Race and Democratization in South Africa

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The issue in this war [Boer War] is whether South Africa is to be a British or Boer Country.—Winston Churchill.

But if men of the future are ever to break the chains of the present, they will have to understand the forces that forged them.—Barrington Moore, Jr.

I. Introduction

On 28 April 1994, about 20 million South Africans, of all shades and colors and from all walks of life, went to the polls to elect a national government. It was the first truly democratic election in the history of South Africa. The result was a stunning victory for the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies, the South African Communist Party and Congress of South African Trade Unions. The ANC was formed in 1912 by the representatives of African people, after the Act of Union (adopted in 1909 and which was the basis for the new Dominion that came into existence in 1910) had excluded Africans from political participation. In 1960, the ANC and Pan African Congress were banned and operated underground until 1990. In the second democratic elections of 1999, despite predictions that the ANC alliance would loose support because of unfulfilled promises, it triumphed with an even larger majority.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) that replaced the apartheid regime finally brought to an end eighty-six years of white supremacist rule. April 1994 was also the culmination of the long and protracted national struggle, which to some seemed an impossibility. Nevertheless, after trials and tribulations, the will of the people triumphed. The outcome was far from perfect. The challenge to overcome decades of abuse and want and to heal the wounds left by racist spoliation still remains. The structural and psychological defects of white supremacy, from which the "new South Africa" emerged, are too deep, their inhuman nature too evident, their cupidity for vested

interests of the old order too powerful to inspire confidence. In the face of all the flaws, and cognizant of the length of the struggle, are there enough reserves of energy to refuse temporizing with a system that represents to victims only misery and degradation?

Why did it take the white rulers of South Africa eighty-six years to summon the will to negotiate with the indigenous peoples of the country? Was there, in some objective sense, a mortal conflict between white *qua* settlers and African *qua* indigenous owners of the land, which made any accommodation impossible? The full meaning of these questions will emerge more clearly on the basis of specific historical facts rather than through imposing theoretical assumptions and then selectively fitting data, the method adopted by those who criticize the ANC for making too many compromises with the status quo.

This essay essentially seeks first to interrogate how the assumption to make South Africa a "white man's country" — *à la* Australia, Canada, New Zealand and, indeed, the United States of America—created the vicious circle from which the country just emerged in 1994. Secondly, I want to show how the labor requirements for operating the largest mining economy in the world, deliberately based on exploiting vast quantities of cheap indigenous labor, made white supremacist rule imperative. Most importantly, this essay sets out to demonstrate that the achievement of democracy is only the beginning of a long process to regain our lost nationhood and dignity. Given the international climate, there remain many rivers and valleys to cross.

II. Where it All Began

In October of 1999, South Africa commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the South African or Boer War. It was not only one of the bloodiest conflicts the British had waged since the Crimean War, it was also the culmination of a series of wars British imperialism had waged in southern Africa following the "discovery" of diamonds in 1867. A brief chronology of these wars describes the process.

> Following hard on the diamond discoveries in 1867–71 British colonial troops made war on the Hlubi in 1873; on the Gcaleka and Pedi in 1877; on the Ngqika, Thembu, Pondo, Griqua and Rolong in 1878; on the Zulu in 1879; the Sotho in 1880; the Ndebele in 1883; and the Afrikaner Republics in 1889. The Cape had absorbed the Transkei and its people in 1879–94. Britain had annexed Basutoland in 1868, Griqualand West in

> 1871, Zululand in 1887, Matabelaland in 1894, and the Afrikaner Republics in 1900. The Zulu rebellion of 1906, in which 4,000 Africans were killed, marked the last stage in 250 years of wars of conquest and dispossession. South Africa's incorporation into the sphere of the British Empire was baptised in blood and subjugation of the African people.[1]

The opening of the Witwatersrand gold mines (1886) was an event of even greater significance for South Africa's relations with Britain than the diamond discoveries. Gold mining required unlimited supplies of "cheap" African labor. Once in production, the Rand mines produced almost a quarter of the capitalist world's supply of gold. This made the Transvaal and, indeed, South Africa a prized colonial possession to be brought under the undisputed sphere of British control, by hook or by crook.

> In those days gold played more than a practical, almost a mystic part in the affairs of nations: that this vast new supply should fall within the British sphere of authority seemed to the imperialists, not to speak of the City speculators, almost a divine dispensation. So by the last years of the century strategy, morality, economics, instinct and plain greed made it inevitable that the Boer Republics must be tied up beneath the Crown—'sooner or later,' as Winston Churchill wrote, 'in a righteous cause or a picked quarrel . . . for the sake of our Empire, for the sake of our honour, for the sake of the race, we must fight the Boers.[2]

The questions that hung over South Africa in the first decade of the 20th century were: who was to be enriched by the profits of the Transvaal's new wealth, and what effect would that have on Britain's status in the world? The answer would shape the destiny of South Africa for the rest of the century.

The nature of white domination and exploitation of the Africans, Coloureds, and South Africans of Asian extraction remains elusive. For liberal writers, explanations range from crude notions of social and cultural pluralism[3] to the description of South Africa as a dual society embodying so-called First and Third World features.[4] For neo-Marxists,[5] South Africa represents the articulation of modes of production.[6] This conceptual and theoretical confusion has resulted in a gross misunderstanding of the nature of the African struggle and the transition to majority rule that began in 1994.[7] To read these debates today is to understand the futility and irrelevance, not only of politically disen-

gaged scholarship, but of the remarkable fruitlessness of trying to fit social reality into a preconceived theoretical schema.

Indeed, Marais has already pronounced the negotiated transition of 1994 a failure because the ANC, instead of transforming the state, itself became assimilated into the status quo. "Already ossifying within the ANC," he writes "are trends that ally it to an agenda which conflicts fundamentally with the hopes and aspirations of the majority of South Africans." Even worse, he describes the ANC as having sold out to neo-liberal policies.

> The neo-liberal features of the ANC government's macro-ventures and *supine postures* struck before the demands of corporate South Africa are, in such a reading, not anomalies. Spurring these developments is the tendency to judge the possibilities of national development on the basis of deeply conservative and empirically questionable interpretation of globalization. Indeed, the post 1994 development seem to amplify Ellen Meiskin Wood's lament that: 'it is not only that we do not know how to act against capitalism but that we are forgetting how to *think* against it.'[8]

Marais goes on to say that "a survey of the ANC history reveals telling legacies, which though submerged during the anti-apartheid struggle, have been pushed to the fore during the transition. Indeed, they raise the question whether a process of change centering on the deracialization of power and privilege (but without dismantling the structural foundations of inequality) might not be compatible with the organization's historical discourse."[9]

In any historical or sociological endeavor, the most important first step is to ask the right question. In 1910, when the four white settler colonies (of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal) were proclaimed, under God, to be an independent White Dominion in the British Empire, what were the consequences for Africans, Coloureds, and Africans of Asian extraction to be excluded from the franchise and ruled as objects rather than subjects?[10] *Non-whites*, to use the expression of the time, were objects to be governed. And to be governed, according to Proudhoun:

> is to be kept under surveillance, inspected, spied upon, bossed, law ridden, regulated, penned in, indoctrinated, preached at, registered, evaluated, appraised, censured, ordered about, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the knowledge, nor the virtue to do so. To be GOVERNED is to be at operation, at each transaction, at each movement, marked

> down, recorded, inventoried, priced, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, sanctioned, endorsed, reprimanded, obstructed, reformed, rebuked, chastised. It is, under the pretence of public benefit and in the name of public interest, to be requisitioned, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be squelched, corrected, vilified, bullied, hounded, tormented, bludgeoned, disarmed, strangled, imprisoned, shot down, judged, condemned, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to top it off, ridiculed, made a fool of, outraged, dishonoured. That's government, that's its justice, that's its morality![11]

Human beings are only truly free among equally free humans. Elsewhere, I have characterized South Africa not only as a white settler state but also as a capitalist social formation, which is the product of British colonialism and imperialism.[12] As a dominion, South Africa was organically developed by usurious British capital to fulfill the colonial role of mining auxiliary, and as a source of raw materials. More importantly, South Africa, like other white dominions, has been a major outlet for Britain's surplus population. This fact was underlined in 1986 by Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister. The issue before the Commonwealth Prime Ministers was the imposition of sanctions on the apartheid regime. And Britain, as the largest investor in South Africa, was resisting. Margaret Thatcher, who, according to Anthony Simpson,[13] arrived late and looked exhausted, after listening to an Asian diplomat discussing a prize for Nelson Mandela, in exasperation eventually "burst out against the hypocrisy of sanctions and the ignorance of other prime ministers: 'They think we could close down the South African tourist office just like that…they don't understand about bank loans . . . they don't realise that there are 800,000 South Africans with British passports.' "[14]

In almost all settler colonies, indigenous populations were displaced or decimated. Only in South Africa did indigenous peoples survive and, during the post World ll decolonization, their fate became an international issue. On the other hand, writes Margaret Perham, "The world hears nothing at the level of international affairs of the Red Indians, Maoris, or Australian aborigines."[15]

One can justifiably ask the question why the African in South Africa did not suffer the fate of other indigenous peoples in white settler colonies? This fact was notorious for presenting British imperial statesmen with one of the most intractable problems. By excluding the **black**

from citizenship in the Union, white settlers would attempt to designate the exploited as eternal because white supremacy constituted the **white** as an eternity of exploitation.

> In so far as the inert sentence passed on the colonized peoples becomes the serial unity of the colonists (in its ideological form), or their link of alterity, it is the Idea as Other as Idea; it therefore remains an Idea of stone, but its strength derives from its ubiquity of absence. In this form of alterity, it becomes racism.[16]

Alexander Wilmot, a Cape Town politician and fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, not only stressed white racial solidarity, but argued the importance of white exploitation of coloured labor.

> The existence of the coloured race is an immense benefit, as by means of them, cheap labour is obtainable, and large agricultural supplies can be constantly procured; but Southern Africa, although its population chiefly comprises the descendants of stalwart nomadic races who have migrated from a northern part of the continent, *is eminently a white man's country, where homes can be found for millions of the overflowing populations of Europe.*[17] (my italics)

In short, the genocidal wars of the 19th century stopped at the point where their logic might be detrimental to the labor needs of settlers. As Cairns puts it:

> The Africans, unlike the American Indians or the Australian aborigines, were expected to play a permanent role in future economic development. Consequently, theories justifying their extermination lacked utility, and accordingly were not employed. In essence, the use of evolutionary theories stopped at the point where their employment might have been detrimental to European interests.[18]

Lord Bryce, the British minister who visited South Africa in the first decade of the 20th century agonized about this problem:

> The other set of troubles, those between white settlers and the aborigines of the land, have been graver in South Africa than any which European governments have had to face in any other new country. The Red man of North America, splendidly as they fought, never seriously checked the advance of the whites. The revolts of the aborigines in Peru and Central America were easily suppressed. The once warlike Maoris of New

> Zealand have, under the better methods of the last twenty-five years, become quiet and tolerably contented. Even the French in Algeria had not so long a strife to maintain with the Moorish and Kabyle tribes as the Dutch and the English had with the natives of the Cape. The Southcoast kaffirs far outnumbered the whites, were of courage, had a very rough and thickly wooded country to defend.... The wars, however, did much to retard the progress of South Africa and to give it a bad name. They deterred many an English farmer from emigrating there in the years between 1810–1870. They annoyed and puzzled the home government and made it think of the colony as a worthless possession, whence little profit or credit was to be shown in return for the unending military expenditure.[19]

Is it fair to our white compatriots to remember these things now, when everybody is rejoicing at the 1994 "miracle"? Would it be fair to the Africans *not* to remember that first and foremost their struggle was to regain their national sovereignty? For the African peoples, what happened in 1910, especially the loss of the land, is the issue that has always been closer and more crucial to their lives. For instance, the first major Acts adopted by the erstwhile Union Government, during the period 1910–1911, were the Mines and Works Act of 1911, which protected white workers from black competition, and the Native Labour Regulation Act, which controlled the movement of African workers. This also established the basis of a "whites only" defense force. This law complemented the "pass laws" that had been tightened in 1896 as a means to force Africans into white employment on the farms and in the mines. All these laws were a precursor to the notorious Native Land Act of 1913, which, in the words of Solomon Plaatje, made Africans foreigners in their own country.

In his discussion of the impact of the Act, Plaatje describes how a widow was treated by the landlord for whom her husband had worked, plowing in shares until his death.[20] The landlord told her she should dispose of her stock and indenture her children to him. "This sinister proposal makes it evident that farmers not only expected natives to render them free labour, but they actively wished the natives to breed slaves for them." Maria found it difficult to comply with the enslavement of herself and her children. The Dutchman ordered her to "clear out" and added, with an oath, "you must get another man before you reach your next place of abode, as the law will not permit you to stay there until you have a man to work for the Baas." For Plaatje:

> Such cruelty to dump animals is as unwarranted as it is unprecedented. It reads cruel enough on paper, but we wish that the reader had accompanied us on one journey, say, during the cold snap in the first week in August, when we travelled from Potchestroom to Vereeniging, and had seen the flocks of those evicted natives that we met. We frequently met those roving pariahs, with their hungry cattle, and wondered if the animals were not more deserving of pity than the owners. *It may be the cattle's misfortune that they have a black owner, but it is certainly not their fault, for sheep have no choice in the selection of a colour for their owners, and no cows or goats are ever asked to decide if the black boy who milks them shall be owner, or but a herd in the employ of a white man; so why should they be starved on account of the colour of their owners?*[21]

Why these barbaric laws, which are reminiscent of slavery? South Africa's most important industries — diamond and gold mining — were based on extracting surplus value on expendable migrant laborers recruited from the reserves created by the 1913 Act. This Act had its predecessor in the Enclosure laws of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England. There the enclosures uprooted villages in the interest of creating a cheap and ready labor supply for the emerging urban industries. To say that capitalism presupposes the existence of surplus workers is nowadays common sense. Yet the fact that the existence of such a class is contingent on a particular set of historical circumstances has seldom received attention by scholars devoted to analyzing the development of capitalism in South Africa.

This makes it obvious that the starting point of any analysis and/or assessment of the prospect for democracy must necessarily review the legacy of almost one hundred years of white supremacy, if we take 1910 as an analytical base line. Only then can one formulate a "correct" theory of transition. What was the struggle about? Given the legacy of white supremacy, what are the prospects for democracy? Never was a government as committed to democracy as the ANC-led GNU confronted with as many daunting problems!

Predicting the future of democracy in South Africa must be firmly rooted in the nature of the political economy of the white settler-state that was created in 1910. This state embodied many contradictions. One was a *secondary contradiction* between the white settlers themselves — Afrikaners and the English — that led to the Boer War. That war left the Afrikaners with a bitter hatred of British imperialism, one that would nourish Afrikaner nationalism. How was this contradiction resolved? Secondly, one must deal with the *major contradiction* between

black and white. Milner, for instance, admitted even as the Anglo-Boer War was in progress, that though the Anglo-Dutch conflict was bad enough, compared with the antagonism between white and black, it was child's play.[22] In the Anglo-Boer rivalries, Africans became pawns. That fact dominated the racist politics of whites. Africans had no say about how South Africa's wealth, which their labor produced, was to be distributed. And indeed, they still have very little say today, in spite of the prattle about so-called *black empowerment*.

In analyzing South Africa's negotiated national democratic revolution, one cannot ignore the global conjuncture in which it took place, i. e., what are the short- and long-term implications of the collapse of the Soviet Union? What challenges did the negotiated settlement pose for fulfilling the aspirations of the poor, most of whom are Africans?

Sociological theory recognizes that modern states are not only creatures of definite historical processes, but that they necessarily bear the imprints or birth marks of their own past.[23] South Africa is one country that can ignore its past at its own peril. The extent and character of the past deformities does shape the health of the new state. From this standpoint, it is important to study South Africa's deformities, shaped, above all, by white settler racist arrogance and the political economy of capitalism (the latter based on the extraction of the most useless metals). This fact created one of the most unequal and unjust societies in the capitalist world. In 1978, Thabo Mbeki, now President of the Republic of South Africa said:

> Of the bourgeois countries, South Africa is unique to the extent that profit maximisation is the overt, unhidden and principal objective of state policy, and can therefore be regarded with respect to this characteristic as an almost perfect model of capitalism, cleansed of everything that is superfluous to its essential characteristics, a model which displays to all their nakedness, the normative forces of this social system and its fundamental interconnectedness.[24]

The dependence of white settler society on conquered black labor in South Africa has a long history, which explains why genocidal theories had to be tempered with the realism of self-interest. In the middle of the 19th century, the economic imperative led to the importation of Indian indentured labor to work in the Natal sugarcane fields, and after the Boer War, it led to the importation of Chinese labor. Exploiting this *non-white* labor led to the imposition of the Masters and Ser-

vants Act of 1856, a law, according to the Simonses, far more ruthless than any in the range of offenses and severity of penalties prescribed for servants.[25] Designed to enforce discipline on ex-slaves, peasants, pastoralists, and rural proletariat, it survived a century of industrialism, and became a model for similar laws in white settler colonies throughout south, central, and east Africa. The Act of 1856 remained, with its offspring, on the South African statute book until 1994, as a grim reminder of the country's slave owning past as well as a sharp instrument of racial discrimination.

The offenses for which the servants could be penalized can be grouped under three headings: breach of contract, indiscipline, and injury to property. The first group included the failure to commence work at an agreed date, unlawful absence from work, desertion, and strikes. Among the disciplinary offenses were disobedience, drunkenness, brawling, and use of abusive language. Servants could be jailed if they damaged the master's property with malice and negligence, used implements unlawfully, lost livestock, or failed to report the loss. Convicted servants were not given the option of a fine, however trivial the offense.[26]

This system of helotry was imposed by force and maintained through a legislative program of racist laws unique in history. Thus, in 1910, South Africa had a singular distinction in the capitalist world. It was a "slave state," to use Lord Oliver's phrase.

The white minority state used "race" as part of a "master race" ethos. According to Hannah Arendt, this ethos had assimilated the feudal notion of inherited rights. "The English brand of race-thinking," she says, "was almost obsessed with inheritance theories and their modern equivalent, eugenics."[27] In South Africa, an aristocracy of race was projected on a national scale and race thinking established the position of Englishmen as "a kind of nobility among nations." The attempt was made to subordinate the whole of the black population to a status of pure labor for the benefit of all whites (except those that Strydom would describe as mad) for advocating equality was a monumental task. It necessitated social engineering on a massive scale. It was because of this imperative that the South African state passed law after law to control social change and establish a profound distinction between "black" and "white." The Manichaeanism that characterized the construction and identities of black groups necessitated the exclusion of even children born as a result of the straying sexual lust of white men for black women.

In a memo to General Smuts entitled "Notes on a Suggested Policy towards Coloured People and the Natives," Lord Selbourne, successor to Lord Milner as High Commissioner for South Africa and governor of the Transvaal and Orange Free State from 1905 to 1910, discussed how to establish a hierarchical structure that would not only ensure cheap labor but would also fragment the blacks.

> *Coloured people:* Our object should be to teach the Coloured people to give their loyal support to the white population. It seems to me sheer folly to classify them with Natives, and treating them as Natives to force them away from their natural allegiance to whites and into making common cause with Natives. If they are so forced, in the time of trouble they will furnish exactly those leaders which the Natives could not furnish for themselves. It is, therefore, in my opinion, unwise to think of treating them as Natives; and it would be unjust as unwise. There are many Coloured people who are quite white inside, though they may be coloured outside. The problem of the treatment of the Coloured people is, indeed, sadly complicated by the fact that they vary in every shade of character and colour from pure white inside and outside to pure black inside and outside. I suggest the wise policy is to give them the benefit of their white blood—not to lay the stress on the black blood, but to lay the stress on white blood, and to make any differentiation of treatment between them and whites the exception and not the rule. A case for such differentiation would only arise when a coloured man showed by his manner of living, e.g., by the practice of polygamy, that he had reverted to the tribal type.
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> *Natives.* The object which the Government must have in their Native policy are: (i) to preserve the peace of the country, for nothing is so demoralizing or so injurious to its true welfare as a native war; (ii) to ensure the destruction of the tribal civilization among the Natives; (iii) to ensure the gradual destruction of the tribal system, which is incompatible with civilization. An important feature of this policy will be teaching the Natives to work. A large proportion of them do work now, but mostly in a desultory and inefficient manner. The object must be to teach them to work continually and effectively as the whites are supposed to but do not always do.[28]

Racism, as a pure system of alien domination, always, within the limits of safety, seeks to maximize the existential differences between the ruling and the ruled race; that is, to create a magical and impassable gulf between "superior" and "inferior" races. In an address at the

degree awarding ceremony at the University of Cape Town in 1908, Lord Selbourne spelled out, once more, the justification for white supremacy in South Africa.

> It is impossible for us, who are once sprung from races which were in contact with the Roman Civilization before the Christian Era, to look to the question from the same point of view as the Bantu races who are totally different. So far as we can form an opinion, our forefathers, 2,000 years ago . . . were distinctly less barbarous than were the Bantu races when they came into contact with the white men less than 100 years ago. Nor has the Bantu evinced hitherto any capacity from their first contact with it.… Speaking generally so far as we can foresee, the Bantu *can never catch up with the Europeans, whether in intellect or in strength of character.* As a race, the white race has received a superior intellect and mental endowment. The white man is the racial adult, the black man is the racial child.[29] (italics mine)

Segregation and its successor, the policy of apartheid, rested on the deeply held belief of irredeemable black inferiority. Thus, any blurring of racial lines was perceived as endangering the structures of white supremacy and its polarized class structure. Every demand for political and social rights translated into a threat to white domination; hence the banning, first of the Communist Party in 1950, and later the ANC and PAC in 1960.

The process of capitalist development in South Africa is unique in that it created the largest, most concentrated, and wealthiest white settler community served by the poorest black working class, most of whom even today live in compounds, shanty towns, or townships. To understand the meaning of Oliver's phrase, let me remind you what it meant to be white in South Africa from 1910 to 1994, when Mr. Nelson Holihlahla Mandela, as President of the Africa National Congress, was elected overwhelmingly to lead the Government of National Unity:

> 'If you are white,' wrote Warramantly,…'you could not have it better in this or any other age. Every institution—social, political, industrial, religious—is tailor-made for your maximum comfort. You will enjoy industrial privileges without industrial responsibility, a disproportionate share of the wealth of a disproportionately wealthy country, feudal service combined with late twentieth century technology, the reservation for you of the country's choicest land, privileged medical services. There will be opulence for your minority in the midst of squalor for the major-

> ity, leisure for your minority in the midst of toil for the majority, power for your minority in the midst of serfdom for the majority. The slave wealth of colonial America, the mineral wealth of Ophir and Tarshish, the territorial wealth of the last days of Empire — all come together to give you a lifestyle you will not willingly surrender.… You live in pleasant surroundings, with affluent whites all around you, you travel in separate transport, study in separate universities, dine in separate restaurants, play in separate fields, relax in separate clubs, worship in separate churches. You pass your life in a gilded cocoon. May be, as you drift from one gilded cocoon to another, you catch a fleeting glimpse of the darkness and desolation between—but the vision is too fleeting to be meaningful.'[30]

In 1912, the Native National Congress (later *Native* was replaced with African) was born. At its birth it was confronted with a situation in which the structure of white hegemony seemed the natural order of the world. From 1912 to the end of World War II, it struggled to have Africans treated as human beings and not as mere, soulless animals that white capitalists exploited without remorse. This struggle for "national liberation" took the constitutional route, using the method of persuasion to advance political and workers' democratic rights within the framework of the white settler state as constituted by the Act of Union. Two years later, the National Party was born, representing Afrikaner interests. Its main goal was to redress the grievous suffering of the Afrikaners during the South African War. The ultimate goal of the National Party was to achieve the republican status that their erstwhile colonies, the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State, had lost when they were incorporated into the Union of South Africa.

III. Pax Britanica

There is much in South African history that cannot be taken for granted. In 1890, as the war loomed between the English and the Boers, Milner explained that the purpose of the war was a final resolution of the "great game between ourselves and the Transvaal for the mastery of South Africa." The object, he said, was the "uniting [of] South Africa as a British state." Chamberlain asserted, with characteristic clarity and hyperbole, that "our supremacy in South Africa and our existence as a great power in the world are involved." The deep mining magnates, the "Park Lane millionaires" of British liberal democracy, had been suspected of putting up money for the Jameson Raid. The City of Lon-

don was generally enthusiastic at the prospect of overthrowing the Kruger regime. In 1899, investments in the gold-mining industry totaled some £74, 000,000, of which the British share was about 70 percent.[31] Because of these interests:

> Britain, the 'mother of democracy,' brought about a war with two puny, but independent states, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, for the sole purpose of laying its bloody stained hands upon the gold mines of the Rand, whose development since 1886 had transformed the regions economy.[32]

In 1907, following the Treaty of Vereeniging granting self-government to the Transvaal colony, Pretoria, the provincial capital, witnessed a unique scene that told much about the Anglo-Boer conflict and the role the Boers were expected to play. The occasion was an official dinner for the first Transvaal ministry. General Botha had just returned from London where he had been received by King Edward Vll. He had been so moved by the terms under which the Transvaal was granted self-government, and the demonstration of friendship by the British government, that on his return to South Africa, he proposed that the Cullian Diamond, that made all other diamonds look worthless (it weighed, uncut, 1.3/4 lbs., and had over 3,000 carats), be given to the British Crown. It had been picked up in the Premier Mine in 1905. But even its size scarcely measured the magnitude of Botha's gratitude. At the official dinner, which began with the singing of "God Save the King," Botha declared:

> There is no necessity for us to declare our loyalty. That requires no proof. The world will see that this government is as jealous for the honour of the flag that waves over us as any ministry ever could be. But, more that, they are actuated by a feeling of deep gratitude because the King of England, the British Government, and the people of Great Britain have treated the people of the Transvaal in a manner which is not equalled in the world.… The result is that today many men who took part in the war are British ministers. Is it possible for a Boer to ever forget such a deed of generosity and justice? Never.[33]

The Town Hall itself was festooned in Union Jacks. Botha and Smuts, Britain's erstwhile enemies, had done for British imperialism more than the British (from Somerset to Milner) could do for themselves. They had not only taken their defeated people into the Union, but had

also made South Africa a member of the White Dominions of the British Empire. By this act, they had agreed to be junior partners of British imperialism. South Africa was a Dominion.

> It had a King, and God Save the King; a flag, the right flag, of course; a constitution, a parliament, a framework, all British; even the mace, the symbol of authority. . . . The generation of British who came to South Africa at the time had no doubts about it being a British country. No one who had ever come had doubts, or were ever of the mind to conceive that the clock would be put back.[34]

In 1897, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. According to Judd, the use of the description "Diamond" was symbolic: "It was part of the invention of tradition, and also a reminder that the Empire contained the diamond fields of South Africa, and as a result, had put the wearing of such jewelry within the grasp of millions of British females, including newly-engaged young women from relatively humble backgrounds."[35]

The South African War itself was unique. According to Sir C.P. Lucas, it stood out as the first in the British Empire in which overseas Britons—Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders—collaborated with the mother country. Canada and Australia contributed 31,000 men and South Africa itself contributed 52,000 men. "The effort strengthened not only the sense of dominion nationhood, but also the idea of imperial cooperation, which was to develop seriously in the twentieth century."[36] By the end of the First World War, South Africa had become a British country in a way it had never been before. For example, of a group of young men that Milner brought to South Africa (the so-called Milner's Kindergarten), a number of them remained in South Africa and played a major role in its governance.

Patrick Duncan, Milner's assistant on the Board of Internal Revenue from 1894 to 1897, came to South Africa as private secretary to Milner. In 1901 he became the Treasurer of the Transvaal, Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal in 1903–1906, and Acting Lieutenant Governor in 1906. He remained in South Africa as lieutenant to Jan Smuts, becoming an advocate of the Supreme Court, a member of the South African Parliament, Minister of the Interior, Public Health, and Education (1921–1924), Minister of Mines (1933–1936), and finally Governor General of South Africa (1936–1946).

Richard Feetham was made Deputy Town Clerk and later Town Clerk of Johannesburg (1902–1905). He was legal advisor to Lord Selbourne (who had succeeded Milner as High Commissioner) in 1907 and a member of the Legislative Council of the Transvaal later (1907–1910). He was the chairman of the Committee on Decentralization of Powers in India in 1918–1919; a King's Council in Transvaal (1919–1923); Chairman of the Irish Boundary Commission (1924 – 1925); Chairman of the Local Government Commission in Kenya Colony (of which Edward Grigg was Governor) in 1926; advisor to the Shanghai Municipal Council (1930 – 1931); chairman of the Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Commission (1930–1935); Vice Chancellor of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (1938); and a judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa in 1939. General Smuts, during the First World War, had been appointed cabinet minister in Lloyd George's War Cabinet.[37]

That South Africa was ever to become a Boer Republic was contrary to expectation. In 1931, when God Save the King was replaced by *Die Stem*, an irate "Englishman jumped up in the side aisles and pointed his finger at Hertzog, as all men are apt to do when moved to righteous anger, and spoke words which were like hostages to fortune: 'God Save the King is built into the foundations of this country. As long as the English language is spoken, so long will it be the national anthem of South Africa'.... For what Hertzog did to the British in this country was to remove their King from them, and by as it were, the King's consent, and this was so grievous a deed that no reason, no argument, no appeal could touch or bring them, even the lawyers among them, to acknowledge its imperial constitutional legality or its political wisdom."[38] Some of the poignancy of these emotions is understandable. In 1961, the final blow fell when the Nationalist Party (NP), that was formed in 1914 and had been elected by the thinnest margin in 1948, declared South Africa a Republic. How did it happen?

The "civil war" of 1899 to 1902, between the British and the Boers, was inevitable. With the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886, British imperial policy could not tolerate an autonomous Boer republic ruled by a bible thumping religious fanatic like Kruger, "whose regime rested on support from conservative Boer farmers whose use of native labor restricted its flow to the mines and whose resistance to change blocked the creation of a modern political infrastructure."[39]

The outcome of the war was a foregone conclusion. On May 31, 1902, sixty representatives of the Boer Republics of the Orange Free

State and the Transvaal, which two years before had been formally annexed by Britain, accepted the terms of surrender. These included the recognition of King Edward VII, the surrender of arms, repatriation of prisoners of war, and the use of Dutch in schools where parents desired it and its use in courts of law. More importantly, the terms promised the early termination of military administration and the introduction of representative institutions in preparation for granting the conquered states self-government. In addition, the question of granting the franchise to the *natives* was postponed until the introduction of self-government. And £3.5 million financial assistance to resettle those displaced by war was promised. British control of the mines and major industries was now guaranteed.

Liberal historians make much of what they call Britain's magnanimous gesture to the Boers which, they argue, necessitated the betrayal of the liberal principles of the Cape by the Imperial government. This "excuse" flies in the face of the well-thought-out intentions of the leader of the Liberal Party in Britain. Campbell-Bannerman was in no doubt about the long tradition of the Imperial state which, since the American War of Independence, had decided on a policy of self-government for white settler communities. Thus, in notes penned during 1901, he asserted that "Mr. Chamberlain thinks we are strong enough for a military occupation of indefinite length, and perhaps we are; but it is not the English way to govern white men as a subject race and England will be involved in a moral catastrophe, worse than all her losses if we make the attempt."[40]

For De Kiewiet, long before the signing of the Vereneeging Treaty in 1902, the post Boer War development had already been set. At the end of the war, the Boer Republics lay helpless and prostrate at Great Britain's feet, but she could only think of one thing: how she might specially raise the stricken republics and reconcile them to herself. With such an aim there was no longer any real room for a courageous native policy.[41]

To General Smuts, the British, by deferring the African franchise, seemed to offer his people everything for which they had fought. Asking his compatriots to accept British terms, he told them:

> Hitherto we have not continued the struggle aimlessly. We did not fight merely to be shot. We commenced the struggle and continued it to this moment because we wished to maintain our independence, and we were prepared to sacrifice everything for it. But we may not sacrifice the

> Afrikaner people for it. But we may not sacrifice the Afrikaner people for that independence. As soon as we are convinced that, humanly speaking, there is no reasonable chance to retain our independence as republics, it clearly becomes our duty to stop the struggle in order that we may not perhaps sacrifice our people and our future for a mere idea of which cannot be realised.[42]

He pointed out that no help was to be expected from the Cape Colony or from Europe, whose aid was limited to sympathy. Other nations would stand and watch "until our entire nation shall have been sacrificed on the altar of history and of humanity." Smuts' argument really was that instead of sacrificing the Afrikaner people for the republic, the republic was to be sacrificed temporarily to save the people. With the acceptance of the surrender terms, British hegemony had been established throughout southern Africa. It now remained for the English and Afrikaners to work through the modalities of coexistence. In the meantime, the African became the sacrificial ship.

The English and Afrikaner ruling classes never allowed their quarrels to disrupt the racial order of white supremacy. They manipulated the fears of the white electorate for party political gains, but at the end of the day made common defense of their class interests. Thus, at crucial constitutional stages—in 1902–7, following the Boer War; in 1909–10, when the terms of unification were being decided; and again in 1936, the year in which the token Cape African franchise was being removed from the common voters role — both white communities showed a determination to preserve unadulterated white power. As political power passed to the Afrikaner nationalists, the British had the satisfaction that they continued to control the commanding heights of the economy of the country. In 1948, when the Afrikaners assumed power, they inherited a state in which white supremacy was not only a *fait accompli* but was taken for granted.

In other words, as Arendt observed, when the Boers lost the war, they temporarily lost their share of the riches, "but definitely they won the consent of all other European elements, including the British Government, to the lawlessness of race society—today all sections of population, British, or Afrikaner, organized workers or capitalist, agree on the race question."[43]

IV. The Birth of the Afrikaner Republic

From 1910 to 1948, the Afrikaners played a waiting game while consolidating their position in various spheres of South African life. In 1926, the Hertzog coalition government of nationalists and white labor, taking a cue from Lord Milner's policies, imposed the so-called Civilised Labour Policy. The adoption of this discriminatory policy in the interwar years solved the "poor white" problem at the expense of the African. In the meantime, they watched Britain's position in the world decline and become superseded by that of the United States of America.

Already in 1917, Ernest Oppenheimer, in order to raise the necessary capital to launch himself in South Africa, looked to American financiers. Writing to Mr. Herbert Hoover, then-president of Morgan Guaranty & Trust Company, Oppenheimer said: "If American capital wishes to obtain a footing in the South African mining business, the easiest course will be to acquire an interest in our company."[44] With the capital obtained from Morgan Guaranty, Oppenheimer formed the Anglo-American Corporation (AAC).[45] The AAC developed into the backbone of mining life in South Africa and other British dependencies. Thus, it is not surprising that on November 12, 1934, General Smuts, in a speech before the Royal Institute of International Affairs, declared:

> The Dominions have stronger affections toward the U.S.A. than Great Britain has. There is a community of outlook, of interests and perhaps ultimate destiny between the Dominions and U.S.A.[46]

South Africa's pro-United States position goes back to the formation of the League of Nations. There, President Wilson accorded Smuts a high profile in the deliberations. For instance, a Japanese delegation proposed the inclusion of a clause recognizing "the principle of equality of nations and just treatment of their nationals," and which would guarantee "no distinction on account of race and nationality." This modest proposal, though supported by a majority of the nations, was defeated by the British and American opposition. Lord Cecil objected because such a suggestion "raised extremely serious problems for the British Empire," while President Wilson protested that it "would raise the race issue through out the world."[47]

Following the opening of the Witwatersrand gold mines, South Africa faced what was called the *Poor White* problem. In the late twenties, the Carnegie Corporation funded the first major research project on the issue of poor whites in South Africa. In their visits to South Africa, associates of the Carnegie Corporation had expressed fears that poor whites represented a threat to the existing racial order since their poverty undermined the assumption of white supremacy. In a memorandum, Frederick Keppel, the President of Carnegie Corporation, reported that there was "little doubt that if the natives were given full economic opportunity, the more competent among them would soon outstrip the less competent whites." The poor white problem, he said was of the "utmost gravity, which neither sociology, nor economics, nor public health, nor psychology and education can deal with alone."[48] It was because of these fears that Keppel suggested that to avoid "complication, an invitation to the Corporation from some non-political body to support the study is essential."[49]

The Carnegie Commission's *The Poor White Problem in South Africa* was a milestone in terms of United States-South Africa relations. The report concluded that segregation was a "wise policy" since the "consequence of social intercourse with non-Europeans" led to the "lowering of the European standard of living to one approximating to the standard of the native." The report was relieved to find that the "great majority of poor whites are still imbued with the conviction of their superiority over non-Europeans" and the "feeling has played an important part in preventing miscegenation." Be that as it may, the report expressed grave fear that this state of affairs could not endure for long and that some form of racial deterioration would be the outcome. The unspoken objective of the report was the maintenance of white supremacy in South Africa.

> The preoccupation of the Carnegie Corporation with the so-called poor white problem in South Africa was at least partly the outcome of similar misgivings about the state of the poor whites in the American South. In both situations, the integrity of the white race appeared to be put at risk by the fitness of the lower classes.[50]

In other words, the entrenchment of white supremacy in South Africa was not just a local issue of white settlers; Britain and the United States played a major role.

The opposition of the National Party to South Africa's participation in World War II is well known. To make a long story short, the post-1948 era will be noted first for the fact that the squalid racial politics between the English and Afrikaners were always settled by the introduction of even more draconian racial laws from which both fractions of the bourgeoisie stood to gain at the expense of blacks. Competitive merchants, shopkeepers, and real estate agents united in pressing for measures like the Group Areas Act, which limited business opportunities for Asians, Africans, and Coloureds in the main shopping centers and gave whites exclusive ownership of land in select suburbs. Competition for cheap black workers, to take another example, was always a chronic cause for dissension between, on the one hand, farmers and mine owners and, on the other, the urban based manufacturing industries. The former always clamored for and obtained stringent pass laws to direct the flow of African labor away from urban areas.[51] This more than anything is what apartheid was fundamentally about—it refined the racial instruments of exploitation and oppression that had their roots in the Masters and Servants Act of 1856.

The irony of the Anglo-Boer War is that it led Verwoerd to withdraw South Africa from the now multi-national Commonwealth, and declare it a republic. Thus, a country heavily franked with British symbols now would bear an Afrikaner stamp. In pre-Republic days, the South African Parliament had life-sized pictures of the British monarchs that looked down from each side of the speaker's chair, but in 1961 they were unceremoniously removed and now adorn the South Africa Museum, together with the Mace, as relics of a dead past. Allighan says that:

> Some ardent Republicans, when those symbols of royalty had been removed, had suggested that the Mace, lying on an orange velvet cushion in the Museum, should bear an inscription consisting of the historic words of Britain's great Republican, Cromwell—'Remove that bauble'—but others recalled, something equally historic: that, subsequently, the 'bauble' returned; also the Monarchy.[52]

With the transformation of South Africa into a republic, Afrikanerdom was now politically supreme. It consolidated its power and white supremacy to the satisfaction of everyone. It had an all-Afrikaner government. In light of step-by-step *afrikanization* of all government institutions, it was not a surprise. What needs special comment is that, in

the process of allowing the Afrikaners to declare a republic, the English had exchanged the symbols that contained their history — the Crown, Commonwealth, and God Save the Queen — for the economic comforts of an Afrikaner-ruled republic that was based on white supremacy. In 1957, Parliament unanimously adopted the Afrikaner national anthem, "Die Stem," with its English translation, as the only national anthem. By Act No. 18 of the same year, the Union Jack was unanimously abolished as an official flag. The significance of these developments is summed up as follows by Krüger:

> There was little protest from English South Africans. It was a clear sign that the time for divided loyalties was past and held a promise as to the common future of the white race in this part of Africa.[53]

In the Assembly debate of September 18, 1958, Verwoerd set out his policy on the *native question* and on the *republican question*:

> Once we can get away from the present struggle over the colour problem and the issue of freedom, by securing the safety of the White man and assuring South Africa's status as a republic, new party orientations will arise of their own accord. Indeed, in such a Republic where our colour policy will be generally accepted there will be no place for a liberal party which strives to establish joint rule by white and non-white.[54]

In regard to the principles of apartheid, he declared his party's adherence to the cynical policy of Rhodes, which had created the reserves as the bases for exploiting African labor. For these areas, he foresaw a time when they would resemble the British Commonwealth. For whites, he said, the other choice was a unitary policy in which South Africa would be dominated by blacks, and where whites would be a minority.

Dr. Verwoerd also expressed his firm belief that the change in South Africa's status to a republic would not lessen its importance as an outpost of Western civilization on the southern tip of Africa. "Not one of us will want to make South Africa a small republic isolated from the society of nations." The relationship with Britain, he assured the English, would be improved "if all of us in this country feel that we are one people, with undivided loyalty to one country and one nation, with our two languages accepted beyond dispute as two languages of this country." There would then be no ulterior motives in seeking the

friendship of Britain. The sooner the republic was established, the sooner there would be an end to the discord between the English- and Afrikaans-speaking people. He assured the House that "White civilization can be saved and White civilization can continue to exist here on the southern tip of Africa in the service of the world."[55]

Verwoerd rejected the concerns of the Leader of the Opposition, who had expressed anxiety about the future and had offered as a solution the increase of the white population by means of immigration. "In the first place he knows and all know that we will never be able to import so many Whites that in a mixed fatherland they will be able to outnumber the Natives. He will not find so many immigrants; he will not be able to establish them in this country; he will not be able to provide them with a living in this country so that even in the next 50/60 years our numbers will be equal."[56]

If we compare the treatment of the Boers with the treatment of the African chiefdoms and kingdoms, we begin to appreciate why South Africa from 1910 to 1994 was called a "white man's country," and why the African was constituted as the inferior and dispensable *other*.

V. Empire is Race: The Culture of Imperialism

In the long history of British colonial imperialism, there is, for sheer explosive expansion, no period comparable to the thirty years from 1870 to 1900. This period saw "Jingoism" at its most egregious. It resulted in bloodshed and injustice around the globe and made Britain's name synonymous with racial hatred. The Empire was mobilizing for war, and music hall audiences, infected with war fever, bellowed out the song of the moment:

> We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo if we do,
> We've got the ships; we've got the men;
> We have got the money too![57]

A list of some major developments in that extraordinary era is warranted:

> There was a clamour for war against Russia in defence of Turkey, the most backward and barbarous of the great powers; the occupation of Egypt; a confrontation with France over spheres of influence on the Upper Nile, with Germany over South West Africa, with Russia over

> Pandjeh; a war of conquest and revenge in the Sudan; the acquisition of Cyprus; the annexation of the Transvaal, Buluchistan, Socotra and Upper Burma; the foundation of protectorates over Bechuanaland, Northern and Southern Nigeria, Uganda and part of Somaliland; the virtual destruction of the Zulus and the Matabele; the foundation of the Rhodesias; an invasion of Afghanistan; the Jameson Raid; two Boers Wars. This added up to nearly five million square miles of territory and nearly a hundred million souls to the empire, and surely if ever a people showed its aggressive colours without shame, then the British people showed them during that quarter of a century that wound up the Victorian age.[58]

In political, economic, and cultural terms, British imperialism emerged from the Boer War with an intensified and long-established sense of Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy. On a scale of narcissistic self-flattery, by the end of the 19th century, Anglo-Saxon "innate racial supremacy" was being expressed to a degree unknown in any other era. For Seeley, the British Empire was an expression of the special genius of the Anglo-Saxon race. In the years from 1870 to 1900, "the 'dominant passion of England' was to extend its empire; and the healthy continuance and immutability of Anglo-Saxon supremacy was being expressed in 'scientific' terms of social Darwinism."[59]

The consequence of Social Darwinism was that almost any expression of opinion, however arbitrary or platitudinous, about rivalry and struggle was sanctified with "science." Scientific racism was unequivocal in its commitment to a scientific and, indeed, biological conception of politics. It transferred Darwin's principles readily from plants and animals to human society, suggesting that white races were better fitted to survive and flourish than others. Social Darwinism elevated amorality to a first principle. It now became a question of whether any action contributed to the survival and welfare of the imperial nation. Indeed, racism was the purest *non sequitur*, associating physical fitness and wholeness of moral, intellectual, and cultural capacity. In its construction of the *other*, and the criteria of group formation, it was more color conscious than nationalist. Racism asserted a color determination for social and political participation.[60]

The doctrine of white supremacy gained in plausibility when it was presented in the context of the wars of conquest. The most significant players in the drama of South Africa during and after the Boer War were all social imperialists—Chamberlain, the Foreign Secretary; Lord Milner; and John Buchan, Milner's Private Secretary. Their notions of

racial superiority were blended with arguments for imperial unity and became the ideology of the new imperialism. As Robinson and Gallagher put it:

> By the seventies, confederated Canada, responsibly governed Australia, and the Cape were regarded as constitutional embodiments of collaboration between British and colonial interests working at its best. The further slackening of formal bonds by colonial governments, it is true, raised qualms about the future of imperial unity. Yet the policy makers felt sure that their self-governing colonials, bound by silken cords of kindred, tradition and self-interest, would continue to be their most loyal and energetic partners in spreading British influence and multiplying British commerce. Unlike the financial and trading enterprises which were thrusting into Oriental empires, those of the white colonists were proving commercially and politically creative. They had the supreme virtue of being self-propelling. The impetus to expansion was soon coming, not so much from the Metropolis as from the colonial communities themselves.[61]

Thus, in South Africa, the ideological liaison between imperialism and racism became much closer. As British imperialism emerged from the brutal wars of conquest, theories of imperialism and white supremacy shared a quest for organic and essentially subjective group identification. From Social Darwinism they derived many crude insights to rationalize and reformulate old prejudices. That is, scientific racism, with its unequivocal commitment to a "scientific" and biological conception of politics, would be more deeply rooted in South Africa.

From 1900 to the formation of the Union in 1910, there was a cascade of boy's tales set in South Africa, including Henty's *With Buller in Natal*. The politics of these books was crude; Henty represented Britain as the "great civilised power on earth'" fighting against the Boers who were "without even the elements of civilisation, ignorant and brutal beyond any existing white community."

> Imperial propaganda of the gripping kind produced by Henty and his fellow wordsmiths was deliberately spread to all classes. Henty's publishers encouraged state and Sunday-school teachers to present his books as prizes, and thousands were duly presented. Working-class children could share in the adventure of their social superiors, learn about the deeds which shaped the empire, absorb some of the imperial ideas. The new imperial ideology was already penetrating the elementary-

> school classrooms through the curriculum. Nearly all the geography learned by trainee teachers at Cavendish College, Cambridge in 1896 consisted of lists of colonies, details of how they were obtained, their products and accounts of their native inhabitants, all of which were passed on for their pupils to memorise. In the same year the recommended outlines of a lesson on South Africa drew attention to the primitive Calvinism of the Boers and their reluctance to wash frequently. *As for blacks, they 'have become reconciled to the inevitable supremacy of whites' and had been taught to be 'useful servants.'*[62] (italics mine)

To give another example, A.E. Haddon, who helped found anthropology as an academic discipline at Cambridge and London, described the Empire in terms of Darwinian principles. He wrote that, "the statement that the most efficient peoples ultimately prevail may be accepted as correct. The racial, economic, social, and political history of South Africa affords a striking example of this process in the natural relations of Bushman, Hottentot, Bantu, Boer and Briton."[63]

These lessons fortified the tendency to judge morality only in terms of its contribution to the supremacy of the white settlers. In the above passage, we see racism being produced as a cultural project to socialize all classes in Britain for their role as an imperial nation. There is an attempt to equip every Briton with the moral, intellectual, and cultural capacity to be superior not only to the *natives*; but to the Boers themselves,[64] even though they would soon be wooed to be the junior partners in ruling "the lower breeds without the law."

> In considering relations between groups, nationalists might dispense with the deduction of inequality from difference; but for racists this illogical procedure was fundamental. The [nationalists] were, surrounded by foreigners, the latter by, half-men. When structuring dealings with what was alien, the nationalist might choose between hatred and indifference. The racist, confronting the innately inferior as potential agents of biological degeneration, had much less choice. He tended to manifest both hatred and contempt and indifference only in the sense of carelessness about whether those who thus endangered his race were treated like men at all. Nationalism might serve, according to circumstances, the purpose either of freedom or of bondage. But racism idealised always an epitomization of illiberal society. It was necessarily, and not merely contingently, aggressive and anti-individualistic. It was the most rigid expression of belief in an almost divine finality—predestination by blood.[65]

I have quoted Biddiss at such length because what he says throws important light on the role of racism in South Africa. At its apogee in the Act of Union, by defining only whites as constituting the nation and everybody else as an outsider, it transcended the concept of territory as constituting a nation.

In South Africa, the acquisition of the Cape Colony by the British led to the abolition of slavery in 1833. The disenchanted Boers migrated into the interior of the country. By 1846, the British had fought their seventh so-called Kaffir war of dispossession. The dispossessed Africans were increasingly seen and treated not only as an inferior species but also as dispensable labor. The exploitation of diamonds in Kimberley from 1867, followed by gold in 1886, meant that the desire to exploit Africans as cheap disposable labor became institutionalized in the migrant labor system.

De Kiewiet, in his inimitable style, equated black labor with "a great raw material." As he put it:

> What an abundance of rain and grass was to New Zealand mutton, what a plenty cheap grazing was to Australian wool, what the fertile prairie were to Canadian wheat, cheap native labour was to South Africa.[66]

Equating Africans with factors of production had a profound impact on how they would be treated. That is, racism was not simply a rationale to justify conquest and domination. It was far more. It was a means to unite the conquerors and demoralize the victims; to enslave by inducing the slave mentality that ensures "acceptance" of one's station in life as an act of *nature.* This was the basis for residential and territorial segregation. The vast scale of cheap labor could only be exploited efficiently if a unified "white" settler and foreign class or complex of classes had a sense of superiority and difference.

Urged by the greedy owners of financial capital and the emerging settler agrarian capitalists, the British colonial apparatus launched an aggressive policy to increase political and administrative control over what they called *native labor* in the whole of southern Africa, up to the 21st parallel. The key document for the creation of *native labor* is the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) that was appointed by Lord Milner in 1903, and made its report in 1905. Briefly, SANAC's charge was to provide an estimate of the number of *natives* from all over southern Africa who would be available, if the legal mechanism to compel them to work could be put in place. Of the age

group between 15 and 50, *SANAC* calculated that in British Africa (which included the Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, with Swaziland and the Orange River Colony, and southern Rhodesia, Basutoland and Bechuanaland Protectorate), there were about 900,000 able-bodied possible workers, of whom from 450,000 to 475,000 might be held to be always at work, or available for work The units of this total were said to oscillate between their homes and outside labor, but the approximate total was constant.

The estimated constant demand of native labor by white capital at any one time was estimated at 782,000. The supply was estimated at 474,472, showing a shortfall of 307, 528 laborers. The Commissioners then posed this critical question:

> Under these circumstances the question naturally arises, how in South Africa agriculture or any industry is carried on? The answer is that when carried at all it is carried on under difficulties, as to which there is abundant evidence. *The British South African aboriginal Native population has not fully met the labour requirements of the country.* There is no doubt that were these Natives alone to be relied upon, South African industries could at present only be worked at half power.[67]

In this paragraph lies the essence of institutional racism. That is, the process of capitalist expansion in South Africa is inextricably linked to the reduction of Africans to nothing but pure labor power. Unfortunately, it is not always appreciated in theorizing about race and class in South Africa that the key to understanding why racism became so deeply entrenched in every aspect of south Africa's life lies in the overwhelming importance of gold mining. Indeed, South Africa's specific integration into the international capitalist economy in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was through its gold production. As Johnson put it:

> Gold is the overwhelmingly visible, nay tangible, fact of South Africa life. Her greatest city Johannesburg is, in every sense, built on it. Her largest company, Anglo-American, owes its position to its ownership of two-fifths of the mines; the mining operations are vast and employ some 700,000 people. Of the economically active workforce in 1960 one in every seven men and one in every twelve women (of all races) worked in mining. It is above all, the dominant fact of life for urban African men. In 1960, of all such men who had jobs, more than one in every three worked in the mining sector.[68]

South Africa was able to develop such a large-scale gold mining industry — of very low grade ore, buried deeply in the earth's crust, under thick layers of hard rock, to be removed and profitable exploited —because of the availability of cheap and disposable black labor. How did this work in actual practice? Quite early in the exploitation of diamonds, Cecil Rhodes and De Beers introduced a classic system of labor control and "theft" prevention.

> They hit on the idea of confining African miners in closed compounds for four or six months of their contract period.... The compound was an enclosure surrounded by a high corrugated iron fence and covered by wire-netting. The men lived, twelve to a room, in huts or iron cabins built against the fence. They went to work along a tunnel, bought food and clothing from the company's stores, and received medical treatment but no wages during sickness, all within the compounds. Men due for discharge were confined in detention rooms for several days, during which they wore only blankets and fingerless leather gloves padlocked to their wrists, swallowed purgatives, and were examined for stones concealed in cuts, wounds, swellings and crevices.[69]

To Keynes, gold was a "barbaric relic" and, indeed, it is. Yet it formed the backbone of South Africa's economy. Is it any wonder that on its basis was created one of the most barbaric racist states?

Moore, Jr. argues that certain forms of capitalist transformation are, for fairly obvious reasons, unfavorable to the growth of free institutions. For instance, a landed upper class person may maintain intact the preexisting peasant society, introducing just enough changes in rural society to ensure that peasants generate a sufficient surplus that can be appropriated and marketed at a profit. Or a landed upper class person may devise wholly new social arrangements along the lines of plantation slavery. "Straightforward slavery in modern times is . . . a creation of a class of colonizing intruders into tropical areas."[70] Both the system of maintaining peasant society intact but squeezing more out of it and the use of servile or semi service labor on large units of cultivation require strong political methods to extract the surplus, keep the labor force in its place, and in general make the system work.

Moore says that not all these methods are political in the narrow sense. Particularly where the peasant society is preserved, there are all sorts of attempts to use traditional relationships and attitudes as a basis of the landlord's position. Economists distinguish between labor-intensive and capital-intensive types of agriculture. Moore says it may

be helpful to speak of labor-repressive systems, of which slavery is but an extreme type. With minor modifications, Moore's insights can be applied to the South African mining industry.

The theory which relegated manual labor to the native, and by which the dividing line was drawn between skilled white and unskