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Source: *Social Text*, Autumn, 1981, No. 4 (Autumn, 1981), pp. 3-27

Published by: Duke University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/466273>

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The Third Reconstruction: Black Nationalism and Race in a Revolutionary America

MANNING MARABLE

In two historic instances Negro Americans have been beneficiaries—as well as victims—of the national compulsion to level or to blur distinctions. The first leveling ended the legal status of slavery, the second the legal system of segregation. Both abolitions left the beneficiaries still suffering from handicaps inflicted by the system abolished.

C. Vann Woodward,
The Strange Career of Jim Crow

I

In the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, an uneven period of Reconstruction began. Partially because Northern troops were as racist as Southerners, no definite policies evolved relating to “the Negro Question.” General William T. Sherman campaigned through Georgia and the Carolinas and issued the famous Order No. 15, which guaranteed blacks the right of pre-emption on former plantation property. Blacks bought or seized thousands of acres of choice farmland, only to give these lands back when President Andrew Johnson insisted on a whites-only land tenure policy. Despite the setbacks, a number of important advances were achieved. The Freedmen’s Bureau, a government agency, provided over twenty-one million rations of food to blacks and aided in the resettlement of families. Churches and white philanthropic organizations established black colleges, universities, and hospitals. By 1875, over 600,000 black youth were attending Southern schools, when only a decade before it was illegal in most states to teach reading to blacks. Politically, progress was made both in the North and the South. By 1873, there were seven blacks in Congress, a figure that would not be equalled again until 1967. Many segregation laws, most of which had existed in nonslave states, were voided: in 1865, for instance, Illinois and Indiana repealed laws stating that blacks could not testify in courts; segregated schools in Rhode Island were abolished in 1866. In

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1865, Congress repealed an act from 1825 that prohibited Afro-Americans from working as post office employees, and allowed blacks to participate in federal court trials. Jim Crow streetcars were stopped in Washington, D.C. in 1865, because of the public protests of abolitionist Sojourner Truth. In general, despite its contradictions, Reconstruction represented a period of greater human freedoms for all Afro-Americans and raised the possibility of a truly democratic American society.

Yet, most of the benefits from Reconstruction disappeared almost as quickly as they were achieved. Slavery was abolished, but in its place were the sharecropping and crop lien systems of agricultural production, modes of labor in certain respects even more oppressive than enslavement. The total numbers of black elected officials, which amounted to 670 state representatives, 124 state senators, and 22 congresspersons in the years 1869–1901, dropped to almost nothing. Beginning in 1890, a series of Southern states passed new constitutions which effectively denied all blacks (and a greater percentage of poor whites) the right of suffrage, in direct violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. County and town governments adopted a system of convict leasing in which thousands of unemployed blacks were arrested for “vagrancy” and then hired to white merchants or businessmen seeking cheap labor. Within a generation after the war, an all-pervasive system of racial segregation was dominant in every aspect of black-white relations. For instance, South Carolina law declared that black and white textile workers could not work together in the same room, use the same entrances, doorways, drinking water buckets and cups, pay windows, or lavatories. Louisiana demanded that its blacks purchase separate tickets at separate pay windows and use separate entrances to attend all local circuses. In 1909, Mobile required all blacks to be off the street by 10:00 p.m. In New Orleans, black and white prostitutes solicited customers in separate districts. As historian C. Vann Woodward has observed, “a Birmingham ordinance got down to the particulars in 1930 by making it ‘unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other’ at dominoes or checkers.”

The reasons for the reactionary, post-Reconstruction period, which historian Rayford Logan has correctly termed “The Nadir,” are varied and complex. The North had no desire to elevate the Negro to the social and cultural status of an equal. The war was fought “over slavery,” but not over the status of the slave. The economic system of involuntary servitude was updated along capitalist lines in conformity with the demands of Northern industry and the dominant Republican Party. Black aspirations for land tenure, the popular demand for “forty acres and a mule,” were largely crushed with the help of the occupying Union army. Black political leaders tended to emerge from the educated, culturally assimilated slave and freed Negro strata, rather than from the masses of field hands and laborers; as a result, most black Republicans tended to be far too conservative in dealing with the former master class. There were of course outstanding exceptions, such as the brilliant Henry M. Turner and Martin Delaney. But generally Reconstruction succumbed to reaction because none of the major parties involved, other than the blacks themselves, had any intention of liberating the Afro-American community from a secondary caste position and from its inferior economic status.

The foundations for the modern Civil Rights Movement, which Woodward refers to as “the Second Reconstruction,” are found within the failure and promise of the first. The next conflict was, like the first, over the relationship between black people and the

South. One pivotal difference was the fact that this conflict was fought on the terrain of public policy and electoral politics, over cultural and social relations rather than on the battlefield. This critical distinction within specific phases of social transformation is described in the works of Antonio Gramsci as the difference between a “war of position” and a “war of movement.”

Another difference was that the ideological forces of liberation (the combined weight of the N.A.A.C.P. and the Urban League on the political right, S.C.L.C. and C.O.R.E. in the center, and S.N.C.C. on the left, plus black nationalist forces and personalities like Malcolm X) were much stronger than were the early black abolitionists (Frederick Douglass, Delaney, Henry Highland Garnet) relative to the forces of reaction and racism. As in the first Reconstruction, the U.S. Government, and particularly the ideologically liberal politicians and intellectuals, sought to create reforms for the Afro-American community at the expense of the racial status quo. A series of Federal laws and Supreme Court decisions challenged and eventually destroyed the legitimacy of Jim Crow, much as the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 had challenged racial discrimination for a brief time. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned Jim Crow in theatres, hotels, restaurants, and all public places. More significantly, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discrimination in economic opportunity, all public educational institutions, unions, and housing. Despite the white South’s “Massive Resistance,” the battle to destroy *de jure* segregation was won by 1970.

Much of the literature on the Second Reconstruction deals with either the political organizations fighting for integration or the specific public figures which the Movement elevated to greatness. Certainly Martin Luther King, Jr. deserves special note, not so much for his rhetorical eloquence or ability to represent the aspirations of millions of black working people, but for the courage and increasingly progressive political positions he took from 1966–68. Others have commented extensively on the impact of political desegregation upon the makeup of local, state, and federal government. For example, in 1964, there were only 103 black elected officials in the United States; by 1970, the total was 1,469, and by 1980 the figure exceeded 5,000. What really made the Second Reconstruction meaningful, however, were the actual material advances gained by the majority of black industrial workers, farmers, and the petty bourgeois strata between 1954 and 1970.

It was in the general quality of human life—housing, educational advancement, employment, health, and cultural activity—that the benefits of the Second Reconstruction were most profound. Black unemployment rates for married males dropped sharply, from 7.9 percent in 1962 down to 2.5 percent in 1969. Overall unemployment rates for all blacks went from 10.9 percent to 6.4 percent during these same years. Black workers began shifting from lower paying agricultural and unskilled laboring jobs to industrial and skilled laboring jobs. Desegregation and official “equal opportunity” hiring practices meant that thousands of technically qualified blacks could compete on relatively even terms for professional and clerical positions which had been previously “Jim Crowed.” As formerly segregated colleges, technical schools, and universities began to admit blacks, several million black youth acquired the academic leverage essential for vocational advancement. These reforms in hiring practices and educational opportunity had a direct impact upon the quality of black housing, black health care, and even infant mortality and fertility rates. Blacks were increasingly able to purchase their own homes, and were now able to afford the physical luxuries (such as indoor plumbing) that most

whites had experienced for decades. Life expectancies for both black women and men increased as the federal government expanded its social service and welfare programs (i.e., Medicare and Medicaid) to aid the elderly and disabled.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx quotes Hegel as stating that “history repeats itself twice,” and then adds, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. If the First Reconstruction was tragic, then its successor was akin to farce, since so many of the same ingredients which coalesced for reaction came together in the later period. Once again, the impetus for reaction first showed itself within the ranks of the Afro-Americans’ allies, the political liberals of both parties. As white middle class constituencies grew alarmed by Watts, Hough, and Chicago’s South Side “riots,” a demand for law-and-order began to prevail. Just as Delaney and DuBois frightened the white postbellum status quo, so too did the Black Panther Party, Malcolm X’s Organization for Afro-American Unity, the Republic of New Africa, and the Black Workers Congress frighten white bourgeois America. “We Shall Overcome” became “What more do *they* want?” Johnson’s domestic liberalism gave way to Nixon and Agnew’s “benign neglect” and vicious political repression. The only progressive black alternative to the N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League block of Negro conservatives—the black nationalists—were unable to unite around a common agenda for political work and economic development. The Supreme Court’s 1978 decision on Alan Bakke gave rise to concern that the educational reforms for blacks might be undermined legally within a few years. No one, of course, raised the question of a return to Jim Crow; like slavery during the First Reconstruction, the Movement had effectively voided this question from the public arena. What did occur by the mid and late 1970s, was the partial destruction of most of the material and economic benefits of the Second Reconstruction.

