ACK MARX-ISM

CEDRIC J. ROBINSON

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PREFACE TO THE 2000 EDITION

The workers in the advanced nations have done all they could, or intended, to do—which was always something short of revolution.
—Oliver C. Cox, *Capitalism as a System*

There is much to be admired in those who have struggled under the inspiration of Marxism. And no recitation of their courage and sacrifice would be adequate or sufficiently eloquent to capture their awesome achievements—or unhappy failures. But the same may be said of diverse other social movements over the centuries, equally inspired by particular constructions of human experience. What such historical spectacles of human endeavor share, of course, is the magnificence of the human spirit: the inextinguishable resolve to refashion society according to some powerful but imperfect moral vision.

Myths and theories of liberation have been constants in the long record of human experience. They are the bracing concomitants to impositions of domination and oppression, whatever the form of a particular regime. And even when the recorder of the moment was unsympathetic or downright hostile to even the most fugitive and muted affirmation of human integrity, there has been almost inevitably at least a trace—a hint—of the desire for a just order. Solon, Aristophanes, Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle, notwithstanding their unrelieved identifications with the propertied classes of ancient Athens, all could not entirely conceal or effectively dismiss the moral challenges of the poor (*demos*), slaves, and women.[1] Among these writers were some of the most clever weavers of aristocratic flummery. So it is not surprising that if the moral authority spawned in the quest for freedom confounded their gifts for eloquent argument, the same would be repeated over the next two thousand years in the works of their seemingly inexhaustible line of heirs. The medieval inquisition, with its vast clerical intelligentsia and uncontested access to lethal force, never achieved the extinction of the urban Waldensian, Franciscan, and Cathar rebellions against poverty, or the largely rural communisms which bubbled up from among the peasants and the Church's own convents and monasteries.[2] And half a millennium later, though the sheer volume of three centuries of legislation, literature, and state force in

support of slavery in Africa and the New World might have appeared daunting, history proves otherwise—the liberationist agenda of antislavery triumphed.[3]

These three examples from ancient Athens, medieval Europe, and the modern New World are merely instances, moments, in the extraordinary historical index of liberation. Presently one might surmise that more attention is being given to liberation's record than at any previous moment in Western historiography. At least in part, this is a legacy of Marxism. The more substantial inspiration, however, is the present state of the world. For the vast majority of the planet's peoples, the global economy publicizes itself in human misery. Thus, the simple fact is that liberationist movements abound in the real world—a reason for attention far more weighty than the self-serving conceits of capitalist triumphalism and the incessant chants of globalism which followed upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

As Foucault recounted, neither Marx nor Engels were particularly audacious when they characterized the capitalist mode of production as voraciously exploitative. As far back as the eighteenth century, David Ricardo, Adam Smith, and numerous other nonradical predecessors in the emerging field of political economy had expressed similar doubts and unease.[4] Hegel's economic observations of industrial capitalism were even more immediate to the studies conducted by Engels and Marx. In the late eighteenth century, with uncharacteristic brevity and specificity, Hegel recorded: "Complete mercilessness. Factories, manufacturing, base their subsistence on the misery of one class."[5] What was stunning in the writings of Marx and Engels, then, was not their mere recognition of class struggle but rather their sympathies in that struggle. While Kant and Hegel threw their support to the bureaucrats as that stratum which constituted what Hegel designated as the "universal class," Marx and Engels proposed the industrial proletariat, wage laborers. But quite possibly that was less an error in judgment (as Cox supposed) than a deceit: even in their own times, notwithstanding their different historical contexts and their specific political maneuvers, it should have been obvious that Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Engels all concealed their faith in philosophy. As Marx put it in 1844: "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, supplant the criticism of weapons; material force must be overthrown by material force. But theory, too, will become material force as soon as it seizes the masses."[6] Given the miserable social and political chaos of their era (and of our own), we should have little difficulty in sympathizing with the impulse to seek political refuge—that is, a social agenda—in the illusory order and power of pure logic and speculation.[7]

The "masses" whom Marx presumed would be "seized" by theory were European male wage laborers and artisans in the metropoles of Western Europe, Britain, and the United States. Here both theory and Marx's casting of historical materialism betrayed him. Instead of the anarchic globalism of modern capitalist production and exchange, Marx imagined a coherent ordering of things: congruous imperial sites from which cohorts of capitalists cultivated, directed, and dominated satellite societies. For Marx, capitalism consisted of a geometric whole whose elementary and often hidden characteristics (price, value, accumulation, and profit) could be discovered with arithmetic means and certainty.

Driven, however, by the need to achieve the scientific elegance and interpretive economy demanded by theory, Marx consigned race, gender, culture, and history to the dustbin. Fully aware of the constant place women and children held in the workforce, Marx still deemed them so unimportant as a proportion of wage labor that he tossed them, with slave labor and peasants, into the imagined abyss signified by precapitalist, noncapitalist, and primitive accumulation.[8] And how, can we suppose, was Marx's conception of the mode-specific, internal development of European productive forces to accommodate the technological borrowings from China, India, Africa, and the Americas which propelled the West into industrialism and imperialism?[9] As Andre Gunder Frank declares:

> the original sin of Marx, Weber, and their followers was to look for the "origin," "cause," "nature," "mechanism," indeed the "essence" of it [capitalism, development, modernization] all essentially in European exceptionalism instead of in the real world economy/system.[10]

Marx's conceit was to presume that the theory of historical materialism explained history; but, at worst, it merely rearranged history. And at its best (for it must be acknowledged that there are some precious insights in Marxism), historical materialism still only encapsulated an analytical procedure which resonated with bourgeois Europe, merely one fraction of the world economy.

Eurocentrism and secular messianism, however, were not the only ideological elements which worked to constrict Marx's imaginary. There was an obvious genealogy and a striking parallel between Aristotle's treatments of slaves and slavery and those of Marx. Aristotle saw slavery as necessary for the self-sufficiency of the *polis*, and in only rare instances were slaves expected to achieve a virtuous life. Given their marginal intelligence and development, Aristotle found no compelling reason for inquiry into the ethics, consciousness, or desires of slaves, content to state that "the slave is in a sense a part of his master, a living but separate part of his body."[11] Marx, though he found slavery abhorrent, similarly recessed slaves from his discourse on human freedom: "The slave only works swayed by fear, and it is not his existence itself which is at stake, since it is guaranteed to him even if it does not belong to him."[12] Their role in capitalist production, Marx believed, was an embarrassing residue of a precapitalist, ancient mode of production, which disqualified them from historical and political agency in the modern world. And this is not the only evidence that Marx had been substantially influenced by Aristotle. As much as on his own immediate predecessors (Kant, Hegel, etc.), Marx also had drawn on Aristotle for his notions of class and class conflict, the latter most frequently signified by ancient Greek writers as *stasis*. Moreover, in *Capital*, Marx had acknowledged the genius of Aristotle, whose discussion of use-value and exchange-value in the *Politics* had predated by one and three-quarters millenia any economic system which Marx was willing to acknowledge as capitalist.[13]

