

might be. On the latter score, workers may consider that attempts to institutionalize labour activity might be to give hostages to fortune. Leadership which in the strikes was effective because it was informal and not visible to employers and the State, may find itself rendered ineffective if it emerges to view in the form of articulate workers' representatives in trade unions and works' committees.

While the lessons of experience have undoubtedly not been lost on black workers, no clear workers' ideology has shown signs of emerging. It may well be, as young militant black intellectuals have claimed, that:

The classical western elements of trade unionism have had to be modified to accommodate the fact that black worker interests extend beyond the factory; they extend to the ghetto where black workers stay together in hostels under squalid conditions; to the crowded trains and buses that carry workers in and out of town often at the risk of serious accidents; to the absence of amenities for black workers in and around town; to the stringent, irksome and humiliating application of influx control laws that result in a lot of blacks losing their job opportunities...⁶²

Such a stance places African collective labour action once again squarely within its political context. It is indeed hard to see how such linkage of economic and broader political issues can be avoided in the long run, hazardous for the proponents of this stance as it may be. Here the possibility is raised of a renewed direct connection of African political movements and worker action, propagated by radicals for much of this century. Inevitably then, much will depend on events in the political arena, both within and outside South Africa.

On a final very speculative note, we conclude that recent events suggest two possibilities inherent in the situation. On the one hand, greater willingness of Government and employers to respond to black workers' interests could result in the creation of linkages across the major line of conflict in South Africa, and steer the colour/class conflict on the level of the urban black worker into a pattern of fairly constrained, institutionalized bargaining, with political issues deferred for some time, or contained within the limits at present set by Government policy. Both sides may see something to be gained hereby; in particular urban Africans may obtain real material improvements. On the other hand, the strikes and African assertiveness may prove to have had only minimal influence on improving the lot of the black urban masses, while stimulating the growth of working class solidarity. The pattern exemplified by recent events could continue and intensify. Periodic build-ups of popular grievance and hostility could recur, to be expressed in large-scale strikes, and could move political issues to the forefront. Police action may be less restrained if the authorities perceive that strike action is likely to become repetitious, and to contain a challenge to the system. Within these two schematic alternatives would seem to lie the course of African collective labour action for the immediate future.

Race and Class in Southern Africa

PHYLLIS MACRAE*

INTRODUCTION

Much of what has been written about the white supremacist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia¹ has discussed race as an independent variable, largely ignoring the economic base of racism. The liberal argument holds that apartheid itself is the source of the 'problem' and that the free market mechanism of capitalism will eventually solve it. I would like to argue from the contrasting viewpoint of Oliver C. Cox that racial attitudes develop secondarily out of situations of economic class exploitation for which racist ideologies provide a rationalization. Cox discusses the original use of white slaves in the West Indies before it became relatively easier to acquire Africans than it was the poor of Europe.² White indentured workers imported to South Africa on a contract basis were originally subject to the same control by mine owners as black labour is now under the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841. Cox states that:

... racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labour, regardless of the colour of the labourer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political class conflict. The capitalist exploiter, being opportunistic and practical, will utilize any convenience to keep his labour and other resources freely exploitable. He will devise and employ race prejudice when it becomes convenient.³

It very quickly became convenient in Southern Africa to base economic discrimination on skin colour. Africans were much less equipped to fight their categorization as a cheaply exploitable resource than was the small group of white workers. And once non-white labour had been defined as a degraded and sub-civilized group (thus deserving of sub-civilized treatment), white workers had to be reclassified not as proletarians, but as associate members of the capitalist class. Race is now a self-perpetuating social variable often superseding the rational economic interests of the different classes. But class cannot be fully subordinated to race as the two main racial groups occupy the traditional class roles. The whites of all classes, through their ownership of the means of political and economic control, maintain a united front against the non-whites of all classes whose only resource is their labour power.

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1 Throughout this paper I have referred to South Africa and Rhodesia, rather than Azania and Zimbabwe, because the former are the political entities existing in the present while the latter are of the future.

2 Oliver C. Cox, "Race and Exploitation: A Marxist View," in Baxter and Sanson, eds., *Race and Social Difference* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 207.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

This paper will examine the growth of the different classes in South Africa and Rhodesia, focusing on the relations between the black and white working classes. I will argue from the economic interests of the two groups that, while at an earlier stage in the development of class relations there was an objective base for white and black working class solidarity, this is no longer the case. The gap in earnings, standard of living and political power between black and white workers is now so great that white labour could only lose if it forsook its alliance with the white ownership classes; non-whites cannot afford disunity on class lines and must work from a base of racial solidarity in their liberation struggle. Finally, I will discuss the relations of the large capitalist oligopolies, both international and domestic, with labour of both races and examine the possible future options for these concerns which wield such great influence over class and race relations in Southern Africa.

THE GROWTH OF THE WORKING CLASS: SOUTH AFRICA

The original Dutch settlers in South Africa farmed on a relatively small scale and, since their labour requirements were limited, they failed to significantly stimulate the growth of an African wage labouring class. Wage workers did not exist as an important group until the early nineteenth century when numbers of workers were imported from England as indentured labour. Many of the sponsored immigrants spent only one or two years in the labour force until they had served their indentured period or repaid their passage and moved on to more prosperous pursuits such as farming or prospecting.

One of the original pieces of labour legislation was the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841, later to become one of the chief means used to control black labour. The Masters and Servants Ordinance was non-racial, class legislation which offered the workers no protection from exploitation.⁴ Breach of contract on the part of the indentured servant was an offence punishable by imprisonment. Today South Africa's economy remains firmly based on the use of migrant contract labour and this act continues to be the chief means of preventing effective combination and agitation by black labour. As soon as workers under contract strike, they are liable to arrest and imprisonment under the act.

The upheavals of the wars between the land-hungry settlers and the Africans whose land they coveted, began the process of forcing the peasantry off the land and into the wage economy. The base of peasant self-sufficiency was destroyed when land and cattle were stolen. As in the other British colonies, the practice of the administration in South Africa was to levy taxes on the African population to compel them to take up wage employment. This served as a measure of control over large numbers of now landless peasants and provided cheap labour for the settler farms.

⁴ H. J. Simons and R. A. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa: 1850-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 20.