As black political theorist Adolph L. Reed has observed, the destruction of Jim Crow removed “a tremendous oppression from black life. Yet, the dismantlement of the system of racial segregation only removed a fetter blocking the possibility of emancipation.” By 1972 or 1973, most of the political outbursts against the system of racial and class exploitation had been depoliticized. In Reed’s words, “Black opposition has dissolved into celebration and wish fulfillment. Today’s political criticism within the black community—both Marxist-Leninist and nationalist—lacks a base and is unlikely to attract substantial constituencies.” Older, integrationist leaders and organizations returned to positions of quasi-hegemony within the Afro-American national community, but they were unable to organize and manipulate black political opinion with the authority they had previously. Ironically, the very successes of the Second Reconstruction (limited but real) plus the paucity of any kind of critical theory rooted within the historical realities of black society in America helped to undermine the N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League, as well as its leadership elites.

The major distinction between both the First and Second Reconstructions and, for instance, the period of reconstruction after the Russian Civil War of 1918–21, was that the American reformers had no critical theory of social transformation by which they could explain or understand the complexity of the challenges they faced. Amílcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau provides us with another example. Between 1956 and 1959, Cabral and his associates in the P.A.I.G.C. developed a theory of social change based upon their knowledge of dialectical and historical materialism—but grounded in the peculiar realities of their country and the social forces which they sought to overthrow. The P.A.I.G.C.’s war for liberation, which culminated in Guinea-Bissau’s independence

from Portugal in 1973, evolved from both a theory of society and its application in the form of socially progressive institutions.

Returning to the First Reconstruction, we observe no fundamental critique of existing state structures and institutions and no debate over ideologies—only a clear commitment to abolish slavery and guarantee certain civil and social rights at the expense of the racist folkways of the white Bourbon South. The Second Reconstruction generated a great participatory response among the masses of black people, but never became truly a liberation movement with the potential for radically transforming all economic and social relations. The reformist black leaders differed over the goals and tactics of the Movement; the petty bourgeois, radical left wing tended to be isolated from the black working class. As a result, many of the material gains achieved in the 1960s were lost in the 1970s; black political leadership seems more aimless and unchallenging of the capitalist hegemonic social and economic forces than at any point since the rise of Booker T. Washington. “It was historically unfortunate that the American Negro created no social theorists to back up his long line of activist leaders,” Harold Cruse wrote. With a critical theory, “the Negro movement conceivably could long ago have aided in reversing the backsliding of the United States toward the moral negation of its great promise as a new nation of nations.”

The roots of a Third Reconstruction are found in the inherent inequities of American capitalism, and in the uniquely racist social relations which are inextricably tied to the political economy by tradition, history, and ideological force. The next social revolution in America, then, must involve the utter abolition of racial prejudice in all its institutional forms; to accomplish this, the capitalist relations of production must be uprooted as completely as slavery was before it. The coming revolution against social privilege, the domination of private property over collective interests, and the private ownership of natural public monopolies (e.g., electric power, mass media, heavy industry, transportation) will set the historical stage for the final assault against white racism.

II

There is a major difference between racial prejudice against blacks in the U.S. and other forms of intolerance or persecution. Intolerance has existed as long as human beings have lived together in social units. The victims of intolerance are forced to give up their own group's belief systems, cultural forms, and social institutions. The outsider must, for the good of the majority, renounce their apostasy and embrace those values defined as “normal” by those who control the social, cultural, and economic hierarchies. Racial prejudice is radically different. According to black sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox, “race prejudice developed gradually in Western society as capitalism and nationalism developed. It is a divisive attitude seeking to alienate dominant group sympathy from an “inferior race, a whole people, for the purpose of facilitating its exploitation.” Thus, some of the very goals of black liberation, which include the ability to control blacks' labor, the establishment of stable, independent communities, and the opportunity to participate and compete within the socio-economic institutions of the dominant society according to our own self-interests, reinforce white racist beliefs and perpetuate restrictive legislation aimed at blacks as a group.

Cox expressed the problem of racial prejudice succinctly by drawing the familiar analogies between blacks and Jews as victims in a way new. “The dominant group is

intolerant of those whom it can define as anti-social. In other words, the dominant group or ruling class does not like the Jew at all, but it likes the Negro in his place." The function of white racist attacks against black children, who are bused across town to attend a formerly all-white, suburban school is therefore fundamentally different from the bombing of a synagogue in Paris by neo-Nazis. Jews are objects of hatred for being different, for example, non-Christian; blacks are hated for attempting to reverse the natural social order of things. Cox explains, "A Jewish pogrom is not exactly similar to a Negro lynching. In a pogrom the fundamental motive is the extermination of the Jews; in a lynching, however, the motive is that of giving the Negro a lesson in good behavior."

If racism is understood as an institutional process rather than a random pattern of intolerant collective behavior, the holistic and organic character of the phenomenon becomes strikingly clear. Racism, broadly defined, is the process of persecution and violence of white power, derived directly from the systemic exploitation of black life and labor. The critical or decisive phrase here is systemic exploitation.

Generally, there are at least six major factors which are present in any society or social order which could be termed racist. The first and most important is the super-exploitation of the labor power of black workers over and above the rate of surplus value expropriation that typically occurs between white labor and management. In precapitalist and early capitalist society, this takes the form of compulsory black labor. W. Kloosterboer's *Involuntary Labour Since the Abolition of Slavery* defines compulsory labor "as that from which withdrawal is generally considered a criminal offense, so that it engenders penal sanction, and/or for which [the laborer] has been accepted without his willing consent." Using these criteria, both chattel slavery (pre-1865) and sharecropping (post-1865) can be classified as kinds of involuntary labor exploitation in the black South. Under advanced capitalist societies, black workers assume the role of a surplus labor pool which must be prepared to shift from one low-paying sector of the economy to another upon demand. Blacks are "the last hired, the first fired" under these unstable conditions. Moreover, since capitalism by its very nature cannot provide a full employment economy, a permanent underclass of blacks who are for all practical purposes outside the workforce exists. The commanding heights of the racist political economy are, of course, owned and managed by whites. Blacks as individuals may be appointed to managerial positions within the corporate hierarchy, but blacks as a group have absolutely no critical power other than as consumers.

The second factor present within any racist order is the historic and systemic pattern of physical isolation, exclusion, and (in many cases) extermination of the oppressed race/class. This includes both *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, customary and legal forms of Jim Crow. To be sure, different cultural and social forms of racial isolation and exclusion have existed in the Americas. Brazilians have an obvious racial bias against people of African descent, but this has been muted and redirected in ways that a North American white could scarcely comprehend. A common racial expression in the 19th century, "Money lightens the skin," reveals that blacks were almost always poor, but that wealth was virtually color blind. This was far from the case in countries settled by the English and Dutch, who practiced a radical form of collective exclusion and social isolation from their African laborers. The largest settler regimes which these two European nations founded, the United States of America and the Republic of South Africa, continue the apartheid traditions to this day.

