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CASTE,
CLASS, &
RACE *A Study in Social Dynamics*

— *Introduction by Dr. Joseph S. Roucek*

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To the memory of
WILLIAM RAPHAEL COX

21. *The New Orthodoxy in Theories of Race Relations*

IN THIS CHAPTER WE SHALL DISCUSS THE RACIAL THEORY OF TWO reputable scholars, Robert E. Park and Ruth Benedict, and elaborate somewhat our own point of view.¹ We shall not, of course, give any consideration to the views of the political biologists who continue to be interested in developing somatic theories of race relations. Trying to deal scientifically with these theories is exceedingly depressing, for almost invariably their apparent objectivity is only a mask for an ulterior purpose.

We cannot defeat race prejudice by proving that it is wrong. The reason for this is that race prejudice is only a symptom of a materialistic social fact. If, for instance, we should discover by "scientific" method that Negroes and Chinese are "superior" to tall, long-skulled blonds—and this is not farfetched, since libraries have been written to prove the opposite—then, to the powers that be, so much the worse for Negroes and Chinese. Our proof accomplishes nothing. The articulate white man's ideas about his racial superiority are rooted deeply in the social system, and it can be corrected only by changing the system itself.

Race prejudice is supported by a peculiar socioeconomic need which guarantees force in its protection; and, as a consequence, it is likely that at its centers of initiation force alone will defeat it. By stepping clear of the whole unnumbered productions of intellectual apologists for Nordic racial pretensions, Adolf Hitler has come into the open and has shown quite clearly the real process by which "Aryans" are made and

¹In our selection of a noted sociologist and an anthropologist who have shown considerable interest in race relations, we are not primarily interested in equating theories. We shall hope only that a critical review of their position may throw light upon significant currents of thought in the field. Moreover, it does not seem necessary to refer to certain statements by these writers merely because they appear correct but have no bearing upon the thesis developed in this study. Social theories gain in meaning and significance if their authors are known; and this fact, we shall hope, is the justification for our personal approach.

unmade. Those people are "Aryans" who have the physical might to support their claim.

The study of race relations, then, is fundamentally a sociological study. In the past, however, the sociologists have not been sufficiently convincing in their analysis to command general recognition. We turn now to a consideration of the character of their thinking.

Robert E. Park

Professor Robert E. Park needs no introduction to American social scientists. His position as a major sociologist and outstanding teacher is well known; his continued interest in the study of race relations is equally well known. He was one of the most consistent opponents of that host of pseudo scientists who take it upon themselves to explain why peoples of color are inferior to white people and how they became that way.

Dr. Park wrote no book on race relations, but he was very much concerned with the theory of race relations in his *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* done in collaboration with E. W. Burgess. His theory will be found mainly in his numerous articles, and evidently the most significant of these is that contributed to the volume, *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, edited by Edgar T. Thompson.

A critical examination of Park's ideas on race relations is valuable not only because it may throw some light upon the state of conservative thinking in this field, but also because it may bring into small focus theories that have gained considerable currency in the social sciences.

The Meaning of Race Relations

In attempting to gain insight into modern race relations Professor Park goes into the life of Ancient Greece and Rome and then concludes: "It is obvious that race relations and all that they imply are . . . the products of migration and conquest. This was true in the ancient world and it is equally true of the modern."² This apparently truistic conclusion can have meaning only when we know that "all . . . relations of cultural or racial minorities with a dominant people may be described . . . as types of race relationship, even though no evidences exist either of race conflict, on the one hand, or of obvious racial diversity on the other."³

To Park, then, the mere cultural difference of a dominant and a

²"The Nature of Race Relations," in *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, Edgar T. Thompson, ed., p. 7.

³*Ibid.*

subordinate people is sufficient to produce the phenomenon which we have come to know as "race relationship." Is it necessary to specify "dominant people"? What if the "cultural relations" take place between peoples of collateral cultural status within the same geographical area? With such a definition it becomes quite easy for Dr. Park to find race problems among the ancient Greeks. He does not differentiate significantly between the types of social systems which may or may not produce the variation in human nature necessary for an expression of racial antagonism. On this score Ruth Benedict observes interestingly:

The principal objective of early imperialism was to secure tribute and to bind the subjugated areas to the capital, not, as in later forms, to exploit a new labor market in working mines or plantations. Therefore, it was economical to honor the most able of the conquered peoples and to depute authority to them. In regard to the folkways and cultural life of the provinces, Roman policy was one of *laissez faire*.⁴

Professor Park asserts further: "The struggles of minor nationalities for self-determination is a phase of race conflict; a phase . . . in which language rather than color is the basis of division and conflict."⁵ The question here is whether either color or language has ever been *the basis* of race conflict. We shall revert to this in a later section.

It seems quite obvious that this definition is entirely too broad to be of service in analyzing race relations as they are commonly understood; and, as we shall see, Park uses it mainly as a stumbling block. It may be suggested that Dr. Park intends to refer here to something quite vital, that such contacts as take place between a dominant culture group and a "minority people" present all the characteristic relations and mechanisms that we are familiar with in the case of racial conflict. But this is the very question under consideration. Park states neither the characteristics of racial conflicts nor those of culture-group conflicts; hence, if it is necessary, we shall have to accept this identity upon his arbitrary opinion.

Race Prejudice

Race prejudice, Dr. Park admits, has been a very difficult social attitude to define; "no one has yet succeeded in making it wholly intelligible."⁶ But our author proceeds to identify the phenomenon:

Race prejudice is like class and caste prejudice—merely one variety of a species . . . as far as race relations are concerned, racial minorities

⁴Ruth Benedict, *Race: Science and Politics*, pp. 160-61.

⁵Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, p. 646.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 578.

are merely social classes . . . race prejudice in the southern states is caste prejudice.⁷

The omnibus scope of the concept of race relations is here continued until it becomes clear that there is confusion. If, so far as race relations are concerned, racial minorities are social classes, is class conflict race conflict? Is there antagonism between social classes? What, at any rate, is a social class? If race prejudice is like caste prejudice, what is caste prejudice? These queries remain unanswered.

The following definition also goes beyond mental grasp: "Race prejudice may be regarded as a spontaneous, more or less instinctive, defense-reaction, the practical effect of which is to restrict free competition between the races."⁸ Could one say, for instance, that the race that is prejudiced is merely suffering from an inferiority complex? This definition seems to allow such a deduction.

Park does not even settle upon a working definition of a *race*, "since ethnologists themselves are not agreed upon any classification of the human family along racial lines."⁹ But he says, "The closest approach we shall ever make to a satisfactory classification of races as a basis of antipathy will be that of grouping men according to color. . . . This would give us substantially the white . . . the yellow . . . and the dark . . . races. The antipathies between these general groups . . . will be found to be essentially fundamental."¹⁰ What now becomes of our all-inclusive definitions of race relations and race prejudice? If this is in fact the author's^{10a} classification of races, then race prejudice must exist only between peoples of different color. If not, he should have included in it the social phenomena of classes, castes, minority groups, and nationalities.

Moreover, Dr. Park has here made a significant assumption, the clarification of which is vital for an understanding of race relations. He assumes that there are fundamental color antipathies between whites, yellows, and blacks. Of course Park does not demonstrate this, and we might ask the question: What historical evidence is there to show that before the white man made his contact with the peoples of color there existed race prejudice among these peoples?

⁷"The Basis of Race Prejudice," *The Annals*, Vol. CXXXX, November 1928, p. 11ff.