How and by what Marx and Engels were seduced into these misapprehensions is explored in Part I of the following study. But of equal and perhaps greater interest are

the efforts of renegade radical thinkers to determine what those seductions were and how to recouperate radical theory from its blunders. These particular critics of Marxism were products of other histories, other intellectual traditions, and other, neglected participants in the world economy. When I took up this work, I was interested specifically in those radical thinkers who had emerged from what I have termed the Black Radical Tradition; how some of the most illustrious and perceptive of them came to terms with Marxism is explored in Part III. Rather than belonging to the mercantile, bureaucratic, or technical classes of Western Europe, their foreparents had been the slaves and freedpersons of the West Indies and North America. More accurately, their predecessors had been human beings who happened to be slaves. And so in Part II, in lieu of simply locating these foreparents in some passive, residual economic category, it was critical to explore the histories of their cultures and then how these enslaved people responded to and reacted against the violence which instigated and patrolled their slave statuses. Only through such an interrogation was it possible to demonstrate their roles in the initiation of the Black Radical Tradition.

Ironically, to Black radicals of the twentieth century, one of the most compelling features of Marxism was its apparent universalism. Unlike the dominant historical discourses of the nineteenth century, historical materialism was inflected by an internationalism and a scientific rigor which plainly transcended the obnoxious and sinister claims for destiny exhibited by such conceits as German nationalism, British imperialism, the racism of the "White Man's Burden," and so forth. For a time, then, Marxism might have seemed an effective antidote to contemporary discourse. But Marxism's internationalism was not global; its materialism was exposed as an insufficient explanator of cultural and social forces; and its economic determinism too often politically compromised freedom struggles beyond or outside of the metropole. For Black radicals, historically and immediately linked to social bases predominantly made up of peasants and farmers in the West Indies, or sharecroppers and peons in North America, or forced laborers on colonial plantations in Africa, Marxism appeared distracted from the cruelest and most characteristic manifestations of the world economy. This exposed the inadequacies of Marxism as an apprehension of the modern world, but equally troubling was Marxism's neglect and miscomprehension of the nature and genesis of liberation struggles which already had occurred and surely had yet to appear among these peoples.

The Black Radical Tradition was an accretion, over generations, of collective intelligence gathered from struggle. In the daily encounters and petty resistances to domination, slaves had acquired a sense of the calculus of oppression as well as its overt organization and instrumentation. These experiences lent themselves to a means of preparation for more epic resistance movements. The first organized revolts in the slave castles in Africa, and on board slave ships, were generally communal in the terms of their Old World kinships (Bambara, Ganga, Yoruba, etc.). These rebellions sought return to African homelands and a repair of the discontinuity produced by enslavement and transportation. Later, in the colonial settlements, when conditions were favorable, revolts often took the form of marronage, a concession to the re-

location of slavery and to the new, syncretic cultural identities emergent from the social cauldron of slave organization. Newly transported "outlaw" Africans and creole Blacks, and sometimes Native Americans and European slaves, withdrew beyond the patrolled presence of exploitation to forge egalitarian societies.

With each historical moment, however, the rationale and cultural mechanisms of domination became more transparent. Race was its epistemology, its ordering principle, its organizing structure, its moral authority, its economy of justice, commerce, and power. Aristotle, one of the most original aristocratic apologists, had provided the template in Natural Law. In inferiorizing women ("[T]he deliberative faculty of the soul is not present at all in the slave; in a female it is present but ineffective" [*Politics*, 1260a12]), non-Greeks, and all laborers (slaves, artisans, farmers, wage workers, etc.: "[T]he mass of mankind are evidently quite slavish in their tastes, preferring a life suitable to beasts" [*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b20]), Aristotle had articulated an uncompromising racial construct. And from the twelfth century on, one European ruling order after another, one cohort of clerical or secular propagandists following another, reiterated and embellished this racial calculus.[14] As the Black Radical Tradition was distilled from the racial antagonisms which were arrayed along a continuum from the casual insult to the most ruthless and lethal rules of law; from the objectifications of entries in marine cargo manifests, auction accountancy, plantation records, broadsheets and newspapers; from the loftiness of Christian pulpits and biblical exegesis to the minutia of slave-naming, dress, types of food, and a legion of other significations, the terrible culture of race was revealed. Inevitably, the tradition was transformed into a radical force. And in its most militant manifestation, no longer accustomed to the resolution that flight and withdrawal were sufficient, the purpose of the struggles informed by the tradition became the overthrow of the whole race-based structure.

In the studies of these struggles, and often through engagement with them, the Black Radical Tradition began to emerge and overtake Marxism in the work of these Black radicals. W. E. B. Du Bois, in the midst of the antilynching movement, C. L. R. James, in the vortex of anticolonialism, and Richard Wright, the sharecropper's son, all brought forth aspects of the militant tradition which had informed successive generations of Black freedom fighters. These predecessors were Africans by origins, predominantly recruited from the same cultural matrices, subjected to similar and interrelated systems of servitude and oppression, and mobilized by identical impulses to recover their dignity. And over the centuries, the liberation projects of these men and women in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas acquired similar emergent collective forms in rebellion and marronage, similar ethical and moral articulations of resistance; increasingly, they merged as a function of what Hegel might have recognized as the negation of the negation in the world system. Hegel's "cunning of history," for one instance, was evident when in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Franco-Haitian slaveowners fled to Louisiana, Virginia, and the Carolinas with as many slaves as they could transport, thereby also transporting the Haitian Revolution. The outrage, courage, and vision of that revolution helped in-

spire the Pointe Coupee Conspiracy in 1795 in Louisiana, the Gabriel-led rebellion in 1800 in Virginia, and the rebellion organized by Denmark Vesey in 1822 outside of Charleston.[15] And, in turn, Denmark's movement informed the revolutionary tract, *APPEAL in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America,* penned by David Walker in Boston in 1829.

Du Bois drew on Hegelian dialectics and Marx's notions of class struggle to correct the interpretations of the American Civil War and its subsequent Reconstruction period grown dominant in American historiography (for instance, Woodrow Wilson's *A History of the American People* [1908]) and popular culture (Thomas Dixon's and D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* [1915]).[16] Undaunted by the fact that he was already on forbidden terrain in the thinking of Hegel, Marx, and his own American contemporaries, Du Bois ventured further, uncovering the tradition. Almost simultaneously, James discovered the tradition in the Haitian Revolution. And only a little later, Wright contributed his own critique of proletarian politics from the vantage point of the Black Radical Tradition. For Du Bois, James, and Wright, Marxism became a staging area for their immersion into the tradition. Black Marxism was not a site of contestation between Marxism and the tradition, nor a revision. It was a new vision centered on a theory of the cultural corruption of race. And thus the reach and cross-fertilization of the tradition became evident in the anticolonial and revolutionary struggles of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

As a culture of liberation, the tradition crossed the familiar bounds of social and historical narrative. Just as in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to take one instance, African marronage infected Native American and African settlements in Florida to produce the Black Seminoles who fought against the United States for three decades, the tradition has effused in myriad forms and locations. For some sense of the diversity, one might examine how the tradition insinuated itself quite unexpectedly into the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe when she authored *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), and particularly *Dred, a Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856); into the Blacks who volunteered during the Civil War, and those in the American military who sent letters of outrage from the Philippines during the Spanish-American War; into Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century; into the blues composed by Rainey and all the women named Smith; and into the filmic work of Oscar Micheaux during the silent film era. Reviewing this list, I suspect the Black Radical Tradition extends into cultural and political terrains far beyond my competence to relate.

In short, as a scholar it was never my purpose to exhaust the subject, only to suggest that it was there.

Notes

1. See my forthcoming study of the history of Western socialism, *The Anthropology of Marxism* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England); and Cynthia Farrar, *The Origins of Democratic Thinking* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

2. See R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (New York: Blackwell, 1987); and the classic work of Norman Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).

3. See my *Black Movements in America* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

4. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), 255ff.

5. Leo Rauch, ed., *Hegel and the Human Spirit* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 166.

6. Karl Marx, "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction." In *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 69.

7. Sheldon Wolin, *The Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960).

8. See Marx's rather perfunctory comments on women and children in *Capital*, where he suggests they constitute part of the reserve army employed episodically to retard the falling rate of profit, and compare with the implications of his research into parliamentary investigations of child labor which describe a more constant exploitation of child laborers. Earlier, in *The German Ideology* (1844), Marx had implied that the control over female reproduction in tribal society had inaugurated the first division of labor in human history.

9. Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Frank comments: "[Joseph] Needham lists not only the well-known Chinese inventions of gunpowder, paper and printing, and the compass. He also examines co-fusion and oxygenation iron and steel technology, mechanical clocks, and engineering devices such as drive-belts and chain-drive methods of converting rotary to rectilinear motion, segmental arch and iron-chain suspension bridges, deep-drilling equipment; and paddle-wheel boats, foresails and aft sails, watertight compartments and sternpost rudders in navigation, and many others" (193). He goes on to state that "Indian mathematics and astronomy were sufficiently advanced for Europeans to import astronomical tables and related works from India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In medicine, the theory and practice of inoculation against smallpox came from India." Frank then continues with a survey of more recent studies of "[t]he export of Indian science and technology relating to shipbuilding, textiles, and metallurgy" (194).

10. Ibid., 336.

11. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1255b12.

12. See Marx's "sixth" chapter of *Capital*, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 512.

13. On Marx's debt to Aristotle, see chapters 1 and 2 of G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); and Scott Meikle, *Aristotle's Economic Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

14. For some recent Aristotelians, see Thomas K. Lindsay, "Was Aristotle Racist, Sexist, and Anti-Democratic?," *The Review of Politics* 56 (Winter 1994): 127–51; Peter Garnsay, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which traces the influence of Aristotle into the first 400 years of Christianity; and Sir Moses Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London: Penguin, 1986), which traces Aristotle into the modern age.

15. Robinson, *Black Movements in America*, 32–36.

16. See Robinson, "In the Year 1915: D. W. Griffith and the Whitening of America," *Social Identities* 3 (June 1997): 161–92.

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to map the historical and intellectual contours of the encounter of Marxism and Black radicalism, two programs for revolutionary change. I have undertaken this effort in the belief that in its way each represents a significant and immanent mode of social resolution, but that each is a particular and critically different realization of a history. The point is that they may be so distinct as to be incommensurable. At issue here is whether this is so. If it is, judgments must be made, choices taken.

The inquiry required that both Marxism and Black radicalism be subjected to interrogations of unusual form: the first, Marxism, because few of its adherents have striven hard enough to recognize its profound but ambiguous indebtedness to Western civilization; the second, Black radicalism, because the very circumstance of its appearance has required that it be misinterpreted and diminished. I have hoped to contribute to the correction of these errors by challenging in both instances the displacement of history by aeriform theory and self-serving legend. Whether I have succeeded is for the reader to judge. But first it may prove useful to outline the construction of the study.

In Western societies for the better part of the past two centuries, the active and intellectual opposition of the Left to class rule has been vitalized by the vision of a socialist order: an arrangement of human relations grounded on the shared responsibility and authority over the means of social production and reproduction. The variations on the vision have been many, but over the years of struggle the hardiest tradition has proven to be that identified with the work and writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and V. I. Lenin. Obviously here the term "tradition" is used rather loosely since the divergencies of opinion and deed between Marx, Engels, and Lenin have been demonstrated by history to be as significant as their correspondence. Nevertheless, in common as well as in academic parlance, these three activist-intellectuals are taken to be the principal figures of Marxist or Marxist-Leninist socialism. Marxism was founded on the study of the capitalist expropriation and exploitation of labor as first taken up by Engels, then elaborated by Marx's "material theory of history," his recognition of the evolving systems of capitalist production and the inevitability of class struggle, and later augmented by Lenin's conceptions of imperialism, the state, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and the role of the revolutionary party. It has provided the ideological, historical, and political vocabulary for much of the radical and revolutionary presence

emergent in modern Western societies. Elsewhere, in lands economically parasitized by the capitalist world system, or in those rare instances where its penetration has been quarantined by competing historical formations, some sorts of Marxism have again translated a concern with fundamental social change.

However, it is still fair to say that at base, that is at its epistemological substratum, Marxism is a Western construction—a conceptualization of human affairs and historical development that is emergent from the historical experiences of European peoples mediated, in turn, through their civilization, their social orders, and their cultures. Certainly its philosophical origins are indisputably Western. But the same must be said of its analytical presumptions, its historical perspectives, its points of view. This most natural consequence though has assumed a rather ominous significance since European Marxists have presumed more frequently than not that their project is identical with world-historical development. Confounded it would seem by the cultural zeal that accompanies ascendant civilizations, they have mistaken for universal verities the structures and social dynamics retrieved from their own distant and more immediate pasts. Even more significantly, the deepest structures of "historical materialism," the foreknowledge for its comprehension of historical movement, have tended to relieve European Marxists from the obligation of investigating the profound effects of culture and historical experience on their science. The ordering ideas that have persisted in Western civilization (and Marx himself as we shall see was driven to admit such phenomena), reappearing in successive "stages" of its development to dominate arenas of social ideology, have little or no *theoretical* justification in Marxism for their existence. One such recurring idea is racialism: the legitimation and corroboration of social organization as natural by reference to the "racial" components of its elements. Though hardly unique to European peoples, its appearance and codification, during the feudal period, into Western conceptions of society was to have important and enduring consequences.

In the first part of this study, I have devoted three chapters to explicating the appearance and formulation of racial sensibility in Western civilization and its social and ideological consequences. Chapter 1 reconstructs the history of the emergence of racial order in feudal Europe and delineates its subsequent impact on the organization of labor under capitalism. Racism, I maintain, was not simply a convention for ordering the relations of European to non-European peoples but has its genesis in the "internal" relations of European peoples. As part of the inventory of Western civilization it would reverberate within and without, transferring its toll from the past to the present. In contradistinction to Marx's and Engels's expectations that bourgeois society would rationalize social relations and demystify social consciousness, the obverse occurred. The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term "racial capitalism" to refer to this development and to the subsequent structure as a historical agency. The second chapter, as it rehearses the formation of the working classes in England, looks pre-

cisely at this phenomenon. Since the English working classes were the social basis for Engels's conceptualization of the modern proletariat, and conjoined with the *sans-culotte* of the French Revolution to occupy a similar place in Marx's thought, their evolving political and ideological character is of signal importance in reckoning the objective basis for Marxist theory. Of particular interest is the extent to which racialism (and subsequently nationalism) both as ideology and actuality affected the class consciousness of workers in England. In the intensely racial social order of England's industrializing era, the phenomenology of the relations of production bred no objective basis for the extrication of the universality of class from the particularisms of race. Working-class discourse and politics remained marked by the architectonic possibilities previously embedded in the culture.

But the appearance of European socialism and its development into a tradition was, as well, somewhat at odds with socialism's subsequent historiography and orthodoxies. The third chapter pursues among the middle classes the obscured origins of socialism and the contradictions that weakened its political and ideological expressions. It was indeed nationalism, a second "bourgeois" accretion, that most subverted the socialist creation. Nationalism, as a mix of racial sensibility and the economic interests of the national bourgeoisies, was as powerful an ideological impulse as any spawned from these strata. As an acquired temper and as a historical force met on the fields of social and political revolution, nationalism bemused the founders of historical materialism and those who followed them. It was to overtake both the direction of capitalist development and eventually the formative structures of socialist societies as they appeared in the present century. The historical trajectories of those developments, again, were almost entirely unexpected in a theoretical universe from which it had been discerned that ideology and false consciousness were supposedly being expelled. When in its time Black radicalism became manifest within Western society as well as at the other junctures between European and African peoples, one might correctly expect that Western radicalism was no more receptive to it than were the apologists of power.

Part II takes up this other radical tradition, Black radicalism, the conditions of its historical emergence, its forms, and its nature. This exposition begins in chapter 4 with the reinvestigation of the past relations between Europeans and Africans, a past that has been transformed by Europeans and for Europeans into a grotesque parody, a series of legends as monstrously proportioned as Pliny's *Blemmyae* "whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders." The obscuring of the Black radical tradition is seated in the West's suppression of Europe's previous knowledge of the African (and its own) past. The denial of history to African peoples took time—several hundreds of years—beginning with the emergence of Western Europeans from the shadow of Muslim domination and paternalism. It was also a process that was to transport the image of Africa across separate planes of dehumanization latticed by the emerging modalities of Western culture. In England, at first gripped by a combative and often hysterical Christianity—complements of the crusades, the "reconquests," and the rise of Italian capitalism—medieval English devouts recorded dreams in which the devil appeared

as "a blacke moore," "an Ethiope." This was part of the grammar of the church, the almost singular repository of knowledge in Europe. Centuries later the Satanic gave way to the representation of Africans as a different sort of beast: dumb, animal labor, the benighted recipient of the benefits of slavery. Thus the "Negro" was conceived. The Negro—whose precedents could be found in the racial fabrications concealing the Slavs (*the* slaves), the Irish and others—substantially eradicated in Western historical consciousness the necessity of remembering the significance of Nubia for Egypt's formation, of Egypt in the development of Greek civilization, of Africa for imperial Rome, and more pointedly of Islam's influence on Europe's economic, political, and intellectual history. From such a creature not even the suspicion of tradition needed to be entertained. In its stead there was the Black slave, a consequence masqueraded as an anthropology and a history.

The creation of the Negro was obviously at the cost of immense expenditures of psychic and intellectual energies in the West. The exercise was obligatory. It was an effort commensurate with the importance Black labor power possessed for the world economy sculpted and dominated by the ruling and mercantile classes of Western Europe. As chapter 5 indicates, the Atlantic slave trade and the slavery of the New World were integral to the modern world economy. Their relationship to capitalism was historical and organic rather than adventitious or synthetic. The Italian financiers and merchants whose capital subsidized Iberian exploration of the Atlantic and Indian oceans were also masters of (largely "European") slave colonies in the Mediterranean. Certainly slave labor was one of their bases for what Marx termed "primitive accumulation." But it would be an error to arrest the relationship there, assigning slave labor to some "pre-capitalist" stage of history. For more than 300 years slave labor persisted beyond the beginnings of modern capitalism, complementing wage labor, peonage, serfdom, and other methods of labor coercion. Ultimately, this meant that the interpretation of history in terms of the dialectic of capitalist class struggles would prove inadequate, a mistake ordained by the preoccupation of Marxism with the industrial and manufacturing centers of capitalism; a mistake founded on the presumptions that Europe itself had produced, that the motive and material forces that generated the capitalist system were to be wholly located in what was a fictive historical entity. From its very foundations capitalism had never been—any more than Europe—a "closed system."

Necessarily then, Marx's and Engels's theory of revolution was insufficient in scope: the European proletariat and its social allies did not constitute *the* revolutionary subject of history, nor was working-class consciousness necessarily *the* negation of bourgeois culture. Out of what was in reality a rather more complex capitalist world system (and one to which Marx in his last decade paid closer attention), other revolutionary forces emerged as well. Informed as they were by the ideas and cultures drawn from their own historical experiences, these movements assumed forms only vaguely anticipated in the radical traditions of the West. In the terms of capitalist society they were its negation, but that was hardly the source of their being. And among them was the persistent and continuously evolving resistance of African peo-

ples to oppression. The sixth chapter rehearses the history of this Black radical tradition in the African diaspora and to some extent in the African continent itself. As both this and the seventh chapter attempt to demonstrate, the record of resistance for four centuries or more, from Nueva Espana to Nyasaland, leaves in no doubt the specifically African character of those struggles. Resistances were formed through the meanings that Africans brought to the New World as their cultural possession; meanings sufficiently distinct from the foundations of Western ideas as to be remarked upon over and over by the European witnesses of their manifestations; meanings enduring and powerful enough to survive slavery to become the basis of an opposition to it. With Western society as a condition, that tradition almost naturally assumed a theoretical aspect as well.

The third and final section of this study traces the social and intellectual backgrounds of the processes that led to the theoretical articulation of Black radicalism. The conditions for modern Black theory were present first in the African diaspora. Far from Africa and physically enveloped by hostile communities, Black opposition acquired a penetrative comprehension. But it was a social and political as well as a historical process that nurtured theory. In the pursuit of that process I have identified three seminal Black radical intellectuals: William Edward Burkhardt Du Bois, Cyril Lionel Robert James, and Richard Nathaniel Wright. They have been chosen for detailed treatment not only because they made substantial contributions to the theoretical text, but because their lives and circumstances were prisms of the events impending on and emanating from the Black radical tradition. Their reactions to their confrontation with Black resistance, the very means used for their expression were distinct but related, characterized by circumstance, temperament, and training. Though their lives were very dissimilar—only Wright could be said to have been directly produced by the Black peasant and working classes—they all came to that tradition late (and hesitantly, as I will argue with respect to Du Bois and James). For all three, though, Marxism had been the prior commitment, the first encompassing and conscious experience of organized opposition to racism, exploitation, and domination. As Marxists, their apprenticeships proved to be significant but ultimately unsatisfactory. In time, events and experience drew them toward Black radicalism and the discovery of a collective Black resistance inspired by an enduring cultural complex of historical apprehension. In these concluding chapters I have attempted to demonstrate how and why this was so. Taken together, the efforts of Du Bois, James, and Wright consisted of a first step toward the creation of an intellectual legacy that would complement the historical force of Black struggle. Their destiny, I suggest, was not to create the idea of that struggle so much as to articulate it. Regardless, the Black opposition to domination has continued to acquire new forms. In a very real sense then, the present study follows.

new theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and even those not always correctly.[109]

This criteria might well have been extended to the more mature, and ultimately more responsible, members of later generations of Marxists. It would have to be deepened, however, to fathom the structure of Marxian theory.

With respect to Marxism's failure in determining the historical force and character of ideology as nationalism, another of Engels's remarks is apropos:

[O]nce an historic element has been brought into the world by other, ultimately economic causes, it reacts, can react on its environment and even on the causes that have given rise to it.[110]

Just as the expansion of capitalism has resulted in the preservation of certain aspects of non- ("pre-") capitalist modes of production, there is also evidence that nationalism in many places has assumed forms largely organized through ideational systems indigenous to those peoples exploited by the world market. It is not entirely accurate to argue as Tom Nairn has recently that:

Nationalism defeated socialism in the zone of high development, forcing it outwards into successive areas of backwardness where it was bound to become part of their great compensatory drive to catch up—an ideology of development or industrialization, rather than one of post-capitalist society.[111]

Nairn suggests the transfer of a socialism bred in the historical conditions at the center of industrial capitalism. This is a socialism capable of changing place without changing character! However, no single model of socialist industrialization or development has resulted from the revolutionary social orders of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Mozambique, or Angola. That is because each of these revolutionary orders is informed by political, moral, and ideological presumptions with priorities that precede their envelopment into the modern world system. Again, it may not be the case that we have seen "the full historical potential of 'nationalism.' "[112]

Conclusion

Among the several curious and unhappy legacies in Western civilizations of those centuries nearest to us are the system of capitalism and the beliefs in rationalism and science. But perhaps in some sense the term "legacy" is inappropriate, not the least for its suggestions of fatality, for none of these has passed away. Capitalism, rationalism, and scientism are not merely forms of activity (production) and reflexives of that activity. Each became a momentous historical force, providing substantially the character of the present industrial world—its character, but not necessarily its historical direction. This has been, of course, a frustrating disappointment to some—particu-

larly those who believed that through the movement of capitalism they had discovered the nature, that is, the basis for historical change. For them, perhaps, the most disturbing social phenomenon of our time has been the "re-emergence" of ideology—what Marx called partial consciousness—to its prescientific, prerational prominence in the affairs of humankind. Ideology, especially in the twentieth century, has come to play a discordant role within the body of modern social thought, somewhat akin to that which slavery assumed among the rationalistic analytical frameworks concomitant to the rise of capitalism. Ideology, simply, is a negation of those strains of contemporary social inquiry that have become dominant. Its "intrusions" in our century and the one that preceded it have helped to abort those social and historical processes believed to be necessary and inevitable; have catalyzed rebellions and revolutions in often unlikely circumstances and among unlikely peoples; and have assisted in extraordinary historical achievement where failure was "objectively" immanent. As an ally of historical forces only poorly understood, ideology has exposed Western thought both in its form as mechanical Marxism for its reductionism,[113] and, in an entirely different way, liberal thought for its reifications.[114]

The limits of Western radicalism as demonstrated in Marxist theory, the most sustained critique of the modern era, are endemic to Western civilization. Those limitations relate directly to the "understanding" of consciousness, and the persistence of racialism in Western thought was of primary importance. It would have been exceedingly difficult and most unlikely that such a civilization in its ascendancy as a significant power in the world would produce a tradition of self-examination sufficiently critical to expose one of its most profound terms of order. Racialism, as I have tried to show, ran deep in the bowels of Western culture, negating its varying social relations of production and distorting their inherent contradictions. The comprehension of the particular configuration of racist ideology and Western culture has to be pursued historically through successive eras of violent domination and social extraction that directly involved European peoples during the better part of two millennia. Racialism insinuated not only medieval, feudal, and capitalist social structures, forms of property, and modes of production, but as well the very values and traditions of consciousness through which the peoples of these ages came to understand their worlds and their experiences. Western culture, constituting the structure from which European consciousness was appropriated, the structure in which social identities and perceptions were grounded in the past, transmitted a racialism that adapted to the political and material exigencies of the moment. In the medieval and feudal social orders of the European hinterland and the Mediterranean, racialism was substantiated by specific sets of exploitation through which particular caste or classes exploited and expropriated disparate peoples.

At the very beginnings of European civilization (meaning literally the reappearance of urban life at the end of the first Christian millennium), the integration of the Germanic migrants with older European peoples resulted in a social order of domination from which a racial theory of order emerged; one from which the medieval nobilities would immerse themselves and their power in fictional histories, positing

distinct racial origins for rulers and the dominated. The extension of slavery and the application of racism to non-European peoples as an organizing structure by first the ruling feudal strata and then the bourgeoisies of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and six-teenth centuries retained this practical habit, this social convention. And as we shall soon see in Part II, from the seventeenth century on, English merchant capital (to cite an important example) incorporated African labor in precisely these terms, that is, the same terms through which it had earlier absorbed Irish labor. Moreover, Euro-pean racialism was to undergo a kind of doubling onto itself, for in between the era of intra-European racism that characterized the first appearance of European con-sciousness and the predatory era of African enslavement, is the almost entirely exoge-nous phenomenon of Islamic domination of the Mediterranean—the eventual fount of European revitalization and recivilization. Independent of the historical meshings of European development but profoundly restricting that development—first in liter-ally retarding European social development by isolating it from civil life, science, speculative thought, and so on, and then, after four centuries, by accelerating its recovery from the twelfth century onward—Muslim civilization mapped the contours of the European cultural renaissance. These events were to leave tell-tale marks on Western consciousness: the fear and hatred of "blackamoors"; the demonization of Islam; the transfiguration of Muhammad the Prophet into the anti-Christ. Not sur-prisingly, Europeans, that is "Christendom," still experience recurrences of antipathy toward what became their shared phantasmagoria.

In short, there were at least four distinct moments that must be apprehended in European racialism; two whose origins are to be found within the dialectic of Euro-pean development, and two that are not:

1. the racial ordering of European society from its formative period, which extends into the medieval and feudal ages as "blood" and racial beliefs and legends.

2. the Islamic (i.e., Arab, Persian, Turkish, and African) domination of Mediterra-nean civilization and the consequent retarding of European social and cultural life: the Dark Ages.

3. the incorporation of African, Asian, and peoples of the New World into the world system emerging from late feudalism and merchant capitalism.

4. the dialectic of colonialism, plantocratic slavery, and resistance from the six-teenth century forward, and the formations of industrial labor and labor reserves.

It is now a convention to begin the analysis of racism in Western societies with the third moment; entirely ignoring the first and second and only partially coming to terms with the fourth. As we shall observe in the next section of this study, the results have been rather bizarre: some students of racism have happily reiterated the premise of a sort of mass psychology of chromatic trauma in which European reactions to darker-skinned peoples are seen as natural; others, including Marxists, have argued for a simplistic "empiricism" where the inevitable consequences of slavery and domi-nation are the rationalizations of racial superiority and inferiority. In each instance, the root of the methodological and conceptual flaws is the same: the presumption

that the social and historical processes that matter, which are determinative, are European. All else, it seems, is derivative. (On this score the preoccupation of Western radicalism with capitalism as a system has served the same purpose. Marxists have often argued that national liberation movements in the Third World are secondary to the interests of the industrial proletariat in the capitalist metropoles, or that they need to be understood only as the social efflux of world capitalism. Such movements require fitting in at the margins of the model for socialist revolution.) What is least defensible though, is how scant the attention paid to intra-European racialism has been.

We have now given consideration to the first moment of European racialism; it is time to explore the other three. This we shall do, but with a difference. History will no longer be left to revolve around European peoples or to originate from Europe as its center. In Part II, in particular respecting African peoples and the African diaspora, we will explore the foundations of the modern era as they were forged or enhanced by the activities of other peoples. In focusing on the history of the struggles of Black peoples for a different social order, we will of course, be reminded again of the limitations of Western radicalism, but more importantly we shall be preparing ourselves for a more profound understanding of the Black radical tradition. When in turn we have concluded that preparation, we shall then examine the pioneering efforts of Black radical theorists. This, too, will provide us with some insight into the problems of Western radicalism. The basis of Part III will be the thought of three Black ideologists, Du Bois, James, and Wright, who became conscious of their own positions and that of Black struggles in Western civilization and thought. Their attempts to reconcile their social consciousness to the priorities of "historical materialism" led to a critique of the very tradition in which they sought relief, and finally to a radical Black consciousness. Most important, however, is their eventual encounter with the Black radical tradition. The result was the first theoretical articulation of a revolutionary tradition whose nature was founded on a very different historical role for consciousness than was anticipated in Western radicalism. The object informing this study is to synthesize the elements of that emergent Black tradition into a coherent schema so that its remarkable insights and its historical project might assume their most authentic significance.

THE NATURE OF
THE BLACK RADICAL
TRADITION

7

This brings us finally to the character, or more accurately to the ideological, philosophical, and epistemological natures of the Black movement whose dialectical matrix we believe was capitalist slavery and imperialism. What events have been most consistently present in its phenomenology? Which social processes has it persistently reiterated? From which social processes is it demonstrably, that is, historically alienated? How does it relate to the political order? Which ideographic constructs and semantic codes has it most often exhibited? Where have its metaphysical boundaries been most certainly fixed? What are its epistemological systems? These are the questions that we now must address, relieved from paradigmatic and categorical imperatives that have so long plagued Western scholarship and whose insistence stemmed largely from their uncritical application and the unquestioned presumption that regardless of their historical origins they were universal. Having arrived at a historical moment, at a conjuncture, at an auspicious time where the verities of intellectual and analytical imitation are no longer as significant to the Black ideologue as they once were, where the now current but dominant traditions of Western thought have once again been revealed to have a casual rather than systemic or organic relationship to the myriad transformations of human development and history, when—and this is the central issue—the most formidable apparatus of physical domination and control have disintegrated in the face of the most unlikely oppositions (India, Algeria, Angola, Vietnam, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Mozambique), the total configuration of human experience requires other forms.

Our first step is relatively easy because it was always there, always indicated, in the histories of the radical tradition. Again and again, in the reports, casual memoirs, official accounts, eye-witness observations, and histories of each of the tradition's episodes, from the sixteenth century to the events recounted in last week's or last month's journals, one note has occurred and recurred: the absence of mass violence.[1] Western observers, often candid in their amazement, have repeatedly remarked that in the vast series of encounters between Blacks and their oppressors, only some of which have been recounted above, Blacks have seldom employed the level of violence that they (the Westerners) understood the situation required.[2] When we recall that in the New World of the nineteenth century the approximately 60 whites killed in the Nat Turner insurrection was one of the largest totals for that century; when we recall that in the massive uprisings of slaves in 1831 in Jamaica—where 300,000 slaves lived under the domination of 30,000 whites—only 14 white casualties were reported, when in revolt after revolt we compare the massive and often indiscriminate reprisals of the civilized master class (the employment of terror) to the scale of violence of the slaves (and at present their descendants), at least one impression is that a very different and shared order of things existed among these brutally violated people.[3] Why did Nat Turner, admittedly a violent man, spare poor whites? Why did Toussaint escort his absent "master's" family to safety before joining the slave revolution? Why was "no white person killed in a slave rebellion in colonial Virginia"?[4] Why would Edmund Morgan or Gerald Mullin argue that slave brutality was directly related to acculturation, "that the more slaves came to resemble the indigent freemen whom they displaced, the more dangerous they became"?[5] Every century it was the same. The people with Chilembwe in 1915 force-marched European women and children to the safety of colonist settlement.[6] And in that tradition, in the 1930s, James ambivalently found Dessalines wanting for his transgressions of the tradition. Dessalines was a military genius, yes. He was shrewd, cunning, but he was also a man whose hatred had to be kept "in check."[7]

There was violence of course, but in this tradition it most often was turned inward: the active against the passive, or as was the case of the Nongquase of 1856, the community against its material aspect. This was not "savagery" as the gentlemen-soldiers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European armies arrogantly reported to their beloved publics at home. Neither was it the "fratricide" of Fanon's extended Freudianism.[8] And only seldom was it the devouring "revolutionary terror" of the "international bourgeois democratic revolution" that Genovese's neo-Marxism has led him to acknowledge.[9] This violence was not inspired by an external object, it was not understood as a part of an attack on a system, or an engagement with an abstraction of oppressive structures and relations. Rather it was their "Jonestown," our Nongquase: The renunciation of actual being for historical being; the preservation of the ontological totality granted by a metaphysical system that had never allowed for property in either the physical, philosophical, temporal, legal, social, or psychic senses. For them defeat or victory was an internal affair. Like those in the 1950s who took to the mountains and forests of Kenya to become the Land and Freedom Army,

the material or "objective" power of the enemy was irrelevant to their destinies. His machines, which flung metal missiles, his vessels of smoke, gas, fire, disease, all were of lesser relevance than the integral totality of the people themselves. This was what Chilembwe meant when he entreated his people to "strike a blow and die." This is what all the Jakobos in all the thousands of Chishawashas and at all the tens of thousands of beer-parties that dot the Black world have been saying for tens of generations: "we had only ourselves to blame for defeat."[10] This was a revolutionary consciousness that proceeded from the whole historical experience of Black people and not merely from the social formations of capitalist slavery or the relations of production of colonialism.

It becomes clear, then, that for the period between the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, it was an African tradition that grounded collective resistance by Blacks to slavery and colonial imperialism. This is precisely what Gerald Mullin discovered and wrote about in his study of Blacks in eighteenth-century Virginia. There he concluded:

> Whatever the precise meaning of procurement for the African as a person, his fellowship or affectivity, a core area of human behavior, remained intact as a slave. Africans, assuming that resistance was a group activity, ran off with their own countrymen, and American-born slaves including mulattoes.[11]

Further on, he would make the point again, only differently and more to our immediate point: " 'Outlandish' Africans often reacted to their new condition by attempting to escape, either to return to Africa or to form settlements of fugitives to recreate their old life in the new land. These activities were not predicated upon the Africans' experience of plantation life, but on a total rejection of their lot."[12] Such was the stuff from which legends were made among the Africans. Where to deny to one's self the eating of salt (the "ocean-sea"?) was a guarantee of the retention of the power to fly, really fly, home.[13] All of it was a part of a tradition that was considerably different from what was made of the individualistic and often spontaneous motives that energized the runaway, the arsonist, the poisoner. It more easily sustained suicide than assault, and its ideological, psycho-social, cultural, and historical currencies were more charismatic than political. When its actualization was frustrated, it became *obeah, voodoo, myalism, pocomania*—the religions of the oppressed as Vittorio Lanternari put it.[14] When it was realized, it could become the Palmares, the Bush Negro settlements, and, at its heights, Haiti. But always, its focus was on the structures of the mind. Its epistemology granted supremacy to metaphysics not the material.

It was the mind, metaphysics, ideology, consciousness that was Mackandel's tool in mid-eighteenth-century Haiti. He persuaded the Blacks and their masters to sense the hatred of the slaves in palpable terms. Ordinary precautions were irrelevant, what the slaves could be physically obstructed from accomplishing was unimportant. Their hatred was a material force, capable of snuffing the lives from masters who had gone so far as to import their foods from France and had unloaded the precious cargo with their own hands. It was the same with Hyacinth. His army could rush the cannon of

the French forces "without fear or care for the volleys," shoving their arms into the cannons' mouths. They knew, they believed that "if they were killed they would wake again in Africa." On that final day of March 1792, 2,000 of them "died," to a mere 100 of their opponents, but they were doubly blessed: they won the battle and even their dead were free.[15] Boukman possessed the same truth. And so did Romaine. Nanny, who had preceded her Haitian sister by sixty years, was warmed in her mountainous retreat in Jamaica by that very same consciousness. They lived on their terms, they died on their terms, they obtained their freedom on their terms. Thus it was with *obeah*men and *obeah*women, and *papaloi*. These were the terms that these African peasants and farmers had brought with them to their captivity. They were also the only terms in which their freedom could be acquired. At Richmond, Virginia, in the summer of 1800, Gabriel had not quite realized this vision, but his George Smith did. Smith believed in Africa and knew of the "outlandish people," that they dealt with "Witches and Wizards, and thus [would be] useful in Armies to tell when any calamity was about to befall them."[16] In 1822 in Charleston, South Carolina, Denmark Vesey realized it, but his Gullah Jack knew it too little. And in 1830, old Nat brought it to fruition.

> Only Nat Turner, who charged his plan with supernatural signs, and sacred, poetic language that inspired action, was able to transcend the world of the plantation and the city. Only Turner led a "sustained" insurrection.[17]

It could not be otherwise. This is what the Black radical tradition made manifest. It was a consciousness implicated in what Amos Tutuola so many generations later would name "the bush of the ghosts."[18] In the twentieth century, when Black radical thinkers had acquired new habits of thought in keeping, some of them supposed, with the new conditions of their people, their task eventually became the revelation of the older tradition. Not surprisingly, they would discover it first in their history, and finally all around them.

The Black radical tradition that they were to rediscover from a Black historical experience nearly grounded under the intellectual weight and authority of the official European version of the past, was to be the foundation upon which they stood. From this vantage point they could survey the theoretical, ideological, and political instrumentation with which Western radicalism approached the problem of revolutionary social change. The Black radical tradition cast doubt on the extent to which capitalism penetrated and re-formed social life and on its ability to create entirely new categories of human experience stripped bare of the historical consciousness embedded in culture. It gave them cause to question the authority of a radical intelligentsia drawn by its own analyses from marginal and ambiguous social strata to construct an adequate manifestation of proletarian power. And it drew them more and more toward the actual discourse of revolutionary masses, the impulse to make history in their own terms. And finally, the Black radical tradition forced them to reevaluate the nature and historical roles of ideology and consciousness. After all it had been as an emergent African people and not as slaves that Black men and women had opposed

enslavement. And long before the advent of the "madmen and specialists" (as Wole Soyinka phrased it), the military dictators and neocolonial petit bourgeoisies who in our own time have come to dominate Black societies in Africa and the Caribbean, the Black radical tradition had defined the terms of their destruction: the continuing development of a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality.

PART

BLACK RADICALISM AND MARXIST THEORY

3

CHAPTER

THE FORMATION OF
AN INTELLIGENTSIA

8

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 landowners (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.

any people. Total herds of cattle, their most precious possession which symbolized to the Xhosa the continuity, vitality, and wealth of patrilineal kin groups, were to be completely destroyed. The reluctant were assured that destruction of the living herds mattered little since they, and all their ancestors, would return to repopulate the earth. Believers were told to consume all the corn in their storage pits, for on the morning of renewal they would find the pits refilled. The Xhosa were not to cultivate the fields and should sacrifice all poultry and other small stock" (p. 105). See also Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964, pp. 32–44; Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, Viking Press, New York, 1966, pp. 193–200; and also J. B. Peires, "Nxele, Ntsidana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction," *Journal of African History* 20, no. 1 (1979): 51–61.

282. See David Clammer, *The Zulu War*, St. Martin's, New York, 1973. G. H. L. Le May, *Black and White in South Africa*, American Heritage Press, 1971; Roux, op. cit., pp. 45–53, 87–100; C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, op. cit., pp. 6371; James Stuart, *A History of the Zulu Rebellion*, Macmillan, London, 1913; George Shopperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1958, pp. 419ff; Shula Marks, "The Zulu Disturbances in Natal," in Robert Rotberg (ed.), *Rebellion in Black Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, pp. 24–59.

283. Gerald Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978, p. 138; Ronald Chilcote, *Emerging Nationalism in Portuguese Africa*, Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1969.

284. Basil Davidson, *The African Past*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1964, pp. 357–58.

285. See Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1975; David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850–1928*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963; R. H. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire, 1813–1889*, Heinemann, London, 1975; Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975; Obaro Ikime, "Colonial Conquest and African Resistance in the Niger Delta States," *Tarikh* 4, no. 3 (1973): 1–13; J. A. Atanda, "British Rule in Buganda," *Tarikh* 4, no. 4 (1974): 37–54; Elizabeth Hopkins, "The Nyabingi Cult of Southwestern Uganda," in R. Rotberg (ed.), *Rebellion in Black Africa*, op. cit., pp. 60–132; Ian Clegg, *Workers' Self-Management in Algeria*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971; T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896–7*, Heinemann, London, 1967; D. N. Beach, " 'Chimurenga': The Shona Rising of 1896–97," *Journal of African History* 20, no. 3 (1979): 395–420; Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1979; and Terence Ranger, "The People in African Resistance: A Review," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 4, no. 1 (October 1977): 125–46, for a sample of the literature on African resistance.

286. T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, op. cit., p. 352.

287. Michael Taussig, "Black Religion and Resistance in Colombia: Three Centuries of Social Struggle in the Cauca Valley," *Marxist Perspectives* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 88–89.

Chapter Seven

1. "Atrocities by rebellious slaves in the United States did not occur often. Rebels killed whites but rarely tortured or mutilated them. They rarely, that is, committed against whites the outrages that whites regularly committed against them. Elsewhere in the hemisphere, where maroon wars and large-scale rebellions encouraged harsh actions, reactions, and reprisals, the level of violence and atrocity rose. But everywhere the overwhelming burden of evidence convicts the slaveholding regimes of countless crimes, including the most sadistic tortures, to every single act of barbarism by the slaves." Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, op. cit., p. 109.

2. Two observations by Henry Bleby during his investigation of the Jamaican rebellion in 1831 are quite typical: "The hired advocate of slavery, Mr. Bortwick, in his lectures of 1833, which were designed to defend and uphold the system, and cover or misrepresent its cruelties and oppressions, laid much stress on the murders, rapes, and other outrages, said to have been committed by the slaves in Jamaica during the insurrection; and the people of Great Britain were triumphantly referred to these as examples of what might be looked for from them in the event of their emancipation. But very few instances of such barbarities were ever brought before the public properly authenticated." And elsewhere: "I confess I have always regarded it as a singular feature in the history of that period, that so few instances occurred of cruelty practiced towards the whites, whether males or females, who at different times fell into the hands of the blacks. Fifty thousand slaves were, probably, more or less concerned in the insurrection; and amongst these, it may be, twenty—certainly not more—were directly accessory to such acts of atrocity as those which we have described." Bleby, op. cit., pp. 43 and 47, respectively.

3. Returning to the Jamaican rebellion of 1831 and the earlier (1816) Barbados revolt, we are reminded of Michael Craton's description of the repressions that followed. Of Barbados, he wrote: "Roaming slaves were shot on sight and Negro houses burned. . . . Captives were commonly tortured. . . . Convicted rebels were publicly executed in different parts of the island and their bodies—sometimes just their heads—in many cases exposed on their home estates" (p. 102). Things went similarly in Jamaica 15 years later: "Many slaves, including women and children were shot on sight, slave huts and provisions grounds were systemat-

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.
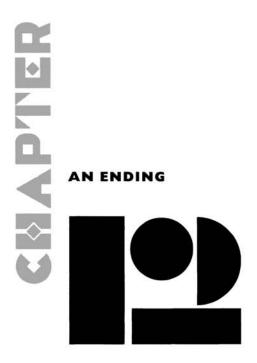
Chapter Nine

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.

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 revolution, he could not avoid a kindred problem: the reevaluation of the nature and the historical role of the revolutionary petit bourgeois intelligentsia and its presumptions. 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 medium" is how James would describe the voodoo ideology of the Haitian revolutionists, 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 American 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 paternalism. 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 secur-ing only a momentary respite—has given way to the imperatives of broader collec-tivities. 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 opposi-tion 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 radical-ism 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 libera-tion 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.