The third factor, to use Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's now famous concept, is the

ideological hegemony of white racism. The ideological apparatuses of the state—the universities, public schools, media, theatre and all creative arts, religion, civic associations, political parties—provide the public rationale to justify, explain, legitimize, or tolerate the first two factors of racism. Hegemony is the ideological or cultural glue which ensures collective consensus within any social order. Within the United States, racist hegemony is achieved in part through the selective management and production of the “news” which carefully filters out any potentially disruptive information on the race question; the systematic denial of information and skills to the oppressed through the perpetuation of inferior public schools; the hypocritical distortion of cultural and social history to minimize racial conflict and class struggle and to emphasize consensus, cooperation; and “the melting pot” thesis; the repetition of religious dogmas which serve to demobilize black social activism and simultaneously advance status quo cultural and social norms which mirror the white middle class’s illusions of what it once had been—such as the Born Again Christianity movement.

The fourth element involves the relationship between black people and the coercive apparatuses of the state—the police, armed forces, prisons, the criminal justice system, and white vigilante hate-groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. All racist states have a black prison population that far exceeds the proportion of black people in the society as a whole. Studies in the United States graphically illustrate that the court sentences and legal treatment received by black, Hispanic, and poor differ radically from those received by upper-to-middle class whites committing the identical crimes. The percentage of black policemen on metropolitan forces is almost always lower than the black urban population in the area. The percentage of blacks in managerial positions in any agency of coercion (the armed forces, police, penal systems) is always lower than the percentage of blacks who are employed in menial tasks. A culture of violence is fostered within the oppressed community, where crimes committed by blacks against blacks are tolerated. Generally, the coercive state apparatuses serve to disrupt, regulate, and/or suppress the development of black social space—that is, the ability of blacks as a group to develop stable family units and neighborhoods, to construct social, cultural, and alternative economic institutions, to strive for upward socio-economic mobility within the predominately white order of things.

The fifth category is philosophical—the redefinition of “blackness” in the light of the reality of “whiteness.” G. W. F. Hegel’s *Lordship and Bondage* is critically relevant here. Human identity, that is, self-consciousness, is directly related to the ideas of reciprocity and recognition. Human beings exist only as they are recognized by others. The dialects of recognition, however, usually do not occur on the basis of equality. Furthermore, human beings are also human in that they are able to find meaning within the labor they perform.

In at least three respects, the racist order transforms both the master and the slave. First, the oppressed are unable to acquire meaning or much purpose from the compulsory labor that they perform (or in the case of contemporary capitalist conditions, in the denial of the opportunity to gain meaningful employment). Work as a creative, productive endeavor ceases to exist for blacks as a group. Whites draw the erroneous conclusion that blacks do not like to work literally because they are black. Second, the ideological and coercive apparatuses of the state block the struggles of blacks to attain full equality and so disrupt the attainment of critical self- and collective consciousness. Amílcar Cabral suggested that when colonialism or compulsory labor began, African

history was frozen or “stopped.” The art of black revolution was at the level of philosophy the attempt “to return to the source,” rejecting the inequality of the white world by a renaissance of certain precolonial or preracist cultural and social norms developed by blacks for blacks.

Lastly, and most significantly, the racist society must invent “the Negro.” In order for the racist order to function, any prior claim to an alternate set of human values, customs, and institutions that the oppressed might have had in the preracist state must be suppressed. Whites as a group have approached blacks historically not in the light of what blacks were (“blackness” or, perhaps a better term, “Africanity”) but in the light of what whites projected that blacks should be and must become (the standpoint of “whiteness”). This reinterpretation of African nations and ethnic groups into the status of “Negroes” was integral to the establishment of black chattel slavery in the United States as a dominant means of production. For example, many colonial historians have observed that white settlers always referred to the Native Americans or Indians as members of certain nations or tribes, or at worst, as “savages” or “heathens.” Seldom were Indians described on the basis of skin color alone. Obviously, the principal distinctions perceived between white colonists were religious or ethnic. Blacks alone were outstanding, first and last, because of their skin color. And as early as 1660 in the Virginia colony, blackness itself was identical to the status of a chattel slave. Negroes ceased to be Africans; blackness was a function of whites’ demands for black labor, not a culture or even a condition of humanity.

The sixth factor is sexual. A major force behind all antiblack restrictions and regulations has always been the irrational yet very real anxiety white males have expressed concerning black sexuality. In *The White Man's Burden*, historian Winthrop D. Jordan argues that the threat of black slave revolts in the 17th and 18th centuries usually assumed a sexual cast. “The notion existed that black men were particularly virile, promiscuous, and lusted after white women. It is apparent that white men projected their own desires onto Negroes: their own passion for black women was not fully acceptable to society or the self and hence not readily admissible.” Black women, however, were naturally lascivious and passionate, and thus were acceptable sexual game for the taking. Castration made the sexual pathology of whites public policy. Colony after colony, from Quaker Pennsylvania to the Carolinas, sanctioned castration as a form of lawful punishment for a whole set of black male offenses. At its root, Jordan states, was the white man’s “racking fear and jealousy” of what black men could do if their relative positions and powers were reversed. Their mastery in the world of economics and politics meant little if the very black man they belittled and abused “performed his nocturnal offices better than the white man. Perhaps, indeed, the white man’s woman really wanted the Negro more than she wanted him.”

Racism, then, is much more than intolerance toward blacks, or the “superstructural justification” of the exploitation of black labor, or the collective projection of white psychosexual neuroses. It is the social nexus from which Western capitalist society and culture was constructed. It seems problematic at best that the simple transfer of state authority from one group of barbarous whites to another group of well-meaning whites (Marxists, democratic socialists, liberals, or others) would alter the basic dynamics of a system that is almost four centuries old. The proponents of social change, reformers and revolutionaries alike, have been socialized within the very system against which they exhort so righteously.

Blacks, and blacks alone, must take the initial and decisive steps toward developing an adequate social theory to destroy white racism. This observation is stated neither with an air of black chauvinism, nor without regard to the many sincere and dedicated white activists who gave their lives toward black freedom—from John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison to Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. It is to recognize that nothing in socialist or liberal political theory or practice to date indicates that white activists have abandoned either infantile economic deterministic or moral suasion schools of thought on the origins and meaning of racism within modern capitalism. No long range coalitions between white progressive organizations and black militant groups, such as the newly formed National Black Independent Political Party, can successfully mount a challenge to the New Right—a white social protest movement that is both intolerant and racist in character and intent—until this hard and painful theoretical work is done.

In *An American Dilemma*, Gunnar Myrdal observed that even during the Great Depression most blacks found it difficult to accept the Old Left's argument that socialism would quickly end the race problem. "When discussing communism in the Negro community," he wrote, the most common black response was the comment, "Even after a revolution the country will be full of crackers." When American progressives, black and white, recognize the kernel of truth within this remark, and begin to construct a more realistic theoretical and programmatic response to white racism, the possibility of a truly nonracist society may be realized. The dilemma of race and class will finally be solved.

When we begin to ponder the social dimensions of the next American Revolution, the problems both in practical and theoretical terms are nothing short of overwhelming. There is not, at the moment, a body of knowledge which could be described as a Marxian theory of racism which can be directly applied to our understanding of American social reality. Talented and creative Marxist intellectuals have emerged within the black community—from W. E. B. DuBois, Oliver Cromwell Fox, and C. L. R. James to more contemporary writers like James Boggs and Earl Ofari. However, there is no indication that their theoretical work has become the foundation for praxis within the majority tendencies of the Black Movement. Many white Marxist-Leninists employ rigid theoretical models in approaching black-white relations, ranging from the old Black Belt Nation thesis of the Comintern to the notion of "white skin privilege." No American Marxist consensus has emerged which explains in a practical way the origins of white racism, the interrelationship between race and class in advanced capitalist states, and the role of black nationalism vis-à-vis the emancipation of the white working class. The majority of white American Marxists are hostile, if not downright antagonistic, toward black nationalist movements, theorists, and organizations. On the other side of the color line, black activists who view themselves as both socialists and nationalists reciprocate the feelings of distrust toward white Marxists. The Old Left, from a black nationalist perspective, was patronizing toward black-oriented issues; the New Left of the 1960s had little or no serious dialogue with the advocates of Black Power, while playing it safe ideologically by working with more conservative, integrationist leaders like John Lewis and Julian Bond. Experiences with leftist organizations have left such a bitter taste among many black activists that a sizeable percentage of black nationalists are aggressively anti-Marxist and even anti-Communist in their theoretical work and practice.

Let us assume for a moment that these and other significant problems of theory and political practice could be resolved. The "war of position," a period of intensive cultural

and intellectual struggle, has given way to an overt struggle for state power. The liberation forces have succeeded in controlling the state apparatus. With this critical prerequisite accomplished, the struggle to build a socialist society with a multiracial and culturally diverse community begins. Given these lofty assumptions, what would be the prospects for black nationalism and the programs for reconstruction in a revolutionary society?

III

Throughout black American history, there have been two distinctly different cultural and political movements that have emerged in the battle against racism and cultural exploitation—integration and black nationalism. Integration is defined here as a worldview which accepts the legitimacy of white civil society's hegemony over black thought, advances a political and economic framework in harmony with the dominant trends within the white-controlled state, conscientiously rejects the alternative standards of behavior and culture established by the black majority, and opposes on principle both *de jure* and *de facto* separation of the races. Black nationalism's goals include the physical separation of the races and the development of autonomous, black-controlled economic, political, and cultural institutions.

A third sub-tendency, often placed within the parameters of black nationalism, is the emigrationist strain of black politics and thought. Unlike most nationalists, emigrationists view themselves as African rather than Afro-American in all critical respects. These blacks do not see any possibility for constructive social, economic, and political relations with whites, and demand the right to be repatriated to the land of their racial and cultural origin, Africa. A socialist revolution would not settle all of these deep, historic divisions among black Americans. The solution to the problem, however, resides in seizing this critical duality of black existence and being, and building upon it. The central contradiction within black society must become, in other words, the central motif for the era of the Third Reconstruction.

The historic duality of black life will express itself in a nonracist, socialist society through institutions of *dual authority*. There will co-exist the structures of a multiracial socialist state with the organs of Afro-American self-rule.

The phrase "dual power" or "dual authority" is most clearly identified with certain Marxist theoreticians, most notably V. I. Lenin. Writing in his party's newspaper *Pravda* in the midst of the Russian Revolution, Lenin observed that the collapse of the Tzarist regime had created two governments or states. "Alongside the Provisional Government, the government of bourgeoisie, another government has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies," Lenin wrote in April, 1917. The basis for the power of the bourgeois state was within the legislature or parliament, the police and armed forces, and the official bureaucracy. "The fundamental characteristics" of the nascent workers' councils or soviets were not "laws previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below"; not the traditional state coercive apparatuses but "the direct arming of the whole people"; not the bureaucracy but "the direct rule of the people as a whole." Two authorities existed simultaneously, one representing the oppressor and the other the oppressed. The transfer of authority from one set of social forces to the other would occur when the revolutionaries succeeded in ob-

taining support from the majority of the working class. “We do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority,” Lenin declared. “To become a power the class-conscious workers must win the majority to their side.” Thus the culmination of the revolution, the establishment of a socialist state apparatus and public ownership of the central means of production and distribution, would actually obliterate dual power in favor of a sole progressive authority.

In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, the practical strategy of dual power became elevated to the level of political dogma. Aspiring revolutionaries immediately translated the successful experience of the soviets into the development of political formations within their own countries. Writing in exile, Leon Trotsky explained the evolution of the 1917 revolution and other social upheavals, from the English Civil War to the great French Revolution, from the vantage point of dual sovereignty or power. “The historic preparation of a revolution brings about in the prerevolutionary period,” Trotsky wrote in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, “a situation in which the class which is called to realize the new social system, although not yet master of the country, has actually concentrated in its hands a significant share of the state power, while the official apparatus of the government is still in the hands of the old lords. That is the initial dual power in every revolution.” The period of equilibrium between the *ancien régime* and the socialist state-yet-to-be was relatively brief. Trotsky admitted that “the phenomenon of the dual power [had] heretofore not [been] sufficiently appreciated,” but vigorously denied that it contradicted in any way the classical “Marxian theory of the state, which regards government as an executive committee of the ruling class.” The capitalist state could not be overturned unless “a new correlation of forces” was prepared to conduct the transfer of power “only as the result of a trial by battle.”

As in so many other instances, the sole representative of Western Marxism who could look beyond the “dual power” lessons of the Russian Revolution was Antonio Gramsci. The workers councils of 1919 and 1920 in Italy were an attempt on the part of Italian radicals like Gramsci and others to replicate the revolutionary example of the soviets. The councils were to become a means to educate the masses, to build a consensus among workers for socialism, and to establish a kind of alternative sovereignty prior to the collapse of the bourgeois state. The failure of the Italian workers council movement and the rise of Benito Mussolini forced Gramsci to rethink many of his older theories on the processes of socialist transformation within the unique terrain of advanced Western capitalist societies. Eventually Gramsci concluded that a “war of position” would have to be waged between the progressive and capitalist forces over an extended period of time, an uneven struggle fought primarily within the institutions of civil society—that is, the ideological and cultural apparatuses of the state. A kind of dual authority would exist when the moral and political legitimacy of the capitalist state, its hegemony over the subordinate social strata, was overthrown. Only when this occurred could the forces of socialism complete the revolutionary process through a “war of maneuver,” the final assault against the coercive apparatuses of the capitalist state. But even in Gramsci’s scenario, the phase of dual power is transitory.

In a racist state, the factor of race is not an accidental phenomenon, an added element to the ideological apparatuses (or “superstructure”) which provides unique character or historic presence. Rather, the existence of racism as an underlying force within public policy and all social relations connotes the necessity for the postcapitalist state to provide structural guarantees to the nonwhite population for its safety and

survival. Dual power or dual sovereignty between the black nation and the postcapitalist, predominately white society must exist in order to protect blacks from the inevitable attacks of racist whites as well as to construct social and political institutions which will erase any privileges that whites formally received simply for being white. This dual power would exist as long as white racism was perceived in any form as a part of public policy decisions and within the general pattern of racial relations. Unlike the Soviet model or Gramsci's workers councils, it would not be a creation of capitalist society, but a product of the seizure of state power and the transition from capitalism to socialism. It would not be a product of the majority (workers) but the creation of a distinct but critically important minority (blacks).

Officials of the multiracial socialist political system will be chosen by all citizens in regular elections. All blacks would have the right to vote in these general elections and legislators elected from the black national community would serve within the new socialist state apparatus with white, Hispanic, and other Third World colleagues. Blacks—with certain exceptions given later in this paper—would pay taxes to the central government and would be subject to its laws. It would be expected that perhaps 12 to 16 percent of the socialist legislators, administrators, and key politicians would be Afro-Americans.

The central government will be responsible for providing all citizens with the essentials of a decent, humane life: free and readily available health care facilities, jobs, free education from the preschool to postdoctoral levels, and clean, comfortable housing. Concurrently there will exist institutions through which blacks can guarantee their self-determination as a national minority, and to participate in the administration of human services for black people. These will be national, regional, and local bodies and will be based on two organizations which will have played the central or determining roles in the prior transition to socialism.

The first of these organizations will be the Black Nationalist Party. (I will give hypothetical names to these and other organizations, governmental agencies and bureaus; the functions and roles of such formations are the essential concern, rather than the specific names.) The Black Nationalist Party would be somewhat like a constituent assembly or a democratic, mass-based legislature of the majority of black Americans. Diverse in class orientation, the Nationalist Party would include large numbers of radicalized black intellectuals and petty bourgeois groups, thousands of students, working people, and the unemployed. During the struggle for revolution, the Nationalist Party would have moved gradually from being a predominantly petty bourgeois, "parliamentary-style party" toward a genuine coalition party led primarily by black workers. Much of the activity of the Nationalist Party would occur within black civil society, outside the arena of production. Nationalist Party members and leaders would initiate new "Freedom Schools" in black churches and mosques; sponsor food, clothing, and producer cooperatives; direct independent black research organizations, schools, and colleges; and establish artistic and cultural forums within black communities. As in most constituent assemblies, Nationalist Party members would probably disagree over many theoretical issues, but would find a general consensus on the significant issues that needed to be addressed.

The second organization that would have been crucial in the socialist transformation and upon which the institutions of black self-determination might be constructed would

be leagues of black workers, the most revolutionary and militant forces within Afro-American society. In structure and in outlook they would closely parallel Gramsci's model for the Italian workers' councils in 1919. Unlike the trade unions, which were distinctly the social products of capitalist economic production, these leagues of revolutionary black workers would represent the push toward socialist economics. They would be far more class-conscious, theoretically and programmatically, than either the old trade unions or the great majority of members and cadre in the Nationalist Party. Its tactics and policies would be nationalist but explicitly Marxist as well; discipline would be far greater, and the central organization of the leagues would exert a greater influence over its members. In Gramsci's view, "this new type of organization, as it develops, grows, and enriches itself with functions organized hierarchically, forms the scaffolding of the socialist state."

Under American conditions, it is probable that Gramsci's assessment would have to be modified: both the Nationalist Party and the black workers' leagues would play a joint role in the transitions from capitalism to socialism. For one thing, both organizations would have a similar structure. Both would draw their strength from the black working class, although the Nationalist Party would in all probability have a substantial petty bourgeois following and leadership. As the class struggle deepened during the Third Reconstruction period, contradictions would be manifested within both groups. The leagues or councils would have a strong tendency towards economism and might underestimate the need for some elements of private enterprise for a brief period of time. In both forces, blacks who advocated integration and a restoration of the civil societal relations between blacks and whites during the pre-revolutionary period would present a real danger. From this vantage point, it would seem most likely that the new black socialist state apparatus would be the product of both political groups and constituencies. Yet, such a new state would have to be constructed in a manner that would permit those millions of integrationist-oriented blacks the right to align themselves with the new, white socialist state and new cultural institutions. Black groups and communities with a longstanding identification with integrationist goals would gravitate sharply toward full participation within the multiracial state apparatus; black nationalists would have little difficulty or hesitancy in opting for the separatist institutions.

The construction of the new black socialist state apparatus would begin at a national level. A national convention of black activists, drawn equally from the Black Workers Councils and the Black Nationalist Party, would be convened. From this gathering, a National Assembly of Afro-American People would be established. This would be the central legislative body for blacks in the revolutionary society. The National Assembly would also include social forces outside of the two major organizations: black student organizations, black trade unionists, independent black consumer and producer cooperatives, neighborhood associates, progressive black religious organizations, and black feminist organizations or collectives. The National Assembly would be unicameral. It would elect representatives to serve on an Executive Council, which would be the executive branch of government. Both bodies would conform to certain specific criteria. At least 20 percent of all representatives should be black youth and adults under the age of thirty. At least 50 percent should be members of a black workers' league or revolutionary council, or have some direct political and personal link to the working class. At least 50 percent of both bodies must consist of black women. No restrictions would be placed upon the political participation of homosexuals. All the participants, of course, would be black.

The first task of the National Assembly of Afro-American People would be to initiate regional assemblies or congresses. Again, participants should be selected in equal numbers from the Black Workers' Leagues and the Black Nationalist Party. The criteria for membership according to race, class, sex, and age would be enforced. Subsequently, or perhaps simultaneously, local and city-wide assemblies or congresses would be introduced. A reciprocal relationship would exist between the local, regional, and national legislative bodies. Local assemblies would have the authority to suggest legislation to the national body, interpret and implement edicts of the national body, and nominate local members to serve on the regional and national levels. National representatives would be selected in proportion to the size of the black population within a specific region or local constituency. A form of recall or referendum might be introduced whereby regional and local assemblies could challenge the legislation of the National Assembly or replace representatives who were not voting in the best interests of regional and local blacks. Only the National Assembly and Regional Assemblies would have the constitutional power to levy taxes, and Regional Assemblies would be limited to taxing only privately owned property (automobiles, land, buildings, etc.) within a given district. All legislators and their staffs would receive annual salaries not exceeding the median wage level for a black industrial worker, computed annually. There would be a strictly enforced term of office during which all elected officials and bureaucrats could serve within the state apparatus.

Funding for the new black state apparatus would be derived from four primary sources. First, the multiracial, central socialist state would guarantee in its new constitution the right of the National Assembly of Afro-American People to control a fixed percentage of federal taxes collected annually. Such a figure would be based on the percentage of blacks to whites nationally, in proportion to the total amount of federal revenues for a given year. Second, the multiracial but white-dominated socialist state would guarantee the right of the National Assembly to expropriate any private property within any given area in which a majority of residents were nonwhite. Third, the National Assembly would levy taxes on all black producer cooperatives and collect rents or fees from any property owned by the Assembly. Fourth, for an indefinite period of years the National Assembly would receive a special fiscal subsidy from the socialist government for reparations—payment for the historic exploitation and oppression of black Americans. Regional and local assemblies would submit annual budgets for approval by the National Assembly's Executive Council. A committee of legislators from the National Assembly would coordinate all budgets and set fiscal priorities for the black community.

The central government would have limited input into this budgetary process in order to ensure harmony between the financial policies of the National Assembly and the larger society. If disagreements between the two bodies cannot be resolved, however, the National Assembly would retain final authority, for control over one's budget is a vital prerequisite for group self-determination. The National Assembly and its regional and local components would have certain powers of government and administration, but would not be entirely or distinctly separate from the multiracial government. There are no provisions here, for instance, for an Afro-American judiciary. The socialist Supreme Court would interpret legislation passed by both the central government and the National Assembly. Programs and policies would be worked out in concert and there would be much coordination between the two sets of political institutions. However, the National Assembly would have the right—if such became necessary—to insist upon and

initiate a complete and uncompromising break from the central socialist state. The socialist constitution would have to guarantee the right of total territorial separation for any and all black Americans. Similarly, other ethnic minorities such as the Hispanics in the American southwest and Native Americans from Alaska to Florida would have the legal right to territorial separation. Only with this ultimate resort can minority rights be securely defended. The threat of physical separation will serve as a counterweight against the continuance of racist ideology and practices.

Many of the functions of the National Assembly would be carried out by bureaus and agencies which would address the economic, social, and cultural interests and needs of the Afro-American community. One of the more important bureaus that would have to be established would be the National Anti-Racist Bureau. (Here again, the function rather than the name is the central concern.) Charged with insuring the constitutional right to live in a “decreasingly racist society,” the Bureau would have offices in every major city and town in the nation. It would function primarily as a kind of Special Prosecutor—investigating and filing charges against individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses, and any governmental bodies.

The penalties for racist behavior could range from voluntary re-education to life imprisonment. “Racist behavior” would include the public provocative use of racially derogatory symbols and language; continued patterns of black employee discrimination in job advancement, evaluation of promotion, pay increases, etc., and economic policies of price fixing within private business or producer cooperatives which take advantage of black consumers; the lack of black representation in state or local government or private business in relation to the proportion of blacks within the area, constituency, or market.