The opening up of the diamond and gold-fields in the second half of the nineteenth century brought a sudden influx of white immigrant labour. From the beginning the black-white labour split was observable. The skilled white immigrants early realized their power to command higher wages than they had received in Europe, as long as they remained in short supply. They also realized the threat of cheap black labour in unskilled jobs and began to organize to protect their privilege. The first white unions were formed at the Cape in the 1880s. The earliest white unions never considered the possibility of organizing unskilled labour of any race, white or non-white. They fought the importation of Chinese and Indian labour for the mines. They also refused to widen their membership to include unskilled whites, ignoring the advantage this would have given them in their battles against DeBeers and other industrial combines. In some instances, however, the non-whites' ability to organize effectively forced the white unions into limited cooperation. In 1904 the Bricklayers' Union at the Cape imposed a colour bar on its membership. When the coloured bricklayers unionized themselves and began to undercut the wages of whites, the latter were forced to form a cooperative, non-racial union.

For the first quarter of the twentieth century the industrialists, backed by the Government, resisted the attempts of white labour to protect itself from competition from cheap, non-white labour. The use of Chinese miners at the New Kleinfontein mine sparked off a three-month strike by white miners in 1907. During the strike African and Chinese workers kept the mines operating without the benefit of white supervision, and displayed their capacity for skilled work. The strike was eventually broken when many of the white miners were sacked and Afrikaners hired in their place. (Afrikaners were not represented in large numbers in the mine labour force until after the First World War.) The choice facing white workers was either to work for equal rates of pay for black and white, which would remove the non-whites' advantage of being able to undercut white wages, or to insist on wage inequality coupled with job reservation for whites. The first alternative was rejected because it would have led eventually to the effective organization of black workers as an economic force tending to erode the privilege of the white workers. A system of equal pay for one job would still require formal or informal job reservation for whites to protect unskilled white labour from falling below the rates of black, skilled tradesmen. The practice of restricting certain jobs for whites and paying them artificially high wages can only be acceptable to employers if they are allowed to reduce costs by paying below subsistence wages to non-white labour. This was the basis of the cooperative agreement eventually worked out to their mutual benefit by white labour and employers.

At first, however, the Chamber of Mines, the negotiating union of the mine owners, resisted job reservation and argued for "free labour competition", which allowed a maximum use of inexpensive non-white labour. The white unions began to campaign for the restriction of certain job categories for whites in the guise of a concern for safety in the mines. Only whites

were responsible enough, it was suggested, to do skilled work such as blasting, driving vehicles and operating machines. The concern with safety was turned around, however, when the miners became aware of the dangers to health from rock dust inhalation during drilling. From then on the definition was altered so that the level of skill varied inversely with the danger involved. Skilled jobs that proved dangerous were reclassified unskilled and reserved for Africans.

The unions faced an uphill battle to win recognition as negotiating bodies. Labour relations were much easier in the Cape where employers were smaller and less powerful than on the Rand where the large oligopolies of DeBeers and later Anglo-American and others were in absolute control over the lives of their employees. The mining companies took care of all aspects of their workers' lives. Blacks were housed, fed and locked up in prison-like compounds. But whites had the more pleasant prison of company houses, hospitals, schools and shops which often bred strong loyalties to the employer and made union organizing difficult. With so much of its employees' lives under its surveillance the company could effectively exclude unwanted labour organizations from the compound and the company town. Miners whose organizing activities became too visible were usually sacked. White workers' class consciousness developed in reaction to the heavy handed rule of the Chamber of Mines. In 1909 the South African Labour Party was formed by socialists of the Social Democratic Federation in co-operation with trade unionists. Although a small group of radicals within the Party continually pressed for inter-racial workers' alliance, the Labour Party never seriously deviated from its aim of protecting white advantage.

The Cape Coloured population was trapped economically and socially between the whites and the Africans. Because they were classified as non-whites by employers, their wages were pulled down by black labour. But on the basis of skin hue and culture they associated themselves with the white populace and identified with white goals. Many occupied skilled and semi-skilled jobs, came into closer competition with white workers and consequently were seen by whites as a greater threat than the Africans. At the Cape where there was, in the early years of the colony, greater liberalism in race relations than in the north, there was some limited cooperation of whites and Coloureds in unions. But in the main the white labour movement rejected alliances with all non-whites and thus the Coloureds were forced back upon themselves. They, in turn, refused to see their common interests with black labour and continued to look to the white Governments at Pretoria and Westminster for assistance. This rejection of a union of non-whites by the Coloureds who possessed important leadership resources has seriously crippled the liberation struggle.

The African Peoples' Organization (APO) was established in 1902 and remained for nearly forty years under the leadership of Dr. Abdul Abdurahman. The APO was led by Coloured intellectuals and petit bourgeois and never attempted radical mass action. Through the Coloured franchise in several Cape constituencies the APO worked to elect white candidates.

Simons states that the APO never developed a more militant conception of the Coloured role in politics than that of *stemvee*—"voting cattle".⁵

The Africans began to organize themselves politically in the South African Native National Congress, later the African National Congress, in 1912. The ANC was also directed by a small African bourgeois class of teachers, interpreters and minor civil servants. The African bourgeoisie in South Africa cannot be seen in the same light as that in the independent African nations, as it is effectively blocked from above in all its social, career and political goals. Objectively, conditions exist for middle class militancy and solidarity with black workers, but the petit bourgeois of the ANC took some fifty years to realize the fact. Not until the 1960s, by which time the ANC had been banned, did it forsake its tactics of well-mannered and ineffective appeals for privileges from the 'master' race. However, the ANC did encourage the growth of an African national consciousness though only on a purely racial and not a class basis.

One of the major reasons why African workers did not respond significantly to attempts to organize them by white labour radicals was the overwhelming influence of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (the ICU) directed by Clements Kadalie. The ANC was concerned with negotiation on behalf of the African population as a whole and the ICU took up the standard of black workers as a class. At first leftists in the Labour Party attempted to organize black unions outside of the ICU but they could not compete with Kadalie's influence. Originally Kadalie was very effective in organizing militant strikes, chiefly at the Cape Town docks. However, he eventually fell under the influence of white liberals and socialists in the Cape Province and in England and was directed into more moderate channels of agitation. Kadalie became increasingly conservative and expelled all communists, black and white, from the ICU in 1927. Under the liberals' guidance, Kadalie attempted to make the ICU respectable but his repeated applications to 'join the white unions' federation, the Trades Union Congress, were consistently refused. Internal mismanagement, financial squabbles and personality clashes among the leaders weakened the ICU and it failed to survive past the early 1930s. Although relatively short-lived, the ICU was enormously influential among Africans of all classes. Simons argues that the TUC isolated and helped destroy the ICU by withholding backing when it was needed,⁶ but he also points out that the ICU never developed "the cohesion and discipline needed to make it an effective political force".⁷ Kadalie had great personal charisma and was a powerful organizer, but he failed to effectively use and direct those he had organized to gain concrete benefits for black workers. Sheridan Johns states that at its height "it seemed that the ICU was on the verge of converting itself into

5 Ibid., p. 123.

6 Ibid., p. 370.

7 Ibid., p. 361.

the first nation-wide mass movement of Africans",⁸ but its militant potential was never realized.

In the early years of trade union activity in South Africa, workers of all races shared the problems of trying to force the industrial combines to recognize their bargaining units. The whites and Coloureds were from the start better organized, but they refused to cooperate with African workers and support them against the employers. Inevitably when African miners struck, white workers would work with the police to drive the Africans back into the compounds and down the mine shafts. When whites struck the Africans were mindful of the lack of support given them, and scabbed for the mine owners to keep the industry operating. Thus the lack of class solidarity between black and white workers directly served the interests of the Chamber of Mines and prevented labour from securing union recognition.

The Government of Jan Smuts' South African Party represented British financial interests and gave fullest support to the mine owners in their fight against labour. Strikes were broken by the use of troops, leaders were fined and some of the more radical labour organizers were deported. Company spies helped to block combined action and company unions were established to secure workers 'loyalty' to the employer. The Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1913 was extremely repressive class legislation and hit hard the freedom of both blacks and whites to organize and hold public meetings.

In the years preceding World War I, the English workers and the smaller Afrikaner working class had begun to cooperate, but the nationalist allegiances of each group broke up their alliance during the war. In the war period the white unions cooperated fairly amicably with the Chamber of Mines to restrict strikes and boost production. Both groups began to realize the benefits possible from closer association and thus began the process of the deproletarianizing of the white working class. At this point the radicals of the International Socialist League realized that white workers were already too committed to the *status quo* and began to consider the need to involve non-whites in a mass based struggle. They initiated campaigns to educate and politicize African workers, but they refused to back militant strike action and counselled non-violent agitation. The socialists operated for many years with one eye on the African constituency and the other on the support of British and Afrikaner labour. It wasn't until after the Second World War that they finally abandoned the futile attempt to draw the two polarized sections of the working class together. The reason that black workers did not respond to the radicals' appeals in significant numbers lay in their inability to reconcile Marxist class categories with the race supremecism of white labour.

The watershed in South African industrial and class relations occurred

8 S. W. Johns III, "Trade Union, Political Pressure Group or Mass Movement? The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa," in R. I. Rotberg and A. A. Mazrui, eds., *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: O.U.P., 1970), p. 751.

with the Rand Revolt of 1922. In 1920 gold prices dropped suddenly and the mine owners attempted to cut back on the proportion of expensive white labour. The post-war recession and a rise in unemployment had intensified the conflict over jobs between the races. The strike began in January 1922 in the coal mines, spread throughout the other mines of the Rand, and was not broken finally until March of that year. The United Communist Party (formed from the Social Democratic Federation and the International Socialist League in 1921), attempted to steer the strike in a radical direction, to insist on higher wages for African as well as white labour. The white unions refused to consider this and even organized commando units of white miners to help the police keep African workers contained in the compounds. The Chamber of Mines was not forced to negotiate because, as usual, the mines were kept operating by black and Coloured miners. Eventually the same violent methods that had suppressed every African strike, were used to force the whites back to work. The death toll was between 230 and 250 and large numbers of communists and other leaders were tried and imprisoned. The strike was won by the mine interests and the ratio of white labour to African was lowered as were white wages. But neither did the Africans win anything from the strike. Wages remained depressed and they failed to enter skilled employment in appreciable numbers.

The most significant outcome of the Rand Revolt was the determination of white labour to defeat English capital interests. The Labour Party formed a coalition with the Afrikaner Nationalist Party and came to power in a pact Government in 1924. Thus the first Nationalist success at the polls was made possible by the support of Labour, and white workers and the Afrikaner farmers have since continued to cooperate closely against the Parliamentary forces of English capital. The pact Government set out immediately to solidify the position of the white unions. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 gave them the legal recognition and negotiation machinery for which they had fought for so long without success. This act omitted indentured Indians and Africans from the definition of employee and excluded them from the negotiating process and the agreements that resulted from it. African unions were not recognized and Industrial Councils were set up which restricted the entry to skilled trades to whites only. Minimum wage scales were set which prevented unskilled whites from falling to the wage levels of African labour. The minimum wage either did not legally apply to non-white labour, or was routinely circumvented by employers. The pact Government of 1924 severed the last links of class solidarity between black and white labour. From then on white workers were absorbed into the exploiting class and protected from competition by non-whites. The Government and financial interests ensured that the class interests of white labour were superseded by racial loyalty.

The South African Communist Party now began to recruit less from white labour, where it had never had significant success, and more from African workers and intellectuals. In 1927 the Party had two hundred African members. In 1928 there were 1,600 Africans out of a total member-

ship of 1,750.⁹ A dispute arose between the rising nationalism of the African members who advocated the overthrow of the white regime and the institution of a Black Republic in South Africa, and white members who were reluctant to abandon their priorities for a purely class struggle. As the SACP was increasingly Africanized it became less of a radical labour party and more a force for militant nationalism. Trade unionism was slowly developing among African workers, but organization was difficult and strikes were fairly easily contained by the arrest of leaders under the Master and Servants Act. Union organization of an unstable migrant labour force, much of which came from colonies outside South Africa, was encumbered by the fact that many of the workers did not consider themselves as part of a permanent proletariat. If their stay in the wage economy was limited to a few years or even a few months, their tribal and cultural allegiances remained paramount. For black workers to strike and risk losing a job was a more serious undertaking than it was for whites, and African strikes were necessarily short due to the lack of strike pay for the workers. The system of migrant contract labour based in the 'Reserves' is the foundation of the means of political control and economic exploitation of the African population. For the purpose of calculating necessary wage levels and housing requirements, contract labourers are assumed to be single with no family to support. The employer assumes no responsibility for the worker outside the contract period. When he is ill, unemployed or too old to work he is forced to return to the Reserve. Thus the Reserve economy is expected to subsidize the employer by providing subsistence for the labourer's family and for the labourer himself when he is no longer needed in the work-force. The fact that the productivity of subsistence farming in most of the African areas has been steadily declining since the turn of the century, and that the infertile and vastly overcrowded Reserve lands cannot possibly support their population, forced the Government to develop tighter constraints on African movements. The pass laws were stiffened under the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1930 to slow the influx of African labour into the towns during the Depression. The pass laws (now called 'Influx Controls') aim at directing a smooth flow of labour to wherever it is needed most, and back to the surplus labour pool in the Reserves when it becomes dispensable. Theoretically no African can be a permanent urban resident, and can stay in the location or township only as long as he has employment. But the number of Africans who do settle fairly permanently in the cities and towns and become proletarianized, breaking many of their ties with traditional Reserve life, is steadily increasing. At present 60% of the African population lives outside the Reserves.¹⁰

During the Depression the problem of the Afrikaner class of 'poor whites' became crucial from the point of view of the Government's need to maintain racial unity. Economically and educationally the Afrikaner farmers have always lagged behind the more urbanized English populace who control

⁹ Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

¹⁰ Ruth First, Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney, *The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 42.

the financial, industrial and large-scale, commercial sectors. As good land grew scarcer and was consolidated into larger units, many small farmers were driven under. In the 1920s, increasing numbers of Afrikaners entered the mining and industrial work-force. The Depression brought floods of poor whites as well as poor blacks to the cities in search of work. There were some isolated cases of combined demonstrations by Afrikaners and non-whites, but the Government intervened with welfare assistance and public employment for the Afrikaners in order to prevent the growth of a class alliance of the poor. Poverty among whites provides a problem for the employers who are forced to fit these unskilled workers into the employment structure in non-manual jobs commanding skilled pay rates. This has resulted in the creation of unproductive, supervisory posts where whites act out the fiction of directing black labour. The losses incurred from carrying this burden of unproductive labour are made up by the starvation wages paid to African workers.

The white unions, still largely dominated by skilled English workers, resented the threat to their security from the influx labour of unskilled Afrikaners and women in the 1930s. But rather than see them join forces with non-whites, the unions reluctantly proposed a minimum wage and the rule of equal pay for equal work. The Wage Act and Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937 enacted these measures. Whites preserved the necessary protection from non-white competition in job reservation and the control of access to training for skilled work. Employers contrived to pay below minimum wages to African labour which was unable to manipulate the Wage Act to its benefit due to its lack of organization and bargaining power. As Afrikaner labour grew in numbers there were attempts to gain control of the unions from the English. When these mostly failed, the Afrikaner nationalist movement developed parallel organizations which were part trade union, part cultural societies. Societies such as *Blankewerkersbeskermingsbond* (the Society for the Protection of White Workers) used the powerful segregation forces of language and religion to isolate Afrikaner workers from the English. The conservative *Bonds* came under the close protection of the Nationalist Government and secured privileges for their members without resorting to traditional strike militancy. Simons points out that, at the time, the Afrikaners were still workers in transition from rural to urban life and were thus more open to the nationalist appeals of the *Bonds*.¹¹

In 1946 the African Mine Workers' Union struck over poor wages and the refusal of the Chamber of Mines to negotiate with the unregistered union. The Government claimed that migrant workers were "not ready" for unions and that tribal life would be disrupted if African unionism was permitted to grow. By contrast with the white Rand strikes of 1922, the African strike of 1946 closed twelve mines completely and crippled nine others, but it was broken with the use of police and troops after five days. The SACP was accused of engineering the strike and a crackdown on the Party began

¹¹ Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 564.

which culminated in its being banned in 1950 under the Suppression of Communism Act. Since the victory of the Nationalist Party in 1948 political dissent has been driven underground. The SACP, the ANC and the split off Pan-Africanist Congress continue to operate illegally. Conservative white unionism has flourished since it was purged of all leftists who persisted in working for inter-racial class solidarity. Black unions contrive to operate unrecognized under the most difficult conditions. The wage gap between black and white labour continues to widen. In 1972 the ratio in the mining sector was 1:20.¹² African real wages continue to fall, in spite of recent campaigns by the British press to force industry to pay at or above the poverty datum line, itself a totally unrealistic evaluation of the needs of African families. The recent wave of strikes of African workers starting with the miners in Namibia in December 1971, has demonstrated the strain that African labour finds itself under as inflation increases, as well as the level of effective organization black labour leaders are able to command. Faced with shortages of skilled labour as industry expands, the unions and employers have been forced to modify colour bars and allow Africans to undertake skilled work at lower rates of pay. White labour is feeling the pressure from employers on one side, and from black labour competition on the other. The industrial sector reserved for whites is being gradually eroded and the Trade Union Congress of South Africa is pressing for the old demand of equal pay for equal work. Legal job reservation, white employment guarantees, the control of access of non-whites to job skills have not been enough to convince white workers of the future security of their privilege.

E. R. Braverman, writing in the *African Communist*, makes some interesting points which suggest future trends in South African labour relations.¹³ Faced with the recent growth of black labour militancy, some employers are pointing out the necessity of organizing African trade unions. They may feel that workers' demands will be better controlled if a carefully directed union movement is built up. Some employers have proposed that unions be based in the 'homelands' in line with the hope that African labour can still be prevented from becoming permanently established in the urban areas. A section of the white unionists are pushing for the inclusion of Africans in the white unions. The reasons are that whites are moving out of the working class and non-whites are moving in. In 1961 whites made up 30% of labour in the manufacturing industries. In 1972 they were only 23%.¹⁴ As the proportion of whites in the labour force declines so does the unions' bargaining power. To retain some influence with employers and also to control undercutting by large numbers of unorganized, and therefore easily exploitable Africans, the unions must admit black workers. These were the arguments put forward by the SACP fifty years ago. Yet, they

12 Ruth First, "The Oppenheimer Empire," *Africa*, 27 (November 1973), p. 27.

13 E. R. Braverman, "African Workers Advance," *The African Communist*, 53 (2nd Quarter 1973), pp. 58-61.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

are still rejected by a significant proportion of the white affiliates of the Trade Union Congress of South Africa, and the Government has refused to consider any appeal for legalizing African trade unions. The renewed black militancy is placing the compromises of the 1940s and 1950s under increased strain and it is becoming evident that the class conflicts between white labour and capital have not yet been resolved.

