but generally confirms James's earlier treatment of the public school phenomenon; see Mangan, chap. 1.

148. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., pp. 158–60. Grace, James declares, was the best known Englishman of his time, that is the last quarter of the nineteenth century. And James deplores the fact that neither Trevelyan, nor Postgate or Cole in their histories of that century found a place for him. But when he declared that he could "no longer accept the system of values which could not find in these books a place for W. G. Grace" (ibid., p. 157), he was also, it would appear, coming to terms with a species of Marxism that possessed neither imagination or political relevance. He had come to terms with the relationship between culture, class power, and economic dominance that had reduced even Marx to a somewhat mumbled admission of perplexity (see Marx on the Western ideal in Greek art in his *A Contribution to the*

Critique of Political Economy). And James realized that he had gone quite far: "The conjunction hit me as it would have hit few of the students of society and culture in the international organization to which I belonged." Ibid., p. 151. Though it is difficult to get her to say it, Sylvia Wynter confirms James' self-assessment: "The co-evolution of new popular forms of social organization, i.e., trade union organizations, political parties, international organization, organizational forms of struggle for popular democracy with the rise of the desire for organized sports all within the decade 1860–1870 provide the basis for the Jamesian reflection on the complexity of human needs, for his implicit affirmation that the 'realization of one's powers' at both the individual and the group level is the most urgent imperative of all . . . [it] was a conjunction that hit James, only because unlike Trotsky he had moved outside the monoconceptual Labor frame to the wider frame of a popular theoretics." Wynter, op. cit., p. 58.

149. See Basil Wilson, op. cit., pp. 49–50; see also Eric Williams's few comments on James in his autobiography, *Inward Hunger*, op. cit.

150. See Thompson's "Foreword" and the title essay in *The Poverty of Theory*, op. cit.

151. E. P. Thompson, "The Politics of Theory," in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981, p. 397.

152. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 150.

153. Ibid., p. 152. The residues of James's "Victorian" upbringing remain until this day and are given full rein at times in this volume. Witness: "The Greeks were the most politically minded and intellectually and artistically the most creative of all peoples." Ibid., p. 154. Hardly a considered or even possible judgment.

154. Ibid., p. 155.

155. Ibid., p. 153.

156. Ibid., p. 155.

157. "Wordsworth had said that England needed manners, virtue, freedom, power. Arnold saw that it had power. Freedom for him was embodied in the first Reform Act. But manners and virtue he was sure were absent and he was equally sure that their continued absence from the realm would end in the destruction of both power and freedom. Mealy-mouthed generations have watered him down as they have watered down Charles Dickens. Arnold was a man of tempestuous temperament. He was tormented all his life by the fear that England (in fact the whole modern world) would be cracked wide open by social revolution and end either in ruin or military dictatorship. It was to counter this that he did what he did. He aimed to create a body of educated men of the upper classes who would resist the crimes of Toryism and the greed and vulgarity of industrialists on the one hand, and the socialistic claims of the oppressed but uneducated masses on the other." Ibid., p. 160.

158. Ibid., p. 162.

159. John Rae, "Play Up, Play Up," *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 October 1981, p. 1120.

160. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, op. cit., p. 164.

161. Ibid.

162. Alan McKinnon, "Communist Party Election Tactics," op. cit., p. 23.

163. See Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976.

164. See Alan McKinnon, op. cit., pp. 22–23. T. D. Burridge suggested one reason for the Labour Party's new vitality: "Though the Party never officially adopted an outright pacifist position, a dedicated pacifist, George Lansbury, was Leader of the Party from 1932–35. In addition, Socialist theory interpreted war in economic terms as a clash of rival imperialisms—the last, most decadent stage of capitalism. Even towards the end of the turbulent 1930s, the Party's advocacy of the collective security doctrine owed relatively little to the idea that the possession of allies would be the best means of fighting a war. Instead, much greater emphasis was placed on the argument that a collective security policy would be the most effective way of preventing a major war." *British Labour and Hitler's War*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1976, pp. 17–18. See also C. L. R. James's very insightful critique of Labour Party politics, "The British Vote for Socialism," in *The Future in the Present*, op. cit., pp. 106–18 (orig. published 1945).

165. Peter Blackman, who left Barbados in the early 1930s, recalls that Du Bois was an important figure to West Indian Blacks attempting to establish their racial identity in the post–World War I period. This largely resulted from the appearance of the *Crisis* magazine. Interview, London, 18 November 1981. James implies the influence of *Black Reconstruction* on his thinking in the 1930s in several places, cf. *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, Lawrence Hill, Westport, 1977, pp. 74–75; "The Making of the Caribbean People," loc. cit., p. 179; and "W. E. B. Du Bois," in *The Future in the Present*, op. cit., pp. 202–12. For Chilembwe, see George Shepperson and Tom Price, *Independent African*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1958, and C. J. Robinson, "Notes Toward a 'Native' Theory of History," *Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 45–78 (Shepperson's response follows: "Ourselves as Others," ibid., pp. 79–87); for Lamine Senghor, see Geiss, op. cit., pp. 310ff; and for Kimbangu, Vittorio Lantenari, *Religions of the Oppressed*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1963.