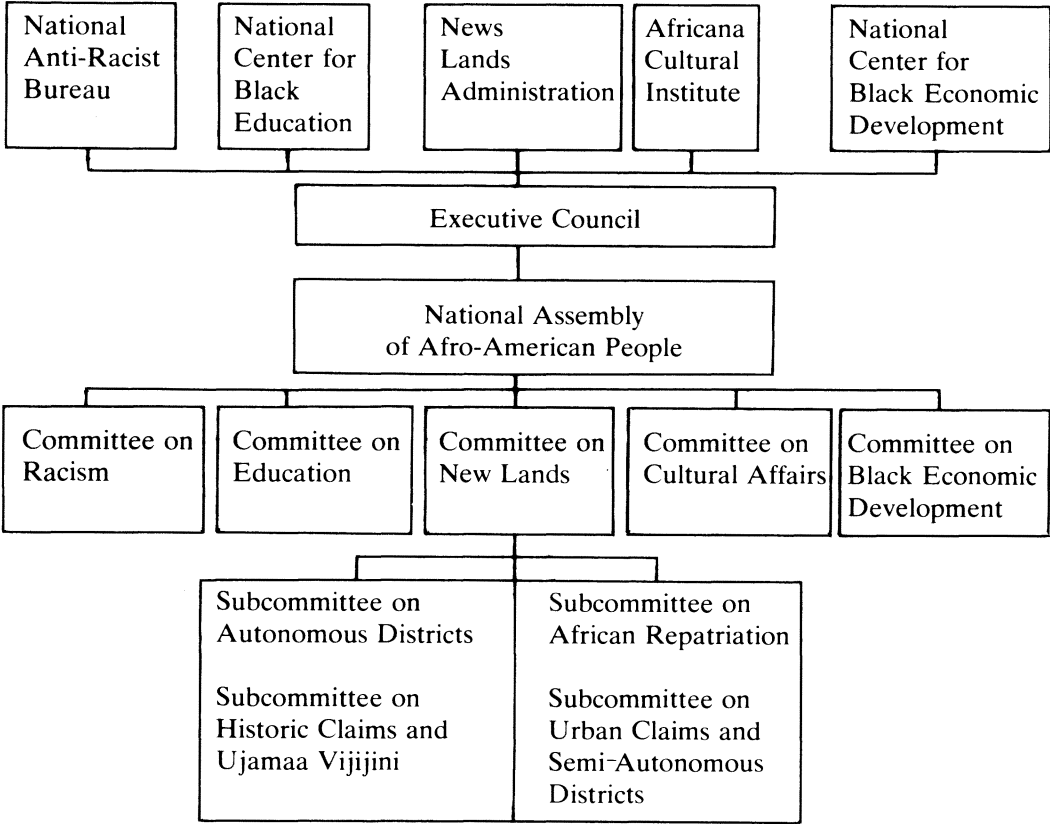
The socialist central government and National Assembly would provide a comprehensive agenda for restructuring American educational and cultural institutions. Regarding the education of the black community, the basic agency involved in this work would be the National Center for Black Education. The National Center for Black Education, in coordination with the National Center for Hispanic Education and other related agencies, would provide the basic guidelines for the operation, curricula, management, and budgets of all nonwhite educational institutions. This would include all public and private schools, colleges, trade schools, and universities with more than fifty percent black student enrollment or whose physical plant was located within a black community (e.g., Columbia University in New York City). The National Center for Black Education would have at least five major divisions: the Elementary and High School Education, Collegiate Education, Adult Education, Parochial School Education, and Research and Development. All education, except parochial, would be absolutely free of costs: tuition, books, transportation to and from school, clothing, and an annual student salary would be paid for by the government, or by the government and the the recipient’s (or recipient’s parents’) employer. The National Center for Black Education would appoint all superintendents of major black public schools, supervisory personnel, college presidents, and key administrative staff; qualifications would be technical excellence, professional ability, and a political commitment to the goals of the National Center and the socialist revolution. Religious colleges, theological seminaries, and private schools would have the right to operate without National Center intervention, but they would receive no financial assistance of any kind, and parents and/or students must assume all tuition fees and related costs. All operating budgets of both black public and private institutions must be submitted to the National Center for scrutiny.

The National Center for Black Education would also take a special interest in the activities of historic black-majority colleges and universities (e.g., Tuskegee Institute, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University). Each college would be administered directly by National Center administrators; faculty or staff opposing the goals of the revolution would be dismissed, or more usually demoted from administrative or policy-making posts. All administrators and faculty chairpersons would be subject directly to National Center evaluation, on both professional and political grounds. Special tax incentives, academic scholarships, and campus employment would be used to attract the most enthusiastic and gifted caliber of black student. The National Center for Black Education would underwrite a major cultural and academic expansion on every campus. Each college would have up-to-date scientific equipment, a radio station, an undergraduate library, art gallery, theatrical facilities for major cultural events, and an historical museum documenting the legacy of each black institution. Schools would not prohibit white attendance, but would strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to black culture and social life. All black university graduates would receive special consideration for government-related jobs. All colleges would develop a policy of indirect participation and involvement in the political, cultural, and economic life of the local and regional black communities.

In the cultural sphere, black life would evolve around the Africana Cultural Institute, whose chief goal and responsibility would be the preservation and encouragement of Afro-American culture, traditions, and history. The Africana Cultural Institute would have at least three major subdivisions: Arts, both performing and creative; Humanities, which includes political philosophy, languages, ethics, history, and traditional religions, and the National Archives for Africana Culture. In the arts, the Institute would sponsor dance companies; jazz, blues, spiritual, gospel, and contemporary popular black music composition, recordings, distribution of recordings, and live presentations in black communities; film production and distribution of black artists and black cultural events; subsidies for black painters and sculptors. In the humanities, the Africana Cultural Institute would provide direct grants to black college faculty engaged in research. It would publish academic research in Afro-American literary criticism, literature, philosophy, religion, history, and other areas of the humanities. Existing black humanities journals would be subsidized directly and left under existing management, whenever possible. In scope the Africana Cultural Institute would assume many if not all the activities currently supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, except that the direction of policy making would be in black hands and the funding would be many times greater. The National Archive for Black Culture would initiate 1930-style "W.P.A." projects: tape recordings of musicians and other black artists; interviews with the major and minor figures in African, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-U.S. culture. The National Archive would purchase, catalogue, and display the papers of every major historical figure in Afro-American history. The complete works of influential black intellectuals, from DuBois and Garvey to Julius Nyerere and Imamu Amiri Baraka, would be published and distributed at a nominal cost to the public. The National Archive's staff would also provide genealogical research for any Afro-American family upon request, without charge.

Economic activities within the black community would be planned by two bodies, the National Center for Black Economic Development, which would be the joint administrative body for the National Assembly and the central socialist government, and the Black Workers' Councils.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW BLACK STATE



The National Center for Black Economic Development would be staffed solely by black workers, either from the Workers League movement or from the Black Nationalist Party. This would be the only agency of dual power within the new bureaucracy that would be comprised entirely by black workers. The entire scope of activity initiated by the National Center for Black Economic Development would be dedicated toward the realization of at least eight basic principles: the abolition of profit as the central criterion for determining investment; the abolition of structural unemployment; the progressive but gradual abolition of all centers of private economic production, moving toward either state or cooperative ownership; a gradual decline in the use of material incentives to reward productivity and the increased use of moral and political incentives; the abolition of all discrimination in the workplace based on sex, race, ethnic, and sexual preference criteria; the progressive abolition of income distinctions based upon the character of work; the initiation of the thirty hour work week as a standard throughout the country; and the development of workers councils.

Black economic reconstruction would be complicated by many intricate and long-standing problems. First the overwhelming majority of Afro-American workers are currently employed in industry, manufacturing, service, or related unskilled jobs. When clerical workers and lower level civil servants are included in this group, this amounts to about 90 percent of all adult black workers. Many of these workers will have been unemployed because of factory layoffs, deliberate disruption of the economy, and political unrest for many weeks or months. About 40 percent of all black people are permanently unemployed and/or have never held steady jobs. About 50 percent of all black youths are unemployed. Simultaneously, black producer and consumer cooperatives will be operating in many urban areas but at various levels of efficiency and profitability. The crisis of authority and law enforcement will also create temporary but widespread shortages in food and other essentials, deepening the public panic for immediate employment, an adequate food supply, and public order. Hundreds of thousands of black families, the supporters of the revolution, will expect the new government to launch massive construction programs for public housing, creating jobs in ghetto areas as well as improvement in living conditions. Other revolutionaries within the black community will call for the complete separation of all black economic institutions: factories run by black workers would operate primarily according to the interests of the local black community, not the state. The black entrepreneurial strata—owners and operators of small ghetto commercial food, clothing, and hair-dressing establishments—might attempt to use their important economic position within the community to threaten, halt, or at least frustrate government efforts to expand its controls over private enterprise.