THE GROWTH OF THE WORKING CLASS: RHODESIA

Probably the most useful class analysis of Rhodesia so far is Giovanni Arrighi's *Political Economy of Rhodesia*.¹⁵ He argues that the most crucial factor in Rhodesia's historical development was the overestimation, by the British South Africa Company in the late nineteenth century, of the value of its mineral holdings in the territory.¹⁶ The mineral wealth of Rhodesia is quite different from that of the Rand. Not only is the ore generally of a lower grade, but the mines are distributed over a wider area and must operate on a smaller, less efficient scale. Consequently mining was from the start highly capital intensive and the need for cheap labour became crucial.

Rhodesia was invaded and settled by Cecil Rhodes' Chartered Company at the end of the nineteenth century. The suppression of the Matabele rebellion of 1896 began the long process of forcing Africans off their land and into the wage economy. Ranger notes that the Matabele men were cattle keepers (the women were the agriculturalists) and those who fought on the losing side in the rebellion had their cattle and land taken from them and divided among the settlers and a small group of 'loyalists' of the tribe. These loyalists were rewarded for backing the settlers and formed the basis of a small class of African landowners. Deprived of their livelihood, many Matabele men were forced into the labour market at an early stage and gained a head start over the other ethnic groups in becoming proletarianized.¹⁷

As in other British colonies, the Company eventually found it could no longer govern Rhodesia economically and, in 1920, the settlers opted for white responsible Government rather than union with South Africa. With the opening up of the mines at the turn of the century came an increase in white immigration. From the beginning this was carefully restricted to skilled and semi-skilled British labour, and a conscious attempt was made to prevent the development of a 'poor white' class. For most of its post-colonial-impact history, Rhodesia has been dominated by its white rural bourgeoisie. This class requires cheap farm labour and, until many of them were forced under by competition from the large combines, numerous settlers operated small-scale mineworkings also calling for African labour. At the turn of the century, Arrighi states, labour was in short supply, but due to a speculative boom in mining, the employers could pay the high wages required

15 Giovanni Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

16 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

17 T. O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia: 1898-1930* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1970), p. 29.

to attract African miners.¹⁸ With the collapse of the boom in 1903-4 came the need to reduce wage costs. But African subsistence and market agriculture still provided the African population with an adequate living and workers for the mines were not forthcoming at the reduced wages being offered. At this point the Government had to undertake political measures aimed at destroying the base of the African economy and forcing labour off the land and into the mines.

Until the First World War African agriculture with its low overheads was more profitable than settler farming (in market produce and not cash crops) and Europeans and Indians acted as traders of African produce. The British South Africa Company attempted to stimulate the growth of the white rural bourgeoisie in order to realize its heavy investment in land and railways in the colony. The Government adopted various measures to encourage the expansion of European agriculture. Territorial segregation was instituted and land redistributed to give the settlers the most fertile areas. In 1969, of all land falling in the category of "unsuitable for farming", 65.7% was in African areas and 34.3% in non-African districts.¹⁹ Africans lost claim to their traditional homelands and were compelled to become feudal tenants paying rent and working for white landlords. Black labour was forced into the market by direct impressment or by taxation. A dual price system for agricultural produce was instituted which discriminated against African farmers. Government expenditure on European agriculture increased in the form of low cost loans, development of infrastructure, research on improved cultivation and training in modern techniques.

Arrighi cites the two prime factors which forced the rapid proletarianization of African agriculturalists: (a) the "transformation of 'discretionary' cash requirements into 'necessary' requirements" and (b) "an upward tendency in the effort price of African participation in the produce market resulting from a growing disequilibrium between the means of production (mainly land) and population in the peasant sector, and a weakening of the peasantry's competitive position on the produce market".²⁰ By the 1920s African agricultural competition had collapsed. Since then the economic viability of the 'Reserves' and African Purchase Areas has steadily fallen due to pressure of overpopulation on infertile land, soil erosion, lack of access to transport and market outlets and the siphoning off to the mines or urban industry of the economically active male population. In 1900, 70% of the total cash earnings of Africans came from the sale of produce. By 1932 this had fallen to 20%.²¹

An unsuccessful attempt was made to create a small class of landed bourgeois among Africans in the Native Purchase Areas. This was encouraged by the urban white petit bourgeoisie who wanted to see the development

18 Giovanni Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Development Studies*, VI, No. 3 (April 1970).

19 George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography* (University of London Press, 1970), p. 53.

20 Arrighi, "Labour Supplies," op. cit.

21 Ibid., p. 23.

of African farmers in competition with the white rural bourgeoisie to keep the prices of farm produce down. But as the latter class gradually consolidated its hold on political power, the attempts to create an African agricultural middle class were sabotaged. The land of the NPAs was not the most fertile, and was located far from the rail links with urban markets. Top limits were placed on the size of holdings to prevent significant accumulation of land by individuals. Access to necessary credit was blocked by provisions which forbade the mortgaging or sub-letting of farms. No provision was made for communal tenure or assisted purchase. The upshot was that the NPAs became merely an extension of the Reserves occupied by subsistence farmers and overcrowded with their landless kin.

Until the 1920s, then, Africans did not enter the labour market in large numbers, and those who worked in the mines were only temporarily proletarians. Under these conditions there was negligible formal labour organization. But Van Onselen points out that, even though there were no formal strikes by African workers prior to World War I, nonetheless, a limited class consciousness was emerging and workers did combine to withhold their labour.²² The large-scale desertion, back to the Reserves, or frequently to mines paying better wages, was a common technique. Informal 'go slows' were regarded by employers as a major problem. But formal organization of workers was difficult to achieve in the tightly policed mine compounds, and Ranger points out that African trade union activity first emerged in the less restricted urban 'locations' of Salisbury and Bulawayo, and states that mine and agricultural workers were isolated from the urban union movement until the 1950s.²³ Effective combination was also hampered by the fact that a large proportion of Rhodesia's non-white labour force has always been drawn from Malawi and, prior to their independence, from Zambia and Tanzania. Foreign labour has been recruited by the Labour Board for the mines so as not to reduce the supply of cheap local labour demanded by the settler farmers. This represents an amicable cooperation between the white rural and industrial interests. But ethnic divisions in the labour force hindered organization. An elite class of workers from Nyasaland (Malawi) developed a monopoly of the more skilled black jobs and their political consciousness was subordinated to their national concerns.²⁴ Van Onselen observed that class divisions among the workers were also evident between those who signed on to the mines under individual contracts and those who were rounded up *en masse* by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau and 'sold' to the mining companies. The independent workers realized and resented the effect of this forced labour in depressing wages, and referred to them as "Chibaro"—slaves.²⁵

In the inter-war period a number of formal organizations emerged to tap

22 Charles Van Onselen, "Workers' Consciousness in Black Miners: Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920," *Journal of African History*, XIV, No. 2 (1973), p. 245.