166. Makonnen, op. cit., p. 116. For the responses of Afro-Americans to the Italo-Ethiopian war, see S. K. B. Asante, "The Afro-American and the Italo-Ethiopia Crisis, 1934–1936," *Race* 15, no. 2 (October 1973):

167–84; and Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., pp. 448ff.; and for the Caribbean, Robert G. Weisbord, *Ebony Kinship*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1973, pp. 102–10. For Italian imperialism, see J. L. Miege, *L'Imperialisme Colonial Italien de 1870 a Nos Jours*, SEDES, Paris, 1968, chaps. 13 and 14.

167. See Makonnen, op. cit., p. 114, for his impressions of James. James articulated his position in Fenner Brockway's *New Leader* in an article entitled "Is This War Necessary?," 4 October 1935, p. 3. For the ILP's position, see James Maxton and Fenner Brockway, "The War Threat," *New Leader*, 22 March 1935, pp. 1, 3; and Brockway, "What Can We Do about Mussolini?," *New Leader*, 19 July 1935, p. 2.

168. See James, "Is This War Necessary?," op. cit., p. 3; and the report of James's activity at the Spring Conference of the ILP, "The Abyssinian Debate," *New Leader*, 17 April 1936, p. 4. For James's opinion of Haile Selassie, see Makonnen, op. cit., pp. 114, 184.

169. Geiss, op. cit., pp. 280–81. Makonnen recalled: "It is said . . . that a number of the influential Ethiopians like [Workineh] Martin and Herouï. . . considered themselves as not being Negroes. In fact, Ethiopians were said to have betrayed the same attitude when, after Haile Selassie's coronation, a delegation came to America. Dr. Workineh Martin was on it, and he refused to lecture even at Howard University. And when the delegation took with them back to Ethiopia only two or three very fair-skinned Negroes, this again seemed to prove that they thought themselves to be white people." "This apparent preference for mulattoes, and the Emperor's refusal to receive the Garveyite delegation, made Garvey bitter about Haile Selassie until the time of the former's death. It was one of the issues that George Padmore and I used to fight him over, because at that time in London, Haile Selassie symbolized our unity in Europe. And yet from the time of the Emperor's arrival in England, Garvey castigated him as a man who, instead of dying on the battlefield in the tradition of Ethiopian leaders, had slunk away to England to find refuge; how could such a coward, Garvey alleged, be the leader of such a great nation?" Makonnen, op. cit., pp. 74–75; see also Weisbord, op. cit., pp. 100–101, 103.

170. James, "Fighting for the Abyssinian Empire," *New Leader*, 5 June 1936, p. 2.

171. Some colonial authorities would trace the disturbances of the late 1930s in the West Indies to the Italo-Ethiopian War. In 1938, Sir Selsyn Grier would inform his audience at an Oxford University seminar on colonial administration: "Repercussions of the Italo-Abyssinian War were profound and widespread. The people of the West Indies saw in it an unprovoked attack by the European upon the African, and this gave rise to a feeling of racial animosity." "Unrest in the West Indies," in Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, op. cit., p. 61.

172. See Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Harper and Row, New York, 1961; Fernando Claudin, op. cit., pp. 210–42; and Julian Symons, op. cit., pp. 106–22.

173. There were five brigades: the Eleventh, German, known as the Thaelmann Brigade the Twelfth, Italian, known as the Garibaldis; the Thirteenth, pan-Slavic, known as the Dombrowski Brigade; the Fourteenth, French and Belgian; and the Fifteenth, consisting of British (English, Canadians, and Irish), American (the Abraham Lincoln Battalion), Caribbean, Central and South American (59th Spanish Battalion) volunteers. See Joseph Brandt (ed.), *Black Americans in the Spanish People's War Against Fascism, 1936–1939*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, n.d. [1979?]; "A Negro Nurse in Republican Spain," The Negro Committee to Aid Spain, New York, 1938 (reissued by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 1977); Salaria Kee (now O'Reilly) was the subject; Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, op. cit., chap. 18; and interviews with Haywood (Santa Barbara, 6 February 1980) and James Yates (Binghamton, 26 April 1978), both Black veterans of Spain. Brandt estimates that between 80 and 100 Black Americans volunteered for the Spanish Civil War. For Nyabongo, a Ugandan who fought with the antifascists in Spain, see Kenneth King's note in Makonnen, op. cit., p. 176 n. 16.

174. For the disturbances in Trinidad, see Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, People's National Movement Publishing Co., Port-of-Spain, 1962, pp. 232–42, and Brinsley Samaroo, "Politics and Afro-Indian Relations in Trinidad" in J. La Guerre, op. cit., pp. 84–97; for Jamaica, see Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1978.

175. Cited in Geiss, op. cit., p. 346.

176. This was the position that James would espouse in his meetings with Trotsky in Mexico in 1939. See James, "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the USA," in *The Future in the Present*, op. cit., pp. 119–27. For the discussions with Trotsky at Coyocan, see George Breitman (ed.), *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, Merit Publishers, New York, 1972, pp. 24–48; Tony Martin, "C. L. R. James and the Race/Class Question," *Race* 2 (1972): 183–93; and Paul Buhle, "Marxism in the U.S.A.," in *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 28–39.

177. James, " 'Civilising' the 'Blacks,' " *New Leader*, 29 May 1936, p. 5.

178. Robert Hill adds an interesting and provocative element to the analysis of James's development of consciousness: "At a very profound and fundamental level, Robeson as a man *shattered* James's colonial conception of the Black Physique. In its place the magnificent stature of Robeson gave to him a new appreciation of the powerful and extraordinary capacities which the African possessed, in both head and

body. Robeson broke the mould in which the West Indian conception of physical personality in James had been formed. That was a time when Black West Indians grew up with an unconscious prototype of the white Englishman and white Englishwoman as their absolute standards of physical perfection and development. James's encounter with Robeson was nowhere more profound than in its forcing him to abandon these inherited values." "Thus, it is the contention of the present writer that *The Black Jacobins* would have been significantly different in quality in the absence of James's relationship to Robeson." "In England, 1932–38," op. cit., pp. 24–25. James met Robeson in 1936 and the latter performed the title role in a production of James's play, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*. Dorothy Butler Gilliam, in her biography of Robeson, puts the meeting and the production of the play at Westminster Theatre in early 1936, see Gilliam, *Paul Robeson: All-American*, New Republic Books, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 87–88. For James's view of Robeson's Marxism, see ibid., p. 127; and James, "Paul Robeson: Black Star," in *Spheres of Existence*, op. cit., pp. 261–62.

179. See James's criticisms of Padmore on this issue, *Nkmah and the Ghana Revolution*, op. cit., p. 63; for Kenyatta, see Murray-Brown, op. cit., p. 221.

180. James, ibid., pp. 69, 71. For James in the United States, see Martin, "C. L. R. James and the Race/Class Question," op. cit., pp. 184–85; and Buhle, "Marxism in the U.S.A.," op. cit., passim.

181. These views were summarized in the final resolutions passed by the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, 1945: "The first of these, 'The Challenge to the Colonial Powers,' took an intermediate line between the revolutionary impatience of Padmore and Nkrumah on the one hand and Du Bois's more cautious conception of 1944 on the other. 'The delegates to the Fifth Pan-African Congress believe in peace. . . . Yet if the Western world is still determined to rule mankind by force then Africans, as a last resort, may have to appeal to force in the effort to achieve Freedom, even if force destroys them and the world.' The second general statement was the 'Declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals,' drafted by Nkrumah, which expresses once again the limitless desire for independence: against imperialist exploitation the colonial peoples should concentrate upon winning political power, and for this an effective organization was essential. The tactics recommended were strikes and boycotts—non-violent methods of struggle." Geiss, op. cit., p. 407.

182. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 73–74.

183. As recently as 1977, James was declaring: "The man at the helm is the African intellectual. He succeeds—or independent Africa sinks: unlike Britain in the seventeenth and France in the eighteenth centuries, there is no class on which the nation falls back after the intellectuals have led the revolution as far as it can go." Ibid., p. 15.

184. Azinna Nwafor, in one of the most forceful critiques of the Pan-African movement, sees the Manchester conference as one of the more progressive moments in Pan-Africanism. Nevertheless, Nwafor concludes: "Pan-Africanism did not offer a revolutionary choice to the emancipation of Africa from its centuries of conquest, domination, and colonial exploitation. The necessarily progressive role which the movement played in the evolution of Africa to independent status should not be underestimated, but the severe limitations of the scope and method are such that it contributed in no small degree to the disarray of the contemporary African scene and the general disenchantment with the fruits of political independence. It would seem that the storm centres of popular uprising for African emancipation were in fact headed off with the aid of Pan-Africanists, who represented themselves to the colonial authorities as the only forces capable of curbing the violence of the masses." "In many respects the OAU [the Organization of African Unity] is the culmination and embodiment of that Pan-Africanism which Padmore has chronicled. Starting as a political movement in exile, and handed on to a group of aspiring and dedicated African leadership who led their several countries to political independence, Pan-Africanism had been a movement carried out over the heads and at the expense of the African peoples themselves. At Addis Ababa [in 1963] this breed of African leadership determined to constitute itself as a new kind of Holy Alliance to preserve the existing status quo which they had inherited from their colonial masters. Their abhorrence of political revolution is total. As one of them stated, with brutal frankness: 'Speaking for ourselves, we prefer things as they are.' " Nwafor's "Introduction" to the 1972 reissue of Padmore's Pan-Africanism or Communism, op. cit. pp. xxxvii–xxxviii, xxxix–xl.

185. James, *The Black Jacobins*, op. cit., pp. 375–76. Subsequent pagination during the discussion of the work will be cited in text.

186. Cabral, "The Weapon of Theory," in *Revolution in Guinea*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1969, p. 102. Earlier in the same address (given at a Tricontinental Conference in Havana, Cuba, January 1966), Cabral had asked: "[D]oes history begin only with the development of the phenomenon of 'class,' and consequently of class struggle? To reply in the affirmative would be to place outside history the whole period of life of human groups from the discovery of hunting, and later of nomadic and sedentary agriculture, to the organisation of herds and the private appropriation of land. It would also be to consider—and this we refuse to accept—that various human groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America were living without history, or outside history, at the time when they were subjected to the yoke of imperialism.

It would be to consider that the peoples of our countries, such as the Balantes of Guinea, the Coaniamas of Angola and the Macondes of Mozambique, are still living today—if we abstract the slight influence of colonialism to which they have been subjected—outside history, or that they have no history." Ibid. p. 95.

187. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky were bourgeois ideologists in terms of their social origins and educations. Marx and Engels had seemingly acknowledged this in *The Communist Manifesto*: "[S]o now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole." Furthermore, with the exception of Engels, none of them seems to have given over much time to the study of working classes. For the most part their works were concentrated on the bourgeoisies: their histories, their States and administrations, their organization of production, their ideologies and philosophies. All, of course, certainly looked closely at the historical and social processes of the breakdown of societies, viz. revolutions, but these were the contradictions of bourgeois societies. It was also the case that few proletarian intellectuals were ever attended to in their writings. This raises again the question: Is Marxism a theory for the proletariat or of the proletariat? One American Marxist has answered the question in this way: "While in their practice Marxists have often tried to take account of the praxis of the proletariat, their theory proves a hindrance." Dick Howard, *The Marxian Legacy*, Macmillan, London, 1977, p. 274. E. P. Thompson seems to have come to similar conclusions in *The Making of the English Working Class*, op. cit., and *The Poverty of Theory*, op. cit.

188. In 1949, Cornelius Castoriadis wrote in "The Relations of Production in Russia": "The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be simply the political dictatorship; it must be above all the economic dictatorship of the proletariat, for otherwise it will only be a mask for the dictatorship of the bureaucracy." Cited by Dick Howard, op. cit., p. 266. Castoriadis has proven to be one of the most consistently critical Marxists. His conclusions followed those of James made ten years earlier in *World Revolution, 1917–1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International*, Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1937. Interestingly enough, Oliver C. Cox, writing in 1948, had not yet found it possible to hone his considerably acute and critical eye on the Russian state: see *Caste, Class and Race*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1948, chap. 11.

189. James, "The Making of the Caribbean People," op. cit., p. 180.

190. This is the position taken by Robert Lacerte, "Xenophobia and Economic Decline: The Haitian Case, 1820–1843," *The Americas* 37, no. 4 (April 1981): 499–515.

191. Marvin and Anne Holloway reissued the book in 1969 through their Drum and Spear Press. This version was entitled *A History of Pan-African Revolt* and included an "epilogue" which detailed Black movements between 1939 and 1969.

192. David Widgery notes: "As disaster overwhelmed the German Left, and Stalin switched to the desperate alliance-mongering of the Popular Front, James—now the editor of the Revolutionary Socialist League's paper, *Fight* made regular clandestine visits to the Paris exile grouping of revolutionaries around Trotsky. 'They were very serious days,' James admonishes, inflecting the adjective 'serious' as only an old-time Trotskyist can. 'There was a German boy very active in our movement. One day we found him at the bottom of Seine.' " "James was, with D. D. Harber, the British delegation to the founding conference of the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1938. This tiny body was established with the hope that, in the holocaust to come, a clearsighted International might find a way through the chaos. But Trotsky and, effectively, Trotskyism succumbed to the terrible repression." "A Meeting with Comrade James," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 116.

193. Tony Martin, for one, believes that James was disciplined by Trotsky on the "Negro Problem" to good purpose. See Martin, "C. L. R. James and the Race/Class Question," op. cit., pp. 27–28. What is purported to be three direct transcripts of the discussions between James, Trotsky, and others have been published as *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, George Breitman (ed.), Merit Publishers, New York, 1967. Some flavor of the exchanges can be found in their remarks on Black self-determination:

"Johnson: I am very glad that we have had this discussion, because I agree with you entirely. It seems to be the idea in America that we should advocate it as the CP has done. You seem to think that there is a greater possibility of the Negroes' wanting self-determination than I think is probable. But we have a hundred percent agreement on the idea which you have put forward that we should be neutral in the development.

Trotsky: It is the word 'reactionary' that bothers me.

Johnson: Let me quote from the document [Johnson's position paper]: 'If he wanted self-determination, then however reactionary it might be in every other respect, it would be the business of the revolutionary party to raise that slogan. I consider the idea of separating as a step backward so far as a socialist society is concerned. If the white workers extend a hand to the Negro, he will not want self-determination.

Trotsky: It is too abstract, because the realization of this slogan can be reached only as the 13 or 14 million Negroes feel that the domination by the whites is terminated. To fight for the possibility of realizing an independent state is a sign of great moral and political awakening. It would be a tremendous revolutionary step.

This ascendancy would immediately have the best economic consequences." Ibid., pp. 31–32. "Johnson" was of course James.

194. For some of his experience in the Missouri work, see James, "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the USA," and "Down with Starvation Wages in South-East Missouri," in *The Future in the Present*, op. cit.

195. *Notes on Dialectics* (Allison and Busby, London, 1980) was in the original a series of letters from James to his associates in the Johnson-Forest organization (see below). According to Robert A. Hill (personal communication) they were known as the "caretaker" papers. David Widgery quotes James as saying the letters were "written in Reno when I was seeing about a divorce." Widgery, op. cit., p. 116. Hill, in collaboration with the Detroit-based Friends of Facing Reality group (whose nucleus was the older members of the Johnson-Forest organization), edited the letters into book form in 1966. For some of the history of the Detroit group, see Dan Georgakas, "Young Detroit radicals, 1955–1965," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 89–94.

196. "Although the Communist Party reached its numerical peak of 80,000 during wartime, it had become a virtual agent of State Capitalism in Russia and America, as its bitter opposition to A. Philip Randolph's planned March On Washington, its avid support of the No Strike Pledge and of the Minneapolis Trotskyists' prosecution by the government all attested. Interlocked with the Red Army invasion of postwar Eastern Europe—'Revolution from the Tank Turret' carried out with the imprisonment or murder of opposing radical and democratic forces as if no other form of liberation were now imaginable— the Communist direction showed something more than 'betrayal' had taken place. The Party's ethnic and race following, which had in a certain sense compensated for its limited cadre outside the leadership of industrial unions, drifted away. Whatever its future, American radicalism would be something very different from what it had been." Paul Buhle, "Marxism in the U.S.A.," op. cit., p. 32.

197. See Stanley Weir, "Revolutionary Artist," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 87; and Tony Martin, "C. L. R. James and the Race/Class Question," op. cit., pp. 25–26.

198. See W. Jerome and A. Buick, "Soviet State Capitalism? The History of an Idea," *Survey* 62 (January 1967); and Martin, ibid. Daniel Bell has contributed a comic version of American Trotskyism, cf. *Marxian Socialism in the United States*, op. cit., pp. 153–57.

199. See Martin, ibid; and Georgakas, op. cit., passim.

200. James, *Notes on Dialectics*, op. cit., p. 7. Subsequent pagination will be indicated in the text.

201. "Lenin had a notion of socialism. It is noticeable that up to 1905 he thought of socialism always in terms of the Commune. And after 1917 he changed—he changed not for Russia but for the world. We have to do the same. We have not done it. For if we had we would recognize in Lenin's articles and methods in Russia of 1917–23 the greatest possible source of theoretical understanding and insight into the world of today." Ibid., p. 147.

202. On occasion, James came quite close to acknowledging this paradox: "The party is the knowing of the proletariat as being. Without the party the proletariat knows nothing. We are here at the climax of a development characteristic of class society. The proletariat is the only historical class to which the party, the *political party*, is essential . . . the bourgeoisie has never found a political party necessary to its existence. The characteristic form of bourgeois political power is the perfection of the state, and for long periods the bourgeoisie has been content and flourished even without control of the state power. The bourgeoisie has no need for a special organization of knowing. Bourgeois society is capitalist production, and by its position as agent of capital, the bourgeoisie automatically is in possession of capitalist knowing, science, art, religion, and the essence of bourgeois politics which is the maintenance of capitalist production." "Apart from its existence as wage-slaves, the proletariat has no history except the history of its political, i.e. revolutionary, organizations. No class in history except the proletariat (and this is by no means accidental) has ever openly, boldly, and both theoretically and practically, aimed at the seizure of state power. The history of the theory and practice of this unprecedented phenomenon in human history is the history of the proletarian political party." Ibid., pp. 172–73. For Castoriadis, see his "On the History of the Workers' Movement," *Telos* 30 (1976): 3–42; and Dick Howard, op. cit., chap. 10.

203. "[A] moment's (Marxist) reflection points to the inadequacy of Trotsky's notion of Russia as a 'degenerated workers' state . . . The 'degeneration' would concern only the form, not the essence, of the Russian social formation. But this confuses the juridical forms of property with the actual relations of production themselves. For Marx, it is precisely these relations of production which determine the forms of distribution and their (deformed) superstructural reflection. The vacillations in Trotsky's own analyses—for example on the question of 'Thermidor,' or on the tactics to be followed by the Opposition—stem from the identification of form and essence." Dick Howard, ibid., p. 265.

204. "It was the workers who did the theoretical work on the soviet. . . . *They* thought over the soviet. They analysed it and remembered it, and within a few days of the February revolution they organized in the great centres of Russia this unprecedented social formation. Lenin saw it this time." James, *Notes on Dialectics*, op. cit., p. 138.

205. Vincent Harding recalled: "One of the things I remember with a combination of sadness and humor

was a long conversation that C. L. R. and Harry Haywood had in our house in Atlanta. It was focused to a large degree—and I just found it somewhat ironic and, as I said, somewhat sad, even though a lot of the development of the conversation also had its humor to it—to see these two really experienced and gifted Black men literally arguing about which expression of Marxist ideology and organization was really best. I think with that experience it took both of them out of the mainstream of so much of Black life, and took their strengths away from that mainstream. I just have the feeling it would have been so much healthier if both of these men might have found some common ground and might have found ways of using their energy beyond those kinds of arguments that grew out of the experiences of the late twenties and thirties, that for them were very fresh wounds and very hard experiences . . . it was just very hard to feel the real significance of some of those ideological arguments that they were carrying on at that time." Interview with Harding by Ken Lawrence, published as "Conversation," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 124.

206. See John Bracey's "Nello," *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 125.

207. Paul Buhle/Noah Ignatin/James Early/Ethelbert Miller interview with James, *Urgent Tasks* 12 (Summer 1981): 82.

Chapter Eleven

1. The social and literary critiques of H. L. Mencken and the radical novels of Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser were Wright's formative introduction to American thought. See Michael Fabre, *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, William Morrow, New York, 1973, pp. 67–69. He had, however, an earlier instruction that Addison Gayle recapitulates: "He discovered that the actions of whites were often precipitous; altercations with them might occur spontaneously, for seemingly illogical reasons or none at all. Among his earliest jobs was one as a porter in a clothing store owned by two white men, father and son. Both sported reputations for maltreatment of blacks. He witnessed several beatings and slappings of blacks who fell behind in their payments. One of the most despicable concerned a black woman. Unable to pay her bill, she was dragged into the store by the two men and herded toward the back room, where she was pummeled and kicked. Afterward, in a state of semiconsciousness, she was shoved out into the street. A white policeman appeared as if on call, stared contemptuously at the dazed woman, then arrested her for drunkenness. The two men washed their hands, gazed benevolently at Wright." Gayle, *Richard Wright: Ordeal of a Native Son*, Anchor Press, Garden City, 1980, p. 35. Among numerous instances like this, two others are enlightening: "He did not take [white] threats about murder lightly. The example of Bob, brother of one of his classmates, was too recent. Bob, who worked in a hotel frequented by white prostitutes, was rumored to have been involved with one of them. Some white folks warned him to end the relationship. For whatever reason, he did not do so and was lynched. When his classmate had rendered the episode to him, Wright had been moved by his friend's grief; but he had felt, too, something of the anxiety and fear that the act of murder produced in the entire black community. Such actions were designed to control behavior and to stem the desire for rebellion among blacks." Ibid., p. 36. Earlier, white terror had struck much closer. Wright's mother had taken her two sons to live with her sister Margaret and her husband, Silas. One night Silas did not return: "The atmosphere in the house was one of silent, desperate waiting. Food was kept hot on the stove. Each sound inside and outside the house rang with deafening clarity. The two sisters took turns peering into the early mist. Sometime later, they were called to attention by a knock on the door. It was not Silas' knock. It was the knock of the dreaded messenger, one of the unsung blacks who historically, sometimes in the dark of the night or the early morning, surreptitiously delivered messages of disaster. This one was short, precise: Hoskins had been killed by white men. His family was to stay away from town. There were to be no final rites." Ibid., p. 17. Experiences such as these, coupled with his father's abandonment of his family, his mother's breakdown and paralysis, his short but nightmarish stay in an orphanage, had predictable results on Wright's personality. But most can be directly and not too indirectly traced to their bases in American social history, particularly where Black labor had been employed. It is hardly to the point, as in the instance of Martin Kilson's pseudo-psychological and reductionist treatment of Wright, to frame them in terms of "marginality." Cf. Kilson, "Politics and Identity Among Black Intellectuals," *Dissent* (Summer 1981): 339–49.

2. See James Baldwin, "The Exile" and "Alas, Poor Richard," in *Nobody Knows My Name*, Dial, New York, 1961; and also Ellen Wright's accounts of Baldwin and Wright in Faith Berry, "Portrait of a Man as Outsider," *Negro Digest*, December 1968, pp. 27–37.

3. See James Ford, "The Case of Richard Wright," *Daily Worker*, 5 September 1944.

4. See Ben Burns, "They're Not Uncle Tom's Children," *The Reporter* 14, no. 8 (March 1956): 21–23; and Gayle, op. cit., p. 272.

5. See "Amid the Alien Corn," unidentified author, *Time*, 17 November 1958, p. 28; see also Gayle's speculations, op. cit., p. 287.

6. Gayle, who has had access to heavily censored documents from the American State Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency, reports that the CIA was "monitoring" talks by Wright as early as April 1951 (op. cit., pp. 219–21); that Wright's "leadership of the Franco-

American Fellowship angered agents of the military, the FBI, the CIA, and the State Department" (p. 221); that within the Black expatriate group, made up of "writers, artists, students, ex-GI's, composers, musicians, and representatives of various governmental agencies such as UNESCO and the United States Information Service . . . there were those, a growing number, who served as agents or informers for the CIA, the FBI, and the American Embassy" (p. 207); and that the agencies' files indicated an increasing traffic of correspondence, reports, and surveillance on Wright from 1956 until his death in 1960 (pp. 262–63; 277–86). Wright, himself dealt with the CIA's activities in the American Black movement and in the expatriate community in France in two works; his unpublished manuscript, "Island of Hallucination" (later published under the title *American Hunger*), and his speech to students and members of the American Church in Paris (8 November 1960), entitled "The Situation of the Black Artist and Intellectual in the United States." Wright's comments in the speech have been summarized by Fabre, op. cit., p. 518. For more on Wright and the CIA, see Constance Webb, Richard Wright, Putnam, New York, 1968, pp. 375–77, 396; and Faith Berry, op. cit. Paul Robeson, among others, was undergoing similar treatment by American agencies at this time. See Philip S. Foner (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks*, Brunner/Mazel, New York, 1978: "[B]eyond revoking Robeson's passport and forbidding him to leave the continental United States from 1950 to 1957, officials of the United States government also sought to influence public opinion against Robeson; to discourage another government 'from honoring Robeson as a great humanitarian and activist for human rights'; to prevent Robeson's employment abroad in a non-political area; and to undermine his political impact by issuing anti-Robeson news releases, and using or soliciting statements of other black leaders to discredit him" (p. 4).

7. See Hoyt Fuller's interview with Chester Himes in *Black World* 21 (March 1972): 93; Webb, op. cit., pp. 312, 417; and Gayle, op. cit., pp. 235–36. Schine was an investigator on the staff of Senator Joseph McCarthy's Senate Subcommittee on Investigations. Like Roy Cohn, Schine seems to have been one of several links between McCarthy and the "elites" whose support gave McCarthy power. Cf. Michael P. Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1967, p. 250.

8. Richard and Ellen Wright had few illusions concerning their enemies, but conclusive evidence was not easily obtained. See Berry, op. cit., pp. 34ff. Some of Wright's acquaintances were skeptical about a "campaign" against Wright but others found it quite reasonable to assume one was in place, see Ollie Harrington, "The Mysterious Death of Richard Wright," *Daily World*, 17 December 1977. Gayle's review of the "sanitized" files of the American intelligence agencies brings the pattern much closer to the surface. Still there are the worrying problems of missing documents and heavily censored ones: "In fact, the number of censored documents during these last, most troublesome years of Wright's life make it difficult to know just what areas of his life or activities were targeted." Gayle, op. cit., pp. 290–91.

9. Fabre published the following letter from Wright to Margit de Sabloniere on 30 March 1960: "You must not worry about my being in danger . . . I am not exactly unknown here and I have personal friends in the de Gaulle cabinet itself. Of course, I don't want anything to happen to me, but if it does, my friends will know exactly where it comes from. If I tell you these things, it is to let you know what happens. So far as the Americans are concerned, I'm worse than a Communist, for my work falls like a shadow across their policy in Asia and Africa. That's the problem; they've asked me time and again to work for them: but I'd die first. . . . But they try to divert me with all kinds of foolish tricks." Fabre, op. cit., p. 509. The files that Gayle has seen confirm Wright's assertions, even beyond Fabre's expectations: "Although he exaggerated the extent and intent of some attacks, I believe that many were expressly designed to make him lose his sense of reality. Whether caused by personal jealousy, political intrigue or racial malevolence, the desire to harm Wright was indisputable." Ibid., pp. 524–25. Seven years later, Gayle was more equivocal: "The temptation to draw conclusions in line with those who believe that the FBI and the CIA were directly involved in Wright's sudden death are great. To do so, however, based upon the facts of the documents, would be wrong. I did not find, *nor did I expect to find*, evidence to support this assertion, held by a great many of the writer's friends. What I found was a pattern of harassment by agencies of the United States Government, resembling at times a personal vendetta more so than an intelligence-gathering investigation" (my emphasis). Gayle, op. cit., p. xv. Gayle, however, believes that there is something amiss in the documents: "The role of the State Department, however, is another matter, for it was here that the seeming vendetta occurred. The only document that supposedly originated with the State Department casts Wright in an unfavorable position. Documents filtered through the State Department to the FBI show an inordinate amount of activity on the part of the Foreign Service during the last months of Wright's life. Most of the documents are heavily deleted, so their content is difficult to comprehend clearly. Whether there is any connection between this activity and Wright's death may be known only if the deleted sections of the documents are released." Ibid. In addition, of course, as John Stockwell, a former CIA operative has shown, the State Department by the early 1970s at least had developed communications procedures concerning covert operations that denied access to even its own communicators. See Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies*, Futura Publications, London, 1979, p. 93.

10. *American Hunger* (Harper and Row, New York, 1977) is the title Wright originally suggested (among others) for his unpublished manuscript, "Island of Hallucination." Fabre, op. cit., p. 616 n. 19. The mate-

rial published under the former title is in large measure the parts of *Black Boy* (Harper, New York, 1945), which Harper expunged from its 1945 edition. Darryl Pinckney would appear to be wrong when he suggests in his review of *American Hunger* that Wright himself was responsible for the deletion (see "Richard Wright: the Unnatural History of a Native Son," *Village Voice*, 4 July 1977, p. 80), since Wright had published much of the material in the *Atlantic Monthly* (August and September 1944) under the title "I Tried to be a Communist."

11. Robert Bone, *The Negro Novel in America*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1965, p. 158.

12. Ibid., p. 160.

13. See Bone, ibid., and Addison Gayle, *The Way of the New World* (Doubleday, Garden City, 1976), for these characterizations of Wright's work. For good reasons Gayle does not cite his previous work in his biography of Wright.

14. For the Gold Coast (now Ghana), see Wright's report, *Black Power* (Harper, New York, 1954); and Cedric J. Robinson, "A Case of Mistaken Identity," paper presented to the African Studies Association Conference, Los Angeles, 1 November 1979.

15. Fabre, op. cit., p.xviii.

16. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, William Morrow, New York, 1971, p. 182.

17. Ibid., p. 188.

18. Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing," New Challenge, Fall 1937, p. 61. This essay was reprinted in *Race and Class* 21, no. 4 (1980).

19. Quite early on in his party experience, Wright while reflecting on his mother's reaction of horror to Communist propaganda had come to the conclusion that: "They had a program, an ideal, but they had not yet found a language." Richard Crossman (ed.), *The God That Failed*, Harper, New York, 1965, p. 107.

20. See Fabre, op. cit., pp. 89–200; and Webb, op. cit., pp. 114–16.

21. Daniel Aaron, "Richard Wright and the Communist Party," *New Letters* (Winter 1971): 178.

22. Crossman, op. cit., pp. 107–8. For some other interesting attempts to deal with the development of American working-class thought, see Stanley Feldstein and Lawrence Costello (eds.), *The Ordeal of Assimilation*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1974; and the special issue, "The Origins of Left Culture in the US: 1880–1940," *Cultural Correspondence/Green Mountain Irregulars* 6–7 (Spring 1978).

23. Wright, "Blueprint," op. cit., p. 59.

24. See Alfred Meyer, *Leninism*, Praeger, New York, 1971, pp. 40–41; and Leonard Shapiro, "Two Years That Shook the World," *New York Review of Books*, 31 March 1977, pp. 3–4.

25. See Geiss, op. cit., pp. 163–75, 213.

26. Gayle, *The Way of the New World*, op. cit., chap. 8.

27. James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," in *Notes of a Native Son*, Dial Press, New York, 1955, p. 22.

28. Sterling Brown's review in *Opportunity*, June 1940, p. 185.

29. Clifton Fadiman's review in the *New Yorker*, 2 March 1940, p. 6.

30. Crossman, op. cit., p. 106.

31. Ibid., p. 105

32. Ibid., p. 108.

33. See Benjamin Gitlow, *I Confess*, op. cit., chaps. 15 and 16; and Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis*, op. cit., p. 22.

34. See Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*, op. cit.; and Roger Kanet, "The Comintern and the 'Negro Question': Communist Policy in the United States and Africa, 1921–1941," *Survey*, Autumn 1973, pp. 86–122.

35. Fabre, op. cit., p. 137.

36. Crossman, op. cit., pp. 141–42.

37. Ibid., p. 146.

38. Ibid.

39. See Earl Browder, "Democracy and the Constitution," in *The People's Front*, International Publishers, New York, 1938, pp. 235–48, and "Resolution on the Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of Working Class Against Fascism," *Communist International*, 20 September 1935, p. 951.

40. Earl Browder, "The 18th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party," in *The People's Front*, op. cit., p. 271.

41. Ibid., p. 275.

42. Browder, "Revolutionary Background of the United States Constitution," ibid., p. 266; and "Twenty Years of Soviet Power," ibid., p. 346.

43. See Wilhelm Reich's "What Is Class Consciousness?" in *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929–1934*, Lee Baxandall (ed.), Vintage Books, New York, 1972.

44. Wright to Michael Gold, reported in Fabre, op. cit., p. 185.

45. Wright, "How 'Bigger' Was Born," introduction to *Native Son*, Harper, New York, 1966, p. xix.

46. Ibid., p. xx.

47. Ibid., p. xxiv.

48. In April 1940, Wright had written to Gold: "[I]f I should follow Ben Davis's advice and write of Negroes through the lens of how the Party views them in terms of political theory, I'd abandon the Bigger Thomases. I'd be tacitly admitting that they are lost to us, that fascism will triumph because it alone can enlist the allegiance of those millions whom capitalism has crushed and maimed." Fabre, op. cit., pp. 185–86.

49. Wright, "How 'Bigger' Was Born," op. cit., p. xix.

50. Ibid., p. xviii.

51. Ibid., p. xvii.

52. Ibid., p. xxiv.

53. Wright, *Native Son*, op. cit., pp. 391–92.

54. See Fabre, op. cit., pp. 184–87, for a summary of the reactions of party leaders to *Native Son*.

55. Wright, "Blueprint," op. cit., p. 60.

56. Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, Telos Press, St. Louis, 1975.

57. See Cornelius Castoriadis, "On the History of the Workers' Movement," *Telos*, Winter 1976/77, pp. 3–42.

58. Wright, "Blueprint," op. cit., p. 54.

59. Ibid., p. 58.

60. Richard Wright, *The Outsider*, Harper, New York, 1953, pp. 118–19.

61. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, op. cit. passim.

62. See Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, op. cit.; Dan Carter, *Scottsboro*, op. cit.; and Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*, op. cit.

63. Wright, "Blueprint," op. cit., pp. 62–63.

64. See Fabre, op. cit., pp. 365ff; and Webb, op. cit., p. 312.

65. See Cedric J. Robinson, "The Emergent Marxism of Richard Wright's Ideology," *Race and Class* 19, no. 3 (1978): 221–37.

66. Richard Wright, *White Man Listen!*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1957, pp. 34–35. For the function of myth, see Cedric J. Robinson, *The Terms of Order*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1980.

67. See Giovanni Piana, "History and Existence in Husserl's Manuscripts," *Telos* 13 (Fall 1972): 86–164; Georg Lukács, "On the Responsibility of Intellectuals," *Telos* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 123–31, William Leiss's review on Husserl and Paul Piccone's "Reading the Crisis," *Telos* 8 (Summer 1971): 110–21 and 121–29, respectively.

68. Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1972, p. 12.

69. Wright, *The Outsider*, op. cit., p. 129.

70. Daniel Aaron, op. cit., p. 180

71. Wright, *The Outsider*, op. cit., p. 227.

72. Ibid., p. 334.

73. Richard Wright, "The Voiceless Ones," *Saturday Review*, 16 April 1960, p. 22. Raman K. Singh's analysis of Cross may be applied (as he suggested) to Wright: "In opposing Communism, Cross is not giving up Marxism; he is merely seeking to abolish the tyranny of the Party. And in adopting Existentialism, he is not abandoning Marxism, but showing his awareness of both economic and cosmic consciousness." Singh, "Marxism in Richard Wright's fiction," *Indian Journal of American Studies* 4, nos. 1, 2 (June/December 1974): 33–34. This is decidedly not the position taken by other writers who came out from the Communist movement as John Diggins sees them; Diggins, "Buckley's Comrades: The Ex-Communist as Conservative," *Dissent*, Fall 1975, pp. 370–81.

74. Wright, *White Man Listen!*, op. cit., pp. 19–20.

75. Wright, *The Outsider*, op. cit., p. 334.

76. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, in Tucker, op. cit., p. 343.

77. Wright, *The Outsider*, op. cit., p. 221.

78. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, op. cit., p. 345.

79. Wright, *The Outsider*, op. cit., pp. 176–77.

80. Wright, "Blueprint," op. cit., p. 57.