We should approach all these economic problems within the black community with two distinct goals: short term stability and long term socialism. Unless every black person who desires a good job gains employment shortly after the revolution, it will be increasingly hard for socialists to argue that a socialist economy creates full employment. The immediate goal of the new black economic policy would be to provide full employment by any means necessary and as quickly as possible. This might mean that the National Assembly and central government would have to support certain aspects of "Black Capitalism" on a temporary basis. For example, the governments might provide subsidies for black-owned and operated small businesses (with gross annual incomes under \$250,000 in 1980 dollars) with strict price controls and labor relations guidelines.

Government grants would be available to black consumer and producer coops. White-owned businesses within majority black communities would be expropriated or purchased and given to the direction of black employees and the local community, with government assistance. A public works program for building and park restoration, garbage control, and political education could employ thousands of chronically unemployed black youth. Gradually, as the major manufacturing and industrial firms are nationalized and full employment is obtained, a greater degree of socialism within the black economic sphere will become possible. One potential alternative can be termed "communization." Major businesses or factories whose physical plants were located within the black community would be directed by a black workers' council, democratically elected. Each council would also include appointed representatives from the immediate black neighborhood. The council would be responsible for all decisions affecting the production of goods, hiring policy and so forth. A National Assembly staff representative would be a liaison person between the council, community organizations, and both governments.

Another major dilemma facing the black community would be the quality and character of housing. The majority of black families do not own their own homes. The construction of many residential buildings occupied by Afro-Americans is poor; in rural areas most houses still lack complete plumbing facilities. Here again, both socialist governments will be expected to provide the means for adequate housing, and perhaps even the possibility of some form of home ownership, for virtually all black people. The governments must state clearly that decent housing is a human right, that every black American will reside in clean, comfortable dwellings within a short period of time, and that this will be achieved by any means necessary. A policy of housing expropriation and resettlement would be initiated in which properties owned by enemies of the state would be allocated to the poor, the unemployed, and the physically handicapped as quickly and as fairly as humanly possible. All white-owned and rented apartment buildings or single family residences within any predominantly black neighborhood would become property of the National Assembly, without reimbursement, and systematically turned over to community organizations, local black nationalist political organizations, workers' councils or the tenants for management. Both governments might provide short term loans or grants to minority contractors and builders, with specific instructions for restoring existing properties and building new homes for black families at minimal cost. Community co-ops and workers' councils would apply for federal grants for building homes and residential apartments, owned directly by workers. On a long term basis, both governments would initiate a national home construction program and home loan policy. All home mortgages would be voided; all black families could apply directly to the dual governments for grants for energy conversion to solar power or for home restoration and expansion.

The greatest and potentially most difficult problem facing both socialist governments' relations with the black community would be "the land question." The central tenet of black nationalism has always been the historic right of the Afro-American people to self-determination. As principal leaders and cadre in the successful revolution, black nationalists would have a right to expect the immediate option of black territorial autonomy and some form of self-rule. The new socialist Constitution would declare that all separate ethnic and cultural groups possessed the right to a national homeland within the United States territory proper; separate or dual governments within a city or single state; and the right to repatriation to a country of one's choosing at government

expense. The basic assumption here is that blacks who desire to integrate with whites continue to do so; blacks wishing some distinct physical separation are provided the material basis to do so.

The major federal agency supervising these problems of resettlement would be the New Lands Administration. In carrying out the provisions of the Constitution, the New Lands Administration's work would fall under at least four major divisions: an Historic Claims Commission; an Urban Claims Commission; a Repatriation Division; and an Autonomous Settlement Division.

The Historic Claims Commission's primary task is to help black Americans establish communities or individual farms within the territories of the original Southern slave states, including Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, and Oklahoma. The Historic Claims Commission would provide transportation, housing, and resettlement of Northern or West Coast black families wishing to return to previously-owned properties or to any new property within the region, and agricultural and technical assistance in marketing and producing farm goods. The Historic Claims Commission would sponsor the construction of special rural cooperative towns, which could be termed "Ujamaa Vijijini"—Familyhood or Socialist villages in Swahili. The central socialist government and the National Assembly would either purchase or expropriate a tract of land suitable for rural economic development. Preferably, tracts would be established in areas geographically, socially, and culturally suitable for black family resettlement. Upon the application of a black cooperative, workers' council, neighborhood association, or a collective numbering more than, say, one hundred individuals, the Historic Claims Commission would provide technical assistance and financial stipends to facilitate relocation. It would build homes for each family and provide up to 300 acres of agricultural land per person. Persons wishing to find nonfarm employment would be assisted. All physical property would be owned jointly by the Historic Claims Commission and the black collective living in the Ujamaa Vijijini. All agricultural or manufactured products would be owned by the collective. Residents would elect commissioners to direct the economic and political life of the community. The commissioners would be paid by the Historic Claims Commission. All economic losses sustained by the Ujamaa Vijijini would be absorbed by the Historic Claims Commission budget.

The Urban Claims Commission would give black city residents grants or interest-free loans to purchase and refurbish parks, vacant lots, and other property for agricultural and related uses. The Urban Claims Commission would provide grants to black workers' councils and trade unions for the purchase of urban property for workers' families or for the community. The major political responsibility of the Urban Claims Commission would be the establishment of Semi-Autonomous Black Districts, political entities which would be created at the expression of sections of the black nationalist population.

The criteria for the Semi-Autonomous Black Districts would be as follows: all districts must contain a minimal residential population of 10,000, at least 40 percent of whom must be of Afro-American descent. Separate black communities within a city or an immediate geographical area could qualify as a single, Semi-Autonomous District (e.g., Watts and Compton in Los Angeles; Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant in New York City). At least ten percent of the voting residents would have to sign a petition submitted to the National Assembly for the creation of the Semi-Autonomous District. The National Assembly would conduct and supervise a plebiscite on the question. With 50 percent or more approval, the mechanisms for the creation of the district would begin.

The district would elect representatives to both the Regional and National Assemblies and would create its own Local Assembly. Special District Commissioners would also be elected to supervise normal municipal activities, such as garbage collection, education, street maintenance, and so forth.

All residents (black and white) in the Semi-Autonomous Districts would pay only one half of the allotted personal income tax to the central government. Special district taxes would be levied on private property and nonfood items, at the discretion of the district commissioners and the Urban Claims Commission. White residents would retain all constitutional rights under both the central socialist government and the National Assembly. Whites could run for public office and participate in the daily life of the district. Residents of the district will retain representation in the central government, if they desire; the central socialist government is required to provide all special services and administrative assistance to the districts. The Semi-Autonomous Districts would have special authority over several key governmental and economic areas. First, district commissioners would control the local police organization, replacing any officers of patrol personnel who were not desired. All educational institutions within the area would become the property of the district government, which would be run in cooperation with the National Center for Black Education. All private property would be subject to expropriation by the district commissioners, subject to the approval of the Urban Claims Commission. Finally, any laws passed by the central socialist government which did not express the best interests of the district's electorate would be subject to nullification by a majority vote in a plebiscite. This right of nullification would be subject to the approval by the chief administrator of the Urban Claims Commission and the Executive Council of the National Assembly. It would be my assessment that the majority of Afro-Americans would reside in Semi-Autonomous Districts within fifteen or twenty years after the socialist revolution.

The Repatriation Division of the New Lands Administration would be concerned with those Afro-Americans who wished to return to any African or Caribbean nation of maternal or paternal ancestry. The Repatriation Division would provide direct grants and loans to black families, workers' councils, community organizations, and trade unions for permanent settlement; any costs for learning an African language prior to settlement, for transportation, and for housing would be provided upon request. The Repatriation Division would also sponsor, in cooperation with the National Center for Black Education, one- to five-year academic scholarships and travel fellowships for temporary work in Africa for black high school students, college students, and adults. All black university students, young black workers in industry, and politically active youth would be encouraged to spend at least two years in an African country, either in a university or performing a special service skill.

The Autonomous Settlement Division of the New Lands Administration would be the largest bureau and most difficult to coordinate successfully. Many nationalists would advocate a complete and total break between black people as a group and whites within the central socialist state; others would call for a series of autonomous black city-states within the existing government; emigrationists would want the government to negotiate the resettlement of several millions of Afro-Americans back to an African country or countries. The goal of the Autonomous Settlement Division would be to find a consensus among nationalist positions on the land question and to implement a stage-by-stage program which would be in the best long term interests of Afro-Americans. If the policy

collective of the Autonomous Settlement Division concluded that a separate state for blacks within the United States was realistic and desirable, then all related government agencies would channel their activities towards the realization of such a state.

Autonomous Black Districts, a "nation within a nation," would have to conform to certain physical requirements. A minimum of 250,000 residents, within any given territorial space would be eligible. Districts would have a black population of at least 50 percent. As with the Semi-Autonomous Districts, the National Assembly would supervise the initial plebescite. At least 15 percent of the voting residents would have to petition for the plebescite; at least two thirds of the residents would have to approve the referendum. With an affirmative vote the district would end its direct political relationship with the central government. All personal income taxes payable to the central government would stop; all representatives would be instantly recalled. District commissioners would be elected to supervise the transfer of state power to the district. For a limited period of time, the National Assembly would provide fiscal and technical assistance to the district, and the central socialist government would pay a substantial reparations subsidy directly to the district government. Sections of land would be transferred from the central government to the district to insure adequate physical space for population growth. After the period of transition, the Autonomous Black District would declare itself a sovereign nation. The District would retain fraternal ties with the National Assembly, but it would be an autonomous entity in every respect—economically and politically. The terms of the separation agreement would expressly prohibit military or economic intervention by the central socialist government. Whites remaining in the Autonomous Black District could be subject to disfranchisement and involuntary removal from the new nation. It would be the responsibility of the central socialist government to resettle these whites and to provide some compensation for lost personal properties.

The theory of dual authority is rooted in the premise that socialism and national self-determination are compatible goals. A black nationalist does not have to reject the body of Marxist literature as the basis for critical theory, simply because some Marxists object to nationalism in any form as being a "bourgeois deviation." It is highly probable that a great many white socialists (and quite a few black Marxist-Leninists) will oppose a separate state apparatus for a few blacks in the revolutionary society. Opponents would insist that racism would be abolished simply by legislative fiat; that the unequal position of black workers within the means of production would be eliminated; that blacks' reasons for a separate-but-equal state or economic structure would disappear.

This is exactly the kind of perspective which reinforces the hegemony of white authority, privilege, and power. Since white Americans as a group are largely devoid of an original, legitimate, and autonomous American culture, they logically deduce that blacks must also be a clean "cultural slate." Because some white leftists have abandoned racism in their personal or individual relations (in most, but not all respects), they assume that once seizing the state apparatus that they could legislate race distinctions out of existence. This highly irrational viewpoint is based on the economic determinist notion that racism is a purely superstructural phenomenon which, with other similar kinds of questions (like sexism), would be dealt with "after the revolution" without difficulty. The creation of a separate and Semi-Autonomous state apparatus such as the National Assembly would frustrate whites' attempts to put blacks in the back of the (socialist) bus. Dual authority means that the contradiction which divides the cultural and social life

of the black nation could be resolved both on the side of nationalism and integration. Dual power means that blacks as a nation would already possess the infrastructure and economic resources necessary for a territorial or physical break from white-dominated socialism. Blacks would have an alternative political institution, directly responsive to the major black forces of liberation, the Nationalist Party, and the Workers' Councils. The inevitable reaction against black progress which followed both the First and Second Reconstructions would be sufficient reason to anticipate the possible attempt by the new socialist state to reverse some or all of the gains of black progressives.

IV

We return to the present. Capitalism forms the basis for all cultural life, social relations, and economic production. White racism afflicts the entire constellation of human relations and thought within capitalist America. The progressive forces bicker and are divided amongst themselves over theory, strategy, and tactics. No socialist revolution intrudes upon the immediate political horizon, not to mention a Third Reconstruction.

Any discussion about the prospects for black America must be informed by the realization that white racism predates capitalism. Nationalization of the basic industries, banks, and financial institutions and seizing state power (via the ballot and the bullet) will not automatically erase 350 years of white racist supremacy, ethnocentrism, and hatred. Socialism will not create a new cultural democracy, but it should provide the material foundations for a really vibrant and egalitarian relationship across the color line. Special concessions will have to be made for the legacy of slavery and the unfinished revolution in civil rights in the 1960s. White revolutionaries must prove to the black community that it is possible for them to reject the years of racist education, socialization, and ideology, and commit the new society to the goal of cultural democracy. If they waver or falter in the slightest, the only viable political alternative for the masses of black working people will be to develop their own separate state entity, completely rejecting whites as coworkers, supporters, or allies.

Some final points: some critics might question these projected liberation institutions on the grounds that they do not effectively deal with other important contradictions, such as the division between women and men or the dilemma of socialist bureaucracies. These are indeed vital issues that can only be explored tentatively here.

The need to struggle against sexism within the black community would be a major position supported by both the Black Nationalist Party and by the Black Workers' Leagues. The National, Regional, and Local Assemblies would have a minimum of 50 percent black female participation. Throughout the revolutionary process, the struggle against the oppression and degradation of black sisters would be a primary and fundamental interest of all institutions within the liberation movement.

The greatest problem in the revolutionary period will be the failure to deepen the class struggle. The class struggle could move from the conflict within the factories between workers and capitalists to a potential struggle between socialist bureaucrats and the masses. The scenario might occur this way. After an intense period of social unrest, major relocations of millions of individuals and the seizure of private properties amounting to billions of dollars, a lull in the revolutionary movement would occur. An ever-deepening degree of conservatism in political and civil society would be manifested in the

thoughts and activities of the revolutionary forces. Such a turn of events would be natural, even predictable, if history is an accurate guide. As the crisis of Soviet socialism gave birth to Stalinism, a similar process could evolve here.

Gradually a great number of individuals within the state apparatus might revert to the practices and policies inherited from the former capitalist bureaucracy. Party cadre might be elevated to positions within the government on the basis of their technical expertise rather than their commitment to socialism or black equality. Leaders of trade unions and Workers' Councils might become unwilling to abandon their positions of authority to return to their factories and have other workers replace them. Men growing to maturity in an overtly sexist society might find it difficult to accept the quota of 50 percent of all government positions going to women. Government posts would have a limited financial appeal, but in other ways the compensation would be extremely attractive—from having a secretarial staff to special rights for government-owned automobiles, houses, and consumer goods. These forces toward conservatism could crystalize into a bureaucratic caste or stratum, with an economic, social, and even psychological need to remain in posts of responsibility. Unless the socialist governments passed strict rules setting time limits on tenure in office, and encouraged to the broadest possible extent mass participation within these new agencies, the spirit of protest would be sacrificed upon the altar of bureaucracy and order.

The critique above may seem to assume throughout that a socialist revolution would be an inherently good thing for all Afro-American people, and that the success of the Black Movement depends upon the successful completion of the socialist transformation. But, there is *no guarantee* that socialism would *ever* end white racism, as it is encountered on a day-to-day basis by individual Afro-Americans. It is probable that a socialist revolution would create many new problems for black people. But it is also my firm conviction that any black liberation movement that does not call for, at some point, the end of capitalist production and the redistribution of wealth and property along more democratic lines is no *liberation movement at all*. We may applaud the previous black movements for fostering a series of meaningful and valuable social reforms, but within the contextual framework of capitalism it is utterly impossible for black people to achieve any measure of collective security, freedom, and power. History, economics, and common sense tell us this. Socialism will only provide greater political space and richer cultural and material foundations for the preservation and development of black working people. It won't solve the problem of white ethnocentrism overnight, in twenty years, or perhaps forever.

We cannot hope for the revolution and the Third Reconstruction within our current century. Socialism is not "on the agenda" in our country, but the battle in civil society for socialist or capitalist ideological hegemony wages daily. As we prepare ourselves and others for the next American civil war, we might consider what we would do with state power if it was truly ours. This is a speculative but hopeful contribution toward the foundations of that socialist society—the new cultural democracy.

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