⁸Park and Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 623; see also Park's repetition of this definition in J. F. Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion*, p. xiii.

⁹Park and Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 634.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 636.

^{10a}For simplification of reference we shall assume that the citations from Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, are by Park.

Caste and Race

The major part of Professor Park's racial theory is involved with his ideas of caste, and this very fact constitutes his major failing. On the origin of caste in India, he writes:

A permanent caste system in India seems to have had its origin in the obvious diversity of racial types in the Indian population. It is a well-recognized fact that visibility is an important factor in maintaining social distance and incidentally making class distinction hereditary.¹¹

This statement covers considerable ground, but it is typical of all the racial theories of "the origin" of caste. As we have attempted to show in a previous chapter, there is available no historical evidence that caste in India had a racial origin. To repeat, the deductive procedure behind this belief is that of imputing the writer's own racial conditioning to an age which could not possibly have known it. Why should "visibility" produce thousands of castes in India? The naked Indian eye has never been so delicate a color detector. But what really is Park's meaning of caste? Although he presents no clear description of it, he declares:

The sect is a spontaneous association; the caste is, in many ways, a *forced* association. After having chosen a profession—let it be priest, soldier, magistrate—a man belongs necessarily to a caste. . . . In India the caste is determined by birth, and it is distinguished by a characteristic trait: the persons of one caste can live with, eat with, and marry only individuals of the same caste.

In Europe it is not only birth, but circumstances and education which determine the entrance of an individual into a caste; to marry, to frequent, to invite to the same table only people of the same caste, exist practically in Europe as in India. . . . We all live in a confined circle, where we find our friends, our guests, our sons- and daughters-in-law.¹²

Therefore, we might say in conclusion to this passage, everyone in the world belongs to a caste. Clearly the author has reached an almost unlimited expansion of the concept of caste. Indeed, he says: "Every religious society tends to assume the character of a caste . . . in so far at least as it prohibits or discourages marriage outside the church or the sect."¹³ And "the prostitute, in America, until recently constituted a caste."¹⁴

We may also observe the contradiction that in India, after a man

¹¹In Edgar T. Thompson, ed., op. cit., p. 16.

¹²Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 205-06.

¹³In Edgar T. Thompson, ed., op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁴Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 722.

has chosen his profession, he belongs to a caste, yet his caste is determined by birth. Moreover, it should be interesting to know in what ways the caste is a forced association.

With this frame of reference Park proceeds to interpret race relations in the United States. First, however, there are some traits of caste which are particularly important in this analysis. "Etiquette," he writes, "is the very essence of caste, since the prestige of a superior always involves the respect of an inferior."¹⁵ But why should etiquette be the essence of caste and not that of class or the family or any other little-dog-big-dog relationship?

At any rate, in an earlier statement, Park seemed to have favored a different "essence." Thus he observes:

Sighele points out that the prohibition of intermarriage observed in the most rigid and absolute form is a fundamental distinction of the caste. If this be regarded as the fundamental criterion, the Negro in the United States occupies the position of a caste.¹⁶

Therefore, we arrive at the conclusion that race relations in the United States are in fact caste relations. "The 'color line' is . . . a local variety of what students of society and human nature call caste."¹⁷ This was not always so, but we are not at all certain when it came about.

The social order which emerged with the abolition of slavery was a system of caste—caste based on race and color. . . . So firmly was the system of caste fixed in the habits and customs . . . of both races in the South that all the social disorganization incident to the Civil War and Reconstruction were not sufficient wholly to . . . destroy it.¹⁸

The question here is: Was slavery the caste system or did the caste system arise after slavery? Dr. Park does not answer this clearly. In the passage above he seems to say that slavery was caste. And to the same effect he asserts: "It was when, after the abolition of slavery, the caste system broke down that the discords and racial animosities that we ordinarily identify with the race problem began."¹⁹

With this confusion we pass to another stage in the evolution of race

¹⁵In Bertram W. Doyle, *The Etiquette of Race Relations*, p. xx.

¹⁶Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 722.

¹⁷Park, in Bertram W. Doyle, op. cit., p. xvii.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. xvi.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. xxi. Again: "The caste system as it had existed was maintained not by law but by a body of customs that was more or less self-enforcing. One evidence of the change in race relations, as a result of emancipation, was the efforts of the southern communities to enforce by statute racial distinctions and discriminations which were difficult or impossible to maintain by custom and tradition." *Ibid.*, p. xx.

relations: "The Negro group has gradually ceased to exhibit the characteristic of a caste and has assumed rather the character of a racial or national minority."²⁰ However, this appears to be contradicted forthwith. In referring to the Jim Crow experience of Congressman Mitchell on a train, the author declares: "This is an *instance of caste* a little less innocent and amiable than the casual mistake of addressing a bishop as 'boy.'"²¹

At this point we may consider Park's explanation of endogamy among Negroes. He reaches this position: ". . . restrictions on intermarriage . . . make the Negro an endogamous social group, in much the same sense that Jews, the Mennonites, and any of the more primitive religious sects are endogamous."²² Here the author seems to be very much in error.

Negroes are definitely not endogamous as the Jews or the tribe; in fact, Negroes are not endogamous at all. Such religious cultures as Judaism and Mohammedanism tend to oppose assimilation. Intermarriage is abhorrent to orthodox Jews; and sanctions against it come from within the group itself. This is also true of certain sects. Because white people are endogamous with respect to Negroes, it does not follow that Negroes are also endogamous. There are no primary sanctions among Negroes prohibiting outmarriage; there is too much color in the group for that. Negroes are probably the freest people in the United States, so far as attitudes against outmarriage are concerned, and this notwithstanding certain reactions against white endogamy. A recognition of this distinction should obviate many spurious comparisons between race relations and "culture-minority" problems.

The Mores and Race Relations

There is a definite ring of fatality and mysticism in Park's discussion of the stability of race relations in the South. This is evidently due to the false outlook derived from the caste belief and to an over-reliance upon the apparent extent to which race relations in the South are "in the mores," a static *laissez-faire* concept. The following illustrates his position:

The failure of reconstruction legislation to effect any fundamental change in the South's caste system is less an illustration of the recalcitrance

²⁰Ibid., p. xxiii.

²¹Ibid., p. xxiv. (Italics added.) See also "Racial Ideologies," *American Society in Wartime*, William F. Ogburn, ed., p. 178.

²²In Bertram W. Doyle, op. cit., p. xxii.

of the Anglo-Saxon than of Sumner's dictum that it is not possible to reform the mores by law.

People not reared in the southern tradition have sometimes assumed that southern people's insistence on racial segregation is evidence that they cherish some deep, instinctive antipathy for the Negro race. Anyone who accepts that conception of the matter is likely to be somewhat mystified when he learns that the Negro is quite all right in his place. And that place, like the place of everyone else, is the one which tradition and custom have assigned him.²³

Here is an extraordinary mixture of ideas that is indeed "mystifying." What constructive thinking about race relations might one do when one is told that "custom" assigned the Negro to his place? If not custom, then one is left to choose between "Anglo-Saxon recalcitrance" and the "mores." At any rate, let us consider the mores. To what extent are race relations in the South in the mores? Here Park follows William G. Sumner's fatalistic ideology quite closely.