23 Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia: 1898-1930*, op. cit., p. 166.

24 Ibid., p. 139.

25 Van Onselen, op. cit., p. 251.

the discontent of black labour and the black population as a whole. The Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association was formed in the early 1920s. It was an elitist association of the tiny African bourgeoisie which attempted to push for the extension of the franchise to Africans. The African Welfare Association was broader based, in that it attempted to organize rural grievances, but it was even more moderate than the RBVA and as ineffective. The ICU of Clements Kadalie achieved a large though impermanent influence in Rhodesia as well as in South Africa. It was more effective in the urban areas than in the mines. Its concerns were more consciously with workers' interests and it was critical of the elitist tendencies of the other associations. The ICU managed to cross tribal lines and appealed to workers both from within Rhodesia and from the north. This more radical organization came under concerted attack by the forces of white rule. Members were threatened with the sack by employers, and with excommunication by the Roman Catholic Church. As in South Africa, however, the ICU was effective in educating Africans but it failed to mobilize them. Ranger notes that it was not predominantly a trade union and it vacillated between appeals to class and race.²⁶

A movement of great influence among Rhodesian Africans was the rise of the native Christian churches, largely independent of white missionary sponsorship. The Watch Tower movement gained the largest following throughout Central Africa. Watch Tower, together with the Vapostori movement, were openly anti-European. They offered simplistic, but basically accurate analyses of the European causes of African problems. Their major drawback was, however, that while they raised African racial and political consciousness significantly, they suppressed any possibility of militant action by counselling the necessity of waiting for the millennium when the white regime would be (supernaturally?) overthrown and eternally damned. Ranger suggests, however, that while these movements failed to organize radical action by Africans, they did serve to heighten consciousness and provided the basis for the later emergence of the nationalist organizations.²⁷

White trade unions benefited to a great extent from the battles fought and won for union security by the South African white labour movement. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934 consolidated the privilege of the white working class and ensured that black labour could provide no significant threat. The act established negotiation procedures but excluded Africans from the definition of employee, and denied legal recognition to African unions. Formal job reservation to protect white workers as yet exists only in the mines and on the railways, but the 1934 Act established Industrial Councils which set conditions for apprenticeship and job training. Thus *de facto* job reservation exists throughout because white workers control the access of Africans to job skills.

The Second World War provided a great impetus to the development

²⁶ Ranger, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

of secondary industry in Rhodesia. White immigration from Europe increased but as skilled labour requirements grew, Africans had to be used in skilled jobs in greater numbers. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the Government came under the control of the urban industrialists. They were willing to sacrifice the interests of the white workers by expanding the African skilled labour force and increasing African wages to create a stable supply. Realizing that they were not fully benefiting from the post-war prosperity, however, African workers began to use the strike weapon. The 1945 strike of railway workers forced the Government to negotiate with black union leaders and resulted in the establishment of a limited form of collective bargaining. A general strike in 1948 represented the resentment of the rest of the African labour-force which had not received similar benefits. White labour saw these strikes as 'Native uprisings' and scabbed to keep essential services operating. As in South Africa, Rhodesian white labour rejected any suggestions of class unity with black workers.

Rhodesian capital interests had benefited from the post-war boom and received a further impetus from the ten-year Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1953-63. The protected market for Rhodesian manufactured goods and agricultural produce was expanded. During this period the urban industrialists and petit bourgeois consolidated their interests in opposition to those of the rural bourgeoisie and the white working class. Arrighi argues that manufacturing capital needed to increase African agricultural productivity in order to increase the element of subsidy from the Reserve economy to the employers. At the same time the industrialists wanted to raise African wages in order to stabilize the labour force and increase black and white labour competition to lower white wages. The settler farmers, faced with threatened competition from African farmers (which did not materialize) and with the loss of African farm labour to industry (which did) reacted by forming the conservative Rhodesian Front Party together with white labour.

Since coming to power in 1962, the RF has acted to consolidate the privilege of all white classes and has taken Rhodesia closer towards the South African solution. The Party has sometimes acted against the interests of the capitalists, for example, when UDI was undertaken in 1965 against the opposition of the larger industrial interests. However, in the long run, independence should prove to be in the best interests of this class if it better enables Rhodesia to develop an apartheid economy. To this end increasingly repressive measures have been introduced to curtail the freedom of the African people. Black militancy in the form of the Zimbabwe African National Union has been forced underground. Pass laws have been tightened and a 'tribal homelands' policy has been launched to try to block the growth of an urbanized African proletariat. An attempt is being made to bolster the authority of the tribal chiefs to use them as an elite which will help to control the African masses on behalf of the Government.

On the whole, black labour militancy has not developed as strongly in Rhodesia as in South Africa. African labour in Rhodesia has not become permanently urbanized in as great numbers. But Rhodesia must be seen as part of

the total South African sphere of influence and many Rhodesian workers are drawn out of the domestic labour supply to the higher paying industries and mines of South Africa, with the result that their stay in the Rhodesian labour market is temporary. Contrary to the situation in South Africa, the Rhodesian working class is largely black. The development of a class of poor whites has been consciously prevented and the colour bar in Rhodesia is drawn at a much higher level than it is in South Africa. Most of the skilled jobs are filled by black workers and whites occupy white collar managerial or supervisory positions. Black trade unions are legally recognized but are totally controlled by management. They are small powerless bodies with negligible membership. Nathan Shamuyarira has pointed out the significant influence here of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) which pays the salaries of the union leadership.²⁸ The unions have been unsuccessful in winning pay increases for black workers, and the rank and file are isolated and tend to look to the political organizations for leadership. Wildcat strikes are increasingly being used as a means of political expression by Rhodesian Africans.

At present, class and race lines are continuing to harden in Rhodesia as each section of society finds its position under stress. Faced with a growing wage gap between black and white workers (in 1969 the average annual income for Africans in the industrial sector was £125 compared with £1,325 for non-Africans),²⁹ and the increasing repression of the Smith regime, African labour is being forced into a new militancy such as was demonstrated in the outbreak of strikes during the visit of the Pearce Commission. Rhodesia still has a chronic shortage of skilled labour and the white unions have not gained the security of their South African counterparts against the invasion of skilled Africans. The industrial interests are under pressure from the labour shortage and from economic sanctions, and as a result are pushing hard against the remaining sectors where whites control the skilled trades. As in South Africa, the continuation of white class collaboration and compromising of interests is increasingly being tested. While the dominant struggle will continue to be fought on racial lines, it is quite possible that this will result in heightened class conflict within the white camp as well.

SUMMARY: THE CLASS STRUCTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA

The basic class divisions of the two countries discussed here are quite similar. In each case the list is as follows:

1. International capitalist interests;
2. Domestic capital;
3. The white urban petit bourgeoisie;
4. The white working class;
5. The white rural bourgeoisie of settler farmers;
6. Indian and Coloured petit bourgeois traders;

²⁸ Nathan Shamuyarira, private communication.

²⁹ Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, op. cit., p. 56.

7. Indian and Coloured skilled labour;
8. A small African bourgeoisie;
9. African wage labour;
10. The African peasantry.

The whites of Rhodesia are overwhelmingly of British origin, but South Africa is characterized by separate classes of Afrikaners often in competition with the English. Traditionally the English South Africans have monopolized the larger financial and industrial concerns, but there is a growing class of Afrikaner capitalists entering into competition and cooperation with the English firms. The Afrikaner-English split in South Africa has been predominantly a rural-urban one and, since 1924, Afrikaner farmers have formed the backbone of the Nationalists' political power in competition with English capital. The skilled trades were, to begin with, dominated by English labour, but since the 1920s Afrikaner labour has played an equally important role in the unions. South Africa's situation is different from Rhodesia's also in that a class of unskilled 'poor whites' was never allowed to develop in the latter. The poor whites played a key role in determining black-white labour relations in South Africa in the past, but they have now been successfully absorbed into the white proletariat and have almost disappeared as a class.

The economic and political interests of international capital and domestic capital are much the same in Rhodesia as they are in South Africa. They each require a stable black labour force, for which they must pay higher wages than those presently prevailing. If black wages are raised, then the artificially high white wages must be lowered, and to this end the employers tend to press for increased black-white labour competition and a relaxing of job reservation. Generally, foreign and domestic capital act in concert but conflict does arise between the two groups, usually because the larger international firms have greater economies of scale and control greater markets and thus can pay higher wages. Competition for scarce labour can also arise when the larger firms must consider, in addition, the labour needs of their branches in neighbouring countries. However, foreign and domestic capital are increasingly linked in joint enterprises and their shared interests outweigh their differences. Both share the basic capitalist contradictions of working to keep wages down while depending on the purchasing power of the working classes to provide an effective market. As the base of the South African economy shifts from mining to the manufacturing of consumer goods, the need to enlarge the market becomes crucial. Ruth First, Steele and Gurney argue that this is leading to an increased expansion into the markets of South Africa's northern neighbours—Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi and the Portuguese territories.³⁰ The desire to sell competitively in European markets encourages industrialists to speed up the substitution of black labour

³⁰ *The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid*, op. cit., p. 258.

for white, as goods produced by white labour are overpriced even before transport costs are added.

South Africa's economy averaged an annual growth rate of 5.8% between 1965 and 1969.³¹ Much of this growth is due to the productivity of African labour. The Bantu Wage and Productivity Association calculated that overall productivity rose 20% following the increased substitution of African labour for white in 1970.³² The BWPA also calculated that from 1967 to 1972 the output of black labour rose 30% while their wages rose at a much lower rate. At the same time the wages of white labour far outstripped their productivity, resulting in inflation.³³

The expanding economy has developed two new sectors—petrochemicals and computers—both highly capital intensive and heavily dependent on imported Western technology, primarily American. The replacement of labour with technology is another attempt to overcome the primary stumbling block in the path of growth—the severe shortage of skilled labour. First of all note the three major mechanisms used to introduce blacks into formerly white, skilled jobs.³⁴ The first is 'labour fragmentation'. Skilled jobs are reorganized to be carried out by one white artisan and several black assistants instead of by three or four expensive white artisans. This represents a great wage saving to the employer. The second mechanism is the development of industry in the 'border areas' near Reserves. Here labour can be housed cheaply and kept out of the towns. No wage agreements apply and trade union activity is banned. The major advantage of relocating in border areas accrues from the relaxing of industrial colour bars, allowing the free substitution of cheap black labour for white. The third and most controversial means of solving the skilled labour shortage is what Harry Oppenheimer terms the 'floating up' of the colour bar.³⁵ This is the simple replacement of white labour by black workers. The whites are promoted and receive salary increments and increased bonuses in return for their agreement to relinquish certain job categories to black labour. The African skilled workers receive less pay for equal work and the white employers and labour keep the change.

White capital is further consolidating its position by an increased co-operation of English, Afrikaner and foreign business interests. Since 1948 the Nationalist Government has encouraged the growth of Afrikaner capital by backing the establishment of Afrikaner controlled banks and building an important State sector as an economic base for this group. The growth of the State sector also increasingly involves the Government as a financial partner of the capital interests. Foreign corporations provide crucial economic and political backing for apartheid, and in return receive some of the highest profits on investment anywhere in the world. For the period 1960 to 1970 the average rate of return on US foreign investment for the world

31 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

was 11%, while in South Africa it was 18.6%.³⁶ Thus apartheid enables an increasingly unified capitalist class to make handsome profits out of African labour. The tensions that do arise in the relationship between white labour and management have thus far been soothed by a sharing of the profits.

As a class the white petit bourgeoisie until now has not played a key role in the class struggle between labour and capital. But it threatens to become an increasingly significant class politically as its ranks are swelled with white workers who float up from the working class. If this upward movement continues at the present rate, class interests will begin to line up with race in South Africa as they have in Rhodesia.

The white workers have always been in conflict with the economic interests of employers in increasing racial competition for jobs. But a compromise between labour and capital was worked out after the First World War, in which labour agreed to restrict strike action in return for protection from the competition of surplus African labour. It is for this reason that white workers have been totally isolated from black labour and have gained levels of economic privilege not possible for a working class anywhere else in the world. White unemployment is negligible. As long as capital is willing to protect its white workers, there can be no possibility of inter-racial working class solidarity. For white workers in Rhodesia to abandon their racial privilege would mean a drop in average income of two-thirds.³⁷ Even in a socialist economy their loss would be greater than one could realistically expect them to accept without a struggle. White labour seems satisfied with the compromise worked out with the employers and will remain so as long as there is no serious threat to the colour bar. But their monopoly of the skilled trades is being threatened as the economy expands. They are losing the demographic battle and, therefore, they actively support the recruitment drives for the immigration of white skilled labour from northern Europe. The economic dependency of white labour on the industrial interests is offset to some extent by the former's control, together with the rural bourgeoisie, of the State power in both Rhodesia and South Africa. The two classes in alliance form the power base for the Vorster and Smith regimes. The farmers need cheap labour and land and resist attempts to stabilize the African labour force in the towns. The 'border industries' may provide unwanted competition for labour in some areas, but they also aim to keep African labour located in the Reserves and thus more available for employment on the farms. The farmers have a vested interest in keeping the Reserves overcrowded and unproductive, to discourage agricultural competition from Africans, and to encourage a steady flow of migrant labour. As this class expands, its need for more land puts greater pressure on the African peasantry. The latest land redistribution in Rhodesia in 1969 reduced the African share of the total area from 54.2% to 45.2%³⁸ and this for a population of five million compared with 200,000 whites.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

37 Rough calculation based on data from *ILO Labour Statistics Yearbook, 1969*.

38 Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, op. cit., p. 54.

The Indian and Coloured skilled workers are trapped between the two main racial groups. Until the last decade they tended to identify themselves with the goals of their white class counterparts. White labour has consistently rejected any union with non-whites, however, and the Coloured workers have been forced to seek solidarity with the African working class. For a long time Coloured and Indian unions resisted cooperation with Africans because they resented the fact that it was this group that pulled their wages down. Until the 1960s they used their superior organizational skills to win for themselves some small concessions in the system of job reservations. In recent years, however, Indians, Africans and Coloureds in South Africa have begun to form a race and class union of non-white labour.

The African middle class has never been numerically significant, although it has provided considerable leadership, and not always in a conservative direction. However, Shamuyarira notes that during the consultations with the Pearce Commission in Rhodesia, members of this class were among the few Africans who did give support to the proposed settlement, whereas African workers totally rejected it.³⁹ Economically, petit bourgeois Africans may receive some limited benefit in comparison with the mass of Africans, but those who have middle class ambitions soon find that they cannot separate themselves from their race. African traders cannot gain access to the major markets. Professionals find their careers and salaries limited. This class is torn between two allegiances: to the whites from whom they gain status and economic support, however minimal, and to the mass of Africans, whose life chances and political future they share. There may indeed be grounds for middle class militancy here but the African bourgeois have yet to demonstrate it significantly.

The African working class is the focus of all class conflict in Southern Africa. The main disputes among the white classes concern how best to minimize the threat of or exploit African labour. Employers support the increased use of black labour, but only at starvation wages. Such support is of little use to the black proletariat. Even if white racial solidarity did break down and the colour bar were breached, the result would be a reduction of black and white wages to the lowest common denominator. The collapse of the colour bar would not serve the interests of black labour unless it was coupled with effective union organization and negotiating strength. African labour is becoming increasingly urbanized and increasingly militant. Union leaders realize that black workers remain the cheapest exploitable resource for white capital and white labour. Faced with a steady decline in real wages, rising costs of living and intensified political and social repression, with all other paths blocked, their only option is violent struggle.

Black workers, through the migratory contract labour system, have maintained strong ties as a class with the African peasantry. This is in spite of the fact that the peasantry acts as a surplus labour pool and threatens

³⁹ Nathan Shamuyarira, "Rhodesia After the Pearce Commission Report, 1972," *The African Review*, II, No. 4 (1972), p. 475.

the job security of more urbanized Africans. Workers supplement peasant subsistence cultivation with their cash earnings, and in turn receive support during unemployment. The peasant cultivators have always been in competition with white farmers for land. African farmers in both countries had the foundations of their economy destroyed by settler competition and now struggle only to survive with ever decreasing resources.

CONCLUSION: RACE AND THE WORKING CLASS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This paper has attempted to argue that racial partition in South Africa and Rhodesia developed to suit the economic interests of the different white classes, and that the races have since been playing the traditional class roles, the main protagonists being white capital and black labour. It has been to the great financial benefit of white capital and labour to suppress their class differences in favour of racial cooperation. Apartheid has proved itself to be an extremely flexible and effective mechanism for subordinating class conflict to racial advantage.

In the face of the racial unity of the white classes, solidarity among non-whites seems to be growing. The SACP and the ANC are working in cooperation with the Black Allied Workers' Union, the Black South African Students' Organization, the Indian Congress and other non-white bodies. Non-whites have come to realize the futility of separate campaigns. They have accepted the fact that, given their common situation as a resource commodity for the white economy, for all those whose skin is not light, race is class.

The question remains whether racism is a necessary condition of capitalism in Southern Africa. The answer is obviously not, but racism and capitalism have developed a symbiotic relationship and the relatively high rate of return on investment in Southern Africa has been largely due to the racial exploitation on which the economy is based. Cox argues that race prejudice was not developed by the white race, but rather by the capitalist class. "It is probable that without capitalism, the world might never have experienced race prejudice. Indeed, we should expect that under another form of economic organization, say socialism, the relationship between whites and peoples of colour would be significantly modified."⁴⁰ Racism in Southern Africa as yet shows no sign of outliving its usefulness. The contradictions of race may not be fundamental in the Marxist sense, but they are likely to remain dominant, suppressing class struggle for some time to come.

⁴⁰ Cox, "Race and Exploitation: A Marxist View," op. cit., p. 212.