According to Sumner, "Each individual is born into [the mores] as he is born into the atmosphere, and he does not reflect on them, or criticize them any more than a baby analyzes the atmosphere before he begins to breathe it." When this concept is applied to race relations in the South, the prospects of change appear dismal indeed. Thus he asserts:

The whites have never been converted from the old mores. . . . Vain attempts have been made to control the new order by legislation. The only result is the proof that legislation cannot make mores. We see also that mores do not form under social convulsions and disorder. . . . Some are anxious to interfere and try to control. They take their stand on ethical views of what is going on. It is evidently impossible for any one to interfere. We are like spectators in a great natural convulsion. The results will be such as the facts and forces call for. We cannot foresee them. They do not depend on ethical views any more than the volcanic eruption on Martinique contained an ethical element.²⁴

This is the passage from which Park took inspiration; it has also been the inspiration of the white ruling class of the South. Gunnar Myrdal is right when he asserts:

The theory of folkways and mores has diffused from the scientists and has in the educated classes of the South become a sort of regional political

²³Ibid., p. xvi.

²⁴*Folkways*, pp. 77-78. In the same vein he continues: ". . . nothing sudden or big is possible. The enterprise is possible only if the mores are ready for it. The conditions of success lie in the mores. That is why the agitator, reformer, prophet, reorganizer of society who has found out 'the truth' and wants to 'get a law passed' to realize it right away is only a mischief-maker." Ibid., p. 113.

credo. The characterization of something as "folkways" or "mores" or the stereotype that "stateways cannot change folkways"—which under no circumstances can be more than a relative truth—is used in the literature on the South and on the Negro as a general formula of mystical significance. It is expressed whenever one wants to state one's opinion that "what is, must be," without caring to give full factual reasons.²⁵

At any rate, the question arises: What really is supposed to be "in the mores" and in whose mores? Clearly it could not be the whole social system of the South that is in the mores, and it would be difficult to accept the rationalization that it is the fear of intermarriage.

The "old mores," the slavery attitudes, were not the static phenomena which Sumner and Park have defined for us. They were never assimilated in the American society. Indeed, they might be compared with large stones in the stomach that were not only indigestible but also productive of increasing irritation, until at last they had to be disgorged. So, too, modern race relations keep the social system in a state of continual unrest. These race relations in the South have developed out of the immediate need of the white exploiting class to restore as far as possible the complete control over its labor supply, which it enjoyed during slavery. A high degree of restoration has been achieved, not through the force of "the mores," but through a continued and vigorous campaign of anti-Negro education and the creation of innumerable situations for the exercise of extralegal violence against Negroes or against whites who seek to intervene in their protection.²⁶

The attitudes of the white ruling class in the South, called mores, are in fact conflict attitudes. The statement often heard in the South that "nothing, nothing will ever change the South" is like the statement, "They shall not pass." Both presume powerful antagonists; both are war cries. But whereas the general who takes the latter position may be fairly certain that he will stand his ground, the former is made by a class which recognizes that it is constantly losing ground. This class may be compared with a man rowing hard upstream, while his boat

²⁵*An American Dilemma*, p. 1049; see also pp. 1045-57 for a good discussion of this subject.

²⁶See Carey McWilliams, "Race Discrimination and the Law," *Science and Society*, Vol. IX, Winter, 1945, pp. 1-22, where the political and economic interests behind the laws which establish anti-racial "mores" are convincingly reviewed; also Frank E. Hartung, "The Social Function of Positivism," *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 12, April 1945, pp. 120-33; and E. B. Reuter, "Southern Scholars and Race Relations," *Phylon*, Third Quarter, Vol. VII, 1946, pp. 232-33.

In fact, it may be an advantage to clear thinking, where social controls in modern society are being analyzed, to abandon altogether the concepts "folkways" and "mores" with their magical implications. Other terms may be devised to designate customary behavior that is more or less culturally mandatory in our highly dynamic social system.

moves slowly down with a powerful current. It gives him considerable encouragement to shout that he will never go down.

Then, too, the anti-Negro attitudes which the ruling class propagates among the white masses cannot be "in the mores" of the people of the South because at least half of them, all the Negroes and a considerable minority of whites,²⁷ reject them entirely. In reality race relations in the

²⁷This point seems so significant that we shall illustrate it by quoting at length from a feature article published in a leading white newspaper of the Deep South. Probably no right is more desired by Negroes in the South than the right of free and equal access to the ballot; and none is more effectively denied them. Let us observe the state of the mores on this score:

"Next Tuesday is . . . July 4, the day we mark radiant on our calendar as the birthday of our nation, when our forefathers signed the great charter of American democracy. Fundamental to that charter, and on which every other claim rests, is the premise: 'All men are born equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.' Next Tuesday we celebrate this birthday of democracy by substituting 'white men' for 'all men,' as we eliminate Negroes from the right of self-government. We will do this with the slogan upon our lips, 'white supremacy.' In its final analysis it may be truly said that this war which we are fighting all over the world today is in protest against the claim of one race to be supreme over another race. Thus the Japanese began their rape of China, and the Germans their slaughter of the Jews. What do we mean by race supremacy? Racial pride may be a wholesome emotion, or it may become a menace to the rights and welfare of mankind.

"Here in the South we are proud of our Anglo-Saxon blood, and basing our claims on the achievements of the race in the past, proclaim the dogma that our race must be supreme. This is a fatal fallacy. Any people, or individual who claims superiority on the achievements of the fathers, denies the fundamental principle of democracy by attempting to substitute the heresy of inheritance for the test of righteousness of achievement. We can only hope to claim any vestige of superiority for the Anglo-Saxon race by maintaining today the spirit and ideals by which our fathers won their place in the world of yesterday. What was that spirit, and what were their ideals?

"The foundation of Anglo-Saxon civilization was laid at Runnymede, when the English people won from the crown the right of trial by jury. It was the birthday of the English spirit of fair play. Out of that great charter was born years after our own great charter, which without discrimination of race, color or creed declares 'all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.' My Anglo-Saxon pride is in their record of fair play, their fine sense of chivalry, their disciplined obedience to their own laws, and their long history of protection of the weak against the strong.

"By that record the civilization of the South must be tested today. We have in our midst—by no choice of their own—a minority race absolutely dependent upon us for 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' The traditions of our past, and the very genius of our race, demand that we grant to them the 'inalienable rights' proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, which we glorify next Tuesday.

"Of course, the slogan 'white supremacy' was born in the South during the terrible days of 'reconstruction,' when conscienceless 'carpetbaggers' and 'scallawags' mobilized an ignorant race, just freed from slavery, and voted them en masse against the welfare of both races. The fear of Negro supremacy produced the defense of white supremacy. But it is folly not to recognize the revolutionary change which has taken place among the Negroes in 65 years. Their progress educationally and commercially is really unmatched in the story of races. There has come an intelligent racial pride, and sense of responsibility, to their own leaders, which makes it impossible for conscienceless politicians to repeat the horrors of the reconstruction political nightmare.

"Of course, we must not shut our eyes to the truth that there is still a great mass

South are rather more in the trigger finger of the people than in their mores. Dr. Park might just as well argue that it is in the mores of the Germans, the "Aryan race," to rule over the peoples of central Europe. Even all the "convulsions and disorder" of World War I and all the attempts of the League of Nations to legislate did not disturb this attitude. Furthermore, anyone who had an opportunity in the early forties to observe the relations between the "German race" and the French people—how the crestfallen Frenchman grinned and reached for his cap as the proud German conquerors went by on the streets of Paris—cannot help concluding that it is in the mores of these people to be ruled by the master German race. Of course the utter nonsense of this hardly bears recitation, and yet it is not different from the antagonistic racial adjustment in the South. Park and Sumner see only the accommodation aspect of the interracial situation. The "convulsions and disorder" of which they speak are themselves the product of maladjustment. Convulsions and disorder do not develop out of social situations that are in the mores; moreover, the racial situation in the South remains pregnant with further possibilities for social eruptions.

Nothing is more discussed, nothing more provocative of heat, indeed, nothing more unstable than race relations in the South. The dominant attitudes supporting race relations are inconsistent with the fundamental democratic mores of the nation, and they are becoming increasingly so. The white ruling class is, to be sure, determined to keep the Negro exploitable, but it dares not rely upon "the mores" to do this. It must exercise "eternal vigilance" in maintaining an ever-present threat of interracial violence if it is to continue its exploitative social order. The Southern racial system "lives, moves, and has its being" in a thick matrix of organized and unorganized violence. As Myrdal observes, "There exists a pattern of violence against Negroes in the South

of ignorant irresponsibility among the Negroes, just as there is such a dead weight of ignorant and irresponsible mass of whites. But just here is our faith in democracy. It is not a form of government, but an educational process. It is in the exercise of freedom of choice, with its responsibility, that men develop in intelligence and character. To lose faith in this process is to lose faith in democracy.

"The story which Celestine Sibley told the other day of the schools of democracy established for Negro children was profoundly significant. It reveals the Negroes' faith in democracy, and also their faith that, despite their present attitude, eventually the white people will grant them the privileges of democracy. That is my faith also. Whatever may be the final legal interpretation of our present plan for a 'white primary,' it is so obviously an annulment of the purpose and spirit of our constitution, that it cannot stand against the growing sentiment of an enlightened democratic conscience. We cannot much longer continue to subject Negroes to 'taxation without representation' or draft them to jeopardize their lives in defense of a democracy which denies them the right of franchise." M. Ashby Jones, feature writer, in the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 2, 1944.

upheld by the relative absence of fear of legal reprisal. Any white man can strike or beat a Negro, steal or destroy his property, cheat him in a transaction and even take his life, without much fear of legal reprisal."²⁸ It may not be too strong an assertion to state that such a condition in America could never become stabilized.

Poor Whites

With respect to the role of poor whites, Park seems to have accepted the popular illusion that there is a fundamental antagonism between them and the colored people. For instance, he says:

It has been the violent . . . efforts of the New South, in which the poor white man has become the dominant figure, to enforce upon Negroes the ritual of a racial etiquette . . . that has been responsible for a good deal, including lynchings. . . . Negroes acquired in slavery the conviction that a poor white man was an inferior white man, and the course of events since emancipation has not increased the black man's respect for the white man as such.²⁹

Might we not ask what "course of events" Park has in mind which might have resulted in an increase of the Negroes' "respect for the white man as such"? In what sense is the poor white man a dominant figure in the South? Indeed, even at a lynching we do not conceive of the poor white as being the dominant figure—unless, of course, we mean that in most of the lynch mobs lower- and middle-class whites are more numerous. But this could not be Park's meaning, because white mobs have always been thus constituted. As a matter of fact, both the Negroes and the poor whites are exploited by the white ruling class, and this has been done most effectively by the maintenance of antagonistic attitudes between the white and the colored masses. Could anything be more feared, is any aspect of race relations more opposed by this ruling class than a *rapprochement* between the white and the colored masses?

This, too, is consistent with Park's belief in the stability of race relations. Those who rely upon the mores for their interpretation of racial antagonism always seek to define their problem as an irrational up-thrust of primitive folk attitudes; as having its roots in some instinctive drive toward repugnance between all biologically distinguishable peoples, a repugnance beyond the reach of cultural variations.

²⁸Op. cit., p. 559.

²⁹In Bertram W. Doyle, op. cit., p. xxi. Italics added.

An Estimate

Shorn of its censural and descriptive support, Park's theory of race relations is weak, vacillating, and misleading; and, to the extent that it lends "scientific" confirmation to the Southern rationalizations of racial exploitation, it is insidious.³⁰ His teleological approach has diverted him from an examination of specific causal events in the development of modern race antagonism; it has led him inevitably into a hopeless position about "man's inhumanity to man," a state of mind that must eventually drive the student into the open arms of the mystic.

It may seem puerile and even unfair to criticize Professor Park's ideas and views in this fashion. Puerile because one, knowing of Park's kaleidoscopic intellectual style, has no difficulty in finding inconsistencies and occasional contradictions in his writings; and unfair because the citations have been abstracted from their animated setting. But we have been especially careful not to distort these ideas and to consider only that part of Park's theory upon which he seems to put some continued reliance. In fact, this is apparently the whole substance of Dr. Park's contributions to the theory of race relations.³¹ Moreover, it is easy to discover inconsistencies but not so easy to show that these inconsistencies are inevitable.

If we know that one believes that the cultural conflicts which existed in ancient times are in fact race conflicts, that race prejudice is caste prejudice, that "the mores" of the white man determine or even maintain the pattern of race relations, then we approach his work with assurance that there will be inconsistencies. Such theories do not explain the facts, and in order to achieve some semblance of logical exposition one must inevitably become inconsistent and contradictory.

Probably the crucial fallacy in Park's thinking is his belief that the beginnings of modern race prejudice may be traced back to the immemorial periods of human associations. As a matter of fact, however, if it is not recognized that color prejudice developed only recently among Europeans, very little, if any, progress could be made in the study of race relations. We must also recognize the peculiar socio-

³⁰Consider, for instance, the manner in which David L. Cohn, one of the most rabid and effective apologists for racial discrimination in the South, brings Park into his service. Says Cohn: "Let those who would attempt to solve [the race] question by law heed the words of the distinguished sociologist, Dr. Robert E. Park: 'We do not know what we ought to do until we know what we can do; and we certainly should consider what men can do before we pass laws prescribing what they should do.'" See "How the South Feels," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1944, p. 51.

³¹For a comprehensive bibliography of Park's writings, see Edna Cooper, "Bibliography of Robert E. Park," *Phylon*, Vol. VI, Winter, 1945, pp. 372-83.

economic necessity for race prejudice. Indeed, Park himself almost put his finger upon this. Thus he writes:

There was no such thing as a race problem before the Civil War, and there was at that time very little of what we ordinarily call race prejudice, except in the case of the free Negro. The free Negro was the source and origin of whatever race problems there were. Because he was free, he was at once an anomaly and a source of constant anxiety to the slaveholding population.³²

Although we do not agree entirely with this statement, it might yet have been observed that in the United States the race problem developed out of the need of the planter class, the ruling class, to keep the freed Negro exploitable. To do this, the ruling class had to do what every ruling class must do; that is, develop mass support for its policy. Race prejudice was and is the convenient vehicle. Apparently it now becomes possible to give meaning to the phenomenon of race prejudice.

Race prejudice in the United States is the socio-attitudinal matrix supporting a calculated and determined effort of a white ruling class to keep some people or peoples of color and their resources exploitable. In a quite literal sense the white ruling class is the Negro's burden; the saying that the white man will do anything for the Negro except get off his back puts the same idea graphically.³³ It is the economic content of race prejudice which makes it a powerful and fearfully subduing force. The "peonization" of Negroes in the South is an extreme form of exploitation and oppression, but this is not caused by race prejudice. The race prejudice is involved with the economic interest. Indeed, "one does not feel prejudice against a beast of burden; one simply keeps him between the shafts." However, it is the human tendency, under capitalism, to break out of such a place, together with the determined counterpressure of exploiters, which produces essentially the lurid psychological complex called race prejudice. Thus race prejudice may be thought of as having its genesis in the propagandistic and legal contrivances of the white ruling class for securing mass support of its interest. It is an attitude of distance and estrangement mingled with repugnance, which seeks to conceptualize as brutes the human objects of exploitation.³⁴ The integrity of race prejudice must be protected and

³²Ibid., p. xxi.

³³In his second inaugural address President Lincoln arrived at a similar conclusion when he declared: "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces. . . ."

³⁴It is some such idea Alexis de Tocqueville had when he wrote: "The European is to the other races of mankind, what man is to the lower animals; he makes them subservient to his use; and when he cannot subdue, he destroys them." *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, p. 182.

maintained by the exploiters, for it is constantly strained even at the very few points where sympathetic contact is permitted between the people.

Race prejudice, then, constitutes an attitudinal justification necessary for an easy exploitation of some race. To put it in still another way, race prejudice is the social-attitudinal concomitant of the racial-exploitative practice of a ruling class in a capitalistic society. The substance of race prejudice is the exploitation of the militarily weaker race. The slogan that the colored man shall never have social equality merely means that the colored man must be forever kept exploitable.

We should not be distracted by the illusion of personal repugnance for a race. Whether, as individuals, we feel like or dislike for the colored person is not the crucial fact. What the ruling class requires of race prejudice is that it should uniformly produce racial antagonism; and its laws and propaganda are fashioned for this purpose. The attitude abhors a personal or sympathetic relationship.³⁵ The following statement by Kelly Miller seems to be relevant:

Henry W. Grady, not only the mouthpiece, but also the oracle of the South, declared in one of his deliverances that he believed that natural instinct would hold the races asunder, but, if such instinct did not exist, he would strengthen race prejudice so as to make it hold the stubbornness and strength of instinct.³⁶

This point may be illustrated further. As an American one might have a great hatred for the English; one might feel the Englishman decidedly repulsive. But normally such an attitude will be personal; it may even have to be private. There are no social sanctions for it. But if the United States should go to war with England, for what real reason, the masses of people may not know, then Americans will be propagandized and made to feel dislike for every Englishman. The attitude thus becomes social, and public expressions of hatred for the English will merit the applause of the group. In this situation, to show friendship for the English is to be defined as a traitor, so that to live easily with one's fellows one should both hate and consequently fear the English. Above all, one should never seem to "fraternize" with them; and this even though one's personal experience contradicts the propa-

³⁵Under feudalism there was no opportunity for the development of race prejudice, for the community of interest among vassals, subvassals, and serfs was based upon personal ties; in modern plantation slavery, race prejudice tends to be at a minimum when personal and sympathetic relationships between master and slave achieve a degree of stability in the process of accommodation.

³⁶*An Appeal to Conscience*, p. 23.

ganda. Ordinarily, however, individual experience will tend to be consistent with social definitions and pressures.

Perhaps we can now begin to think constructively about race prejudice. The mystification is probably gone. Evidently race prejudice can never be wholly removed under capitalism, because exploitation of militarily weaker peoples is inherent in capitalism. However, within this system the form of race exploitation may be changed.

Ruth Benedict

Professor Ruth Benedict, the distinguished American anthropologist, is more careful in her study of race relations;³⁷ yet there remain some significant inconsistencies. She sees, as Dr. Park does not, that racial antagonism is a recent European development; moreover, she has examined with greater insight the intercultural relationships among the Grecian, Roman, and medieval peoples.³⁸ So far as we know, Mrs. Benedict has developed no theory which seeks to explain Negro-white relations in the United States as a relationship between two castes.

Both Benedict and Park, however, approach their problem with a concept which tends to weaken their whole discussion. "Ethnocentrism" is supposed to have some relationship to racial antagonism, but neither writer has been able to state clearly what this relationship is.³⁹ They seem to imply, at least, that ethnocentrism is incipient race prejudice. "Ethnocentrism," says W. G. Sumner, "is the technical name for this

³⁷*Race: Science and Politics*.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 157-66.

³⁹In an article by an eminent student of Dr. Park which develops not only the letter but also the sermonizing spirit of Park's approach, "the genesis of race prejudice" is described fundamentally and in terms of universal, psychological human traits as follows: "Racial prejudice is associated with the disposition on the part of virtually every human group to think of itself as superior to outsiders. The notion of chosen people is quite widespread. We know of primitive communities the members of which call themselves 'men' or 'human beings' to distinguish themselves from all outsiders who are regarded as not quite human. We generally glorify the people whom we speak of as 'we,' whereas the 'others' or outsiders are depreciated and suspected. Although strangers do sometimes have a romantic fascination for us, more often than not we fear them and remain at a respectful distance from them, ready to believe almost anything about them to which we would not for a moment give credence if it concerned a member of our own group." Louis Wirth, "Race and Public Policy," *The Scientific Monthly*, April 1944, pp. 303-40. (Italics added.) This type of discussion of the behavior of "human beings" not only adds practically nothing to an understanding of race prejudice but also definitely distorts the subject. Is it really true that there is a "disposition on the part of virtually every human group to think of itself as superior to outsiders"? Do Negroes and Chinese and Indians feel superior to whites in the sense that whites feel superior to them? If they do not, it would seem that the significant problem lies in an explanation of the difference. As Emile Durkheim points out: "Social facts must be interpreted by social facts."

view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it."⁴⁰ Other sociologists have expressed this idea as a "we feeling" or a "consciousness of kind."

"Racism," asserts Dr. Benedict, "is essentially a pretentious way of saying that 'I belong to the Best People. . . . The formula 'I belong to the Elect' has a far longer history than has modern racism. These are fighting words among the simplest naked savages."⁴¹ Now it is very difficult to know what Professor Benedict means. She seems to say that modern race prejudice is merely "pretentious" ethnocentrism. But since ethnocentrism is a very ancient and rudimentary social attitude, must we conclude that race prejudice is as old as mankind? The latter conclusion is opposed to one of her basic hypotheses.

The fact is that one will be inevitably confused if he begins his study of the history of race relations by assuming that ethnocentrism precedes the phenomena. Ethnocentrism is a social constant in group association, hence it cannot explain variations in collective behavior. The "we feeling" may be present in the family, in the football team, as well as in the race or in the nation. Ethnocentrism exists today as ever, and it may continue indefinitely without evolving into race prejudice. In other words, ethnocentrism does not become anything else. When a group becomes race-conscious it will have achieved some degree of solidarity; therefore, we may expect it to show signs of ethnocentrism. But the ethnocentrism is immediately a function of its solidarity rather than of its racial antagonism. Indeed, the essential fact of ethnocentrism is not so much antagonism as it is a propensity in members of a cultural group to judge and estimate, in terms of their own culture, the cultural traits of persons in other cultures. John Linschoten, a sixteenth-century white stranger among the Africans at Mozambique, described this reaction among the natives:

. . . they take great pride, thinking there are no fairer people than they in all the world, so that when they see any white people, that wear apparell on their bodies, they laugh and mocke at them, thinking us to be monsters and ugly people: and when they will make any develish forme or picture, then they invent one after the forme of a white man in his apparell, so that . . . they think and verily persuade themselves, that they are the right colour of men, and that we have a false and counterfeit colour.⁴²

⁴⁰Op. cit., p. 13.

⁴¹Op. cit., pp. 154-55. See also Robert E. Park in *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, E. T. Thompson, ed., pp. 10ff.

⁴²Arthur Coke Burnell, ed., *The Voyage of John Huyghen von Linschoten to the East Indies*, from English trans., 1598, Vol. I, p. 271.

Ethnocentrism is always limited—both in intensity and in direction. A people's favorable conception of themselves may be affirmed by expressions of affection as well as by expressions of dislike for certain groups.⁴³ Therefore, to repeat, ethnocentrism may be thought of as indirectly derived from social attitudes which need not always be aggressive and antagonistic.⁴⁴ These may be (a) a friendly attitude: *We* like them; *they* are like us. We will give even our lives to help these friends when they are in serious difficulties—such as the attitude of the United States toward England in the two world wars. (b) A hostile attitude: They are barbarians, uncivilized people. We will not rest until they are subdued—such as the usual attitude of the Greek colonists toward the un-Hellenized peoples among whom they settled. (c) A conditional attitude of amiability: We like them; we are their best friends, if only they will stay in their place—such as the attitude of most white Southerners toward the colored people. (d) A defensive attitude: We have nothing against them; they are powerful, but we will fight back when they ill-treat us—such as the attitude of American Negroes toward whites. (e) An egocentric attitude: the common chosen-people conception of many groups.⁴⁵ There are other possibilities. For instance, in a single social situation, the "we" feeling of one group may be graded both in intensity and in quality toward other groups. In South Africa the social solidarity of the white English and Afrikaner people assumes a different aspect as it is addressed to the Jews, or the "colored," or the Asiatics, or the natives. We should expect this because the solidarity itself is a function of the peculiar social interaction between one group and another in the total ethnic situation. Extremely isolated peoples may even express ethnocentrism with reference to the animals about them.⁴⁶

⁴³On June 28, 1943, at the meeting of the British Empire Parliamentary Association in Ottawa, Canada, attended by members of the American Congress, the Hon. Thomas Vien, Speaker of the Canadian Senate, referred to the assembly as "the two branches of the great Anglo-Saxon family."

⁴⁴It is likely, however, that a common hostility toward an out-group may be more productive of in-group solidarity than a common friendship. Aristotle put it strongly when he said: "A common fear will make the greatest of enemies unite."

⁴⁵The following is Aristotle's version of the Grecian variation of this attitude: "Those who live in cold countries, as the north of Europe, are full of courage, but wanting in understanding and the arts: therefore they are very tenacious of their liberty; but not being politicians, they cannot reduce their neighbors under their power; but the Asiatics, whose understandings are quick, and who are conversant in the arts, are deficient in courage; and therefore are always conquered and the slaves of others: but the Grecians, placed as it were between these two boundaries, so partake of them both as to be at the same time both courageous and sensible; for which reason Greece continues free, and governed in the best manner possible, and capable of commanding the whole world." *Politics*, p. 213.

⁴⁶It is likely that not every primitive people would be so confident as were the early Hebrews that God gave man dominion over all the animals of the earth.

The following seem to be characteristic of the cycle of racial antagonism which includes ethnocentrism: first, a capitalist need to exploit some people and their resources; then the more or less purposeful development among the masses, the public, of derogatory social attitudes toward that particular group or groups whose exploitation is desired—here the strategy of the capitalists will depend upon the nature of the ethnic situation; a consequent public estrangement of sympathetic feeling for and loss of social identification with the exploited group—that is to say, a development of race prejudice; the crystallization of a “we feeling” and of social solidarity on the part of the propagandized group against the exploited group and a reaction of the latter; and, finally, the continual appeal to this “we feeling,” consciousness of solidarity, or ethnocentrism as a means of intensifying race prejudice so that the exploitative purpose might be increasingly facilitated.⁴⁷

Another shortcoming of Mrs. Benedict's study lies in its abstractness. It conceives of race prejudice as essentially a belief and gives almost no attention to the materialistic source of the rationalization. “Racism,” she writes, “is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority. . . . [Racism] is, like religion, a belief which can be studied only historically.”⁴⁸

This is the kind of approach which unwittingly deflects the view from the real impersonal causes of race prejudice. Indeed, from this position the author proceeds to identify race conflict with religious persecution. She recognizes no significant difference whatever between “persecution” and racial aggression. The fact that the Inquisition was a religious conflict “is a reflection of the times; from every other point of view religious persecutions and racial persecutions duplicate one another.” Again: “In order to understand race persecution, we do not need to investigate race; we need to investigate persecution. Persecution was an old, old story. . . .”⁴⁹ This, obviously, is misleading.

As we have attempted to show in a previous chapter, in interracial antagonism it is not exactly intolerance which actuates the conflict. The

⁴⁷This, of course, is an ideal statement. Race prejudice is a continuing, becoming, changing phenomenon. It is directly responsive to changes in the whole capitalist system. Moreover, people of all races are born into and ordinarily accept the system as they find it. In modern times capitalists never have to begin from scratch and create the social situation in which race prejudice is developed.

⁴⁸Op. cit., p. 153. The following illustrates further the author's tendency in this respect: “To understand race conflict we need fundamentally to understand conflict and not race. . . .” Ibid., p. 237. (Italics Benedict's.)

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 230-31.

struggle is not one directed toward the achievement of enforced conversion; neither is there a secondary interest in the welfare of the group as in persecution situations. As a price of peace, the “inferior” group is not asked to recant or to renounce anything. The exploited race is all right so long as it remains contentedly exploitable;⁵⁰ the persecuted group is all right if it agrees to give up its beliefs.⁵¹ Intolerance tends to cease with conversion or recantation, while race prejudice abhors the very idea of conversion. Therefore, religious persecution and racial domination are categorically different social facts. Indeed, during the first period of European transoceanic colonization, the interest of the Roman Catholic Church and that of the capitalist adventurers constantly came into conflict; and the predominance of the one or the other materially affected the form of interracial adjustment. This does not mean to say, however, that a capitalistically exploitative purpose may not be couched in a religious context.

Probably the most tentative thesis of Dr. Benedict is her conclusion that “racism was first formulated in conflict between classes. It was directed by the aristocrats against the populace.”⁵² In support of this, she relies principally upon the posthumous publications of Henry Boulainvilliers and Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, written in the middle of the nineteenth century. Although Dr. Benedict elaborates this point considerably, further discussion of it could have only some remote academic significance if it did not give us an opportunity to observe the confluence of race, class, and nationality problems.

⁵⁰The unvarnished purpose of all “racism” may be expressed as some variant of the following discourse delivered in 1859 by a New York advocate of the Southern system: “Now, Gentlemen, nature itself has assigned his condition of servitude to the Negro. He has the strength and is fit to work; but nature, which gave him this strength, denied him both the intelligence to rule and the will to work. Both are denied him. And the same nature which denied him the will to work, gave him a master, who should enforce this will, and make a useful servant of him. . . . I assert that it is no injustice to leave the Negro in the position into which nature placed him; to put a master over him; and he is not robbed of any right, if he is compelled to labor in return for this, and to supply a just compensation for his master in return for the labor and the talents devoted to ruling him and to making him useful to himself and to society.” Quoted by W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, p. 52.

⁵¹Recently Hayim Greenberg introduced an article reporting persecution as follows: “Very alarming reports have reached us recently concerning the Jews in Yemen. A representative of the Yemenite Jews informed a press conference in Tel-Aviv that . . . the Jews of Yemen faced imminent prospects of extinction: they have been given the alternative of ‘voluntary’ conversion to Mohammedanism or of having to face such conditions as would lead to their natural death.” See “In ‘Arabia Felix,’” *Jewish Frontier*, July 1944, pp. 8ff; see also, for a good discussion of medieval persecution, Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 1943.

⁵²Op. cit., pp. 174-75.

First, however, the meaning of the term "racism" calls for a word. Most people who use the term conceive of it as a racial ideology or philosophy of racial superiority; but, in addition, they usually make the implied or expressed assumption that racism is the substance of modern race antagonism. This almost always leads to confusion because it ordinarily resolves itself into a study of the origin and development of an idea rather than the study of social facts and situations. The study of racism is a study of opinions and philosophies. However, since students of racism are seldom, if ever, concerned with the peculiar type of social organization in which race antagonism develops, they are likely to produce an apparently consistent selection of verbalizations from promiscuous intergroup conflicts as the story of the development of racial antagonism. Such is the difficulty which confronts Dr. Benedict when she declares: "Fanatical racism . . . occurred in Israel long before the days of modern racism." She reaches this conclusion on the ground that the prophet Ezra advocated tribal endogamy and that the tribes themselves practiced group exclusiveness.⁵³ This protraction of "racism" into the distant past was made even though it is a thesis of Dr. Benedict's essay that racism has a recent beginning.

Although Boulainvilliers and Gobineau seem to have been expressing a similar racial philosophy, they were in fact reacting to two fairly distinct stages in the development of modern society. It is not by mere chance that Boulainvilliers (1658-1722) was a contemporary of Louis XIV (1638-1715) and that Gobineau (1816-1882) was a contemporary of Metternich (1773-1859) and François Guizot (1787-1874). Nor should it be surprising that both Boulainvilliers and Gobineau are Frenchmen. It was Louis XIV, then the most divine and powerful monarch in Europe, who finally brought the French nobles to their knees and who derived very much of his power from the fluid wealth of the third estate. It was he who "domesticated" and pulled the teeth of the French feudal lords. It was Metternich of Austria who, after the Bourbon restoration in France, led the reactionary forces in Europe against the liberal and equalitarian philosophies which mothered the French Revolution. It was at that time also that liberal writers with Enlightenment ideologies were driven underground. Boulainvilliers and Gobineau, therefore, were reactionaries in highly reactionary social situations.

Boulainvilliers was the champion of the frustrated and weakened nobles; Gobineau was an antagonist of the Jacobins. Boulainvilliers

⁵³Ibid., p. 163. Compare Num. 36:12 and Deut. 7:3-8.

stood between the monarch and the bourgeoisie, in which position he could develop no significant racial theory. Racism and nationalism are not ideologies of a nobility; superior right by conquest is the basis of feudal claims, and it is upon this ground that Boulainvilliers sought to rest his case for French feudalism.⁵⁴ But Gobineau's fire was directed squarely at the proletariat, especially at the exploited colored peoples of the world; he was a mature philosopher of racial antagonism. In grand style he declared, "The human race in all its branches has a secret repulsion to the crossing of blood, a repulsion which in many of its branches is invincible, and in others is only conquered to a slight extent." From the point of view of color prejudice, the *Essay* might have been written by William McDougall or Lothrop Stoddard.

There certainly is some justification for concluding that the *Essay* is anti-proletarian and, consequently, anti-democratic. But, if so, which class does it favor? Dr. Benedict thinks it is the "aristocrats." "Aristocrats" as such, however, are not a political class. Certainly Gobineau was not arguing for a return of feudalism. What he wanted was capitalism ruled by a superior bourgeoisie, probably a vestigial nobility as in England. This, together with his cult of ancestor worship as a basis of national power and aggression, his nationalism, which Dr. Benedict denies, rounds him out as the St. John of Fascism. The following excerpt might have been taken from *Mein Kampf*:

. . . a people will never die, if it remains eternally composed of the same national elements. If the empire of Darius had, at the battle of Arbela, been able to fill its ranks with Persians, that is to say with real Aryans; if the Romans of the later Empire had had a senate and an army of the same stock as that which existed at the time of the Fabii, their dominion would never have come to an end. So long as they kept the same purity of blood, the Persians and Romans would have lived and reigned.⁵⁵

To understand Gobineau and his successors properly we shall have to inquire briefly into the relationship of modern class conflict, race relations, and nationality relations. Class conflict and capitalism are inseparable, modern race relations developed out of the imperialistic practices of capitalism, while offensive and defensive nationalism provides the *esprit de corps* necessary for solidarity in exploitative group action under capitalism. Leaders of nationalism must inevitably be opposed to modern political-class conflict; that is to say, they must be against the proletariat.

⁵⁴For a brief discussion of Boulainvilliers and his contemporary Fénelon, see Jacques Barzun, *The French Race*, Chap. VII.

⁵⁵Arthur de Gobineau, op. cit., p. 33.

These three social phenomena, all functions of capitalism, are progressive and, in given situations, they may combine with different degrees of intensity to produce different social effects. Ordinarily, the greater the imperialistic practice, the greater will be the nationalism and the less the class conflict. Therefore, the ruling capitalist class may seek to stimulate nationalism either for the purpose of suppressing class conflict or for the purpose of dividing a proletariat on racial lines so that both groups may be the more easily exploited. In recent times that imperialism which Europeans practiced so freely among the colored peoples of the world has been systematically attempted at home. In his characterization of fascism Maurice Dobb declares that we must see Hitlerism "as a monstrous system of exploitation of surrounding territories, treated as colonial regions for the exclusive benefit of privileged groups in the metropolis: a system of exploitation more ruthless than preceding ones, utilising more perfect and diabolic methods of repression, and essentially predatory in its economic effects."⁵⁸

The modern nation itself is a product of capitalism; medieval peoples became nations as they developed a bourgeoisie. Moreover, the nationalism of the modern state is dynamic. The smaller nation that has become nationalistic⁵⁷ and rid itself of the immediate control of a great power tends to move from defensive to offensive nationalism.

Historically, racial ideologies were developed with reference to the relationship of Europeans with non-European peoples and subsequently refined to meet the needs of imperialism within Europe itself. Race problems and nationality problems, then, belong to the same species of social problem. However, we should not conclude, as Dr. Park does, that "language rather than color is the basis of . . . conflict" between nationalities; and it would be misleading to speak of nationality problems as a "phase of race conflict." Apparently the basis of international conflict must be sought either in the type of exploitative situation or in the competitive status of the international bourgeoisie.

⁵⁸"Aspects of Nazi Economic Policy," *Science and Society*, Spring 1944, p. 97.

⁵⁷In his famous book on the *National Question*, Joseph Stalin observes: "The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand, is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its native folk and begins to cry out about the fatherland, claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole." Pp. 20-21. To the same effect, see Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. by Max Eastman, Vol. III, pp. 55-56.

A Restatement

We may restate in simple *outline* form the nexus between capitalism and race relations, with special reference to the American scene.

Capitalist, bourgeois society is modern Western society, which, as a social system, is categorically different from any other contemporary or previously existing society.

Capitalism developed in Europe exclusively; in the East it is a cultural adoption.

In order that capitalism might exist it must proletarianize the masses of workers; that is to say, it must "commoditize" their capacity to work.

To "commoditize" the capacity of persons to work is to conceptualize, consciously or unconsciously, as inanimate or subhuman, these human vehicles of labor power and to behave toward them according to the laws of the market; that is to say, according to the fundamental rules of capitalist society. The capitalist is constrained to regard his labor power "as an abstract quantity, a purchasable, *impersonal* commodity, an item in the cost of production rather than a great mass of human beings."

Labor thus becomes a factor of production to be bought and sold in a non-sentimental market and to be exploited like capital and land, according to the economic interest of producers, for a profit. In production a cheap labor supply is an immediate and *practical* end.

To the extent to which labor can be manipulated as a commodity void of human sensibilities, to that extent also the entrepreneur is free from hindrance to his sole purpose of maximizing his profits. Therefore, capitalism cannot be primarily concerned with human welfare. Slavery, in a capitalist society, presents an ideal situation for easy manipulation of labor power; but it is against free competition, a powerful desideratum of capitalism. Labor, under slavery, is of the nature of capital. It should be observed, however, that long-continued contact between slave and master may develop personal sympathies which tend to limit good business practice in the exploitation of slave labor.

It becomes, then, the immediate pecuniary interest of the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, not only to develop an ideology and world view which facilitate proletarianization, but also, when necessary, to use force in accomplishing this end.

So far as ideology is concerned, the capitalists proceed in a normal way; that is to say, they develop and exploit ethnocentrism and show by any irrational or logical means available that the working class of their own race or whole peoples of other races, whose labor they are

bent upon exploiting, are something apart: (a) not human at all, (b) only part human, (c) inferior humans, and so on. The bourgeoisie in Europe were faced both with the problem of wresting the power from the agricultural landlords and at the same time keeping the workers from snatching any part of that power. Among the peoples of color, however, the Europeans had only the problem of converting virtually the whole group to worker status.

So far as force is concerned, we might illustrate. In the unrestrained process of "commoditizing" the labor of the American Indians the early European capitalist adventurers accomplished their complete extermination in the West Indies and decimated them on the continent.

The rationalizations for their doing this were that the Indians were not human; they were heathens; they could not be converted to Christianity; therefore, they were exploited, like the beasts of burden, without compunction for infringements of natural human rights. At that time also the argument for the exploitation of the labor of white women and white children in Europe was that the long hours of labor kept them from the concern of the devil, from idleness, and that their supposed suffering was part of the price all human beings must pay for their sins either here or hereafter.

When the great resource of African black labor became available, Indians in the West were not so much relied upon. They were largely pushed back as far as possible from exploitable natural resources.

Slavery became the means by which African labor was used most profitably; hence Negroes were considered producers' capital.

As the tendency to question such overt capitalist exploitation of human beings increased, principally among some articulate persons—ordinarily not immediately engaged in business, the rationalizations about the non-human character of Negroes also increased. Moreover, the priests, on the whole, pointed out that God amply sanctioned the ways of the capitalists. The greater the immediacy of the exploitative need, the more insistent were the arguments supporting the rationalizations.

At this time, the early nineteenth century, many white workers in Europe and in America were being killed, beaten, or jailed for attempting to organize themselves so that they might limit their free exploitation by the entrepreneurs. Their unions were considered conspiracies against "society," and thus against the bourgeois state.

In 1861 the Civil War was commenced partly as a reaction to certain social pressures to break the monopoly on black labor in the

South and to open up the natural resources of that region for freer exploitation.

At length, however, the Southern agricultural capitalists initiated a counterrevolution and re-established a high degree of control over their labor supply. To do this they had to marshal every force, including the emotional power of the masses of poor whites, in a fanatical campaign of race hatred, with sexual passion as the emotional core.

In support of this restoration the ruling class enacted black codes in which the principal offenses were attempts to whiten the black labor force by sexual contacts and tampering with the labor supply by union organizers or labor recruiters. All sympathetic contact between the white and black masses was scrupulously ruled out by a studied system of segregation. The whole Negro race was defined as having a "place," that of the freely exploitable worker—a place which it could not possibly keep if intermarriage was permitted.

At this time, also, the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the labor movement in the North was being driven underground. Labor had to organize in secret societies—sometimes terroristic societies. Troops, sometimes Federal troops, were being called out from east to west to put down strikes, and the Knights of Labor became a proletarian movement.

Today the ruling class in the South effectively controls legislation in the national Congress favorable to the continued exploitation of the Negro masses mainly by diplomatic bargaining with the politicians of the Northern capitalist exploiters of white labor. The guardians of the racial system in the South control or spend millions of dollars to maintain segregation devices—the most powerful illusory contrivance for keeping poor whites and Negroes antagonized—and to spread anti-color propaganda all over the nation and the world. For this expenditure they expect a return more or less calculable in dollars and cents.

Today it is of vital consequence that black labor and white labor in the South be kept glaring at each other, for if they were permitted to come together in force and to identify their interests as workers, the difficulty of exploiting them would be increased beyond calculation. Indeed, the persistence of the whole system of worker exploitation in the United States depends pivotally upon the maintenance of an active race hatred between white and black workers in the South.

The rationalizations of the exploitative purpose which we know as race prejudice are always couched in terms of the ideology of the age. At first it was mainly religious, then historico-anthropological, then Darwinian-anthropometrical, and today it is sexual, *laissez faire*, and

mystical. The intent of these rationalizations, of course, must always be to elicit a collective feeling of more or less ruthless antagonism against and contempt for the exploited race or class. They could never have the meaning that, since the race or class is supposed to be inferior, superior persons ought to be humane toward it—ought to help it along the rugged road whereby full superior stature might be achieved. On the contrary, they must always have the intent and meaning that, since the race is inferior, superior people have a natural right to suppress and to exploit it. The more “inferior” the race is, the more securely the yoke should be clamped around its neck and the saddle fixed upon its back. The rationalizations are thus a defense; race prejudice is a defensive attitude. The obtrusiveness of certain social ideals developed under capitalism as concessions to the masses makes the rationalizations of racial exploitation necessary.

22. *The Modern Caste School of Race Relations*

DURING THE LAST DECADE A PROLIFIC SCHOOL OF WRITERS ON race relations in the United States, led mainly by social anthropologists, has relied religiously upon an ingenious, if not original, caste hypothesis. Professor W. Lloyd Warner is the admitted leader of the movement, and his followers include scholars of considerable distinction.¹ We propose here to examine critically the position of this school.

The Hypothesis

If we think of a hypothesis as a tentative statement of a theory which some researcher sets out to demonstrate or to prove, then the school has no hypothesis. But we shall quote liberally so that the authors might have an opportunity to speak for themselves about the things which they believe. These we shall call loosely the hypothesis. The school is particularly interested in race relations in the Southern states of the United States, and its members believe that they have struck upon an

¹See the leading hypothesis by W. Lloyd Warner, “American Caste and Class,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLII, September 1936, pp. 234-37. See also, by the same author, “Social Anthropology and the Modern Community,” *ibid.*, Vol. XLVI, May 1941, pp. 785-96; W. Lloyd Warner and W. Allison Davis, “A Comparative Study of American Caste,” in *Race Relations and the Race Problem*, pp. 219-40; W. Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage*; W. Lloyd Warner, Buford H. Junker, and Walter A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature*; W. Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, Mary R. Gardner, and W. Lloyd Warner, *Deep South*; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; Buell G. Gallagher, *American Caste and the Negro College*; Robert Austin Warren, *New Haven Negroes*; Kingsley Davis, “Intermarriage in Caste Societies,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 43, September 1941, pp. 376-95; Robert L. Sutherland, *Color, Class and Personality*; Edward A. Ross, *New-Age Sociology*; William F. Ogburn and Meyer F. Nimkoff, *Sociology*; Kimball Young, *Sociology*; Robert L. Sutherland and Julian L. Woodward, *Introductory Sociology*; Stuart A. Queen and Jeanette R. Gruener, *Social Pathology*; Alain Locke and Bernhard J. Stern, *When Peoples Meet*; Wilbert E. Moore and Robin M. Williams, “Stratification in the Ante-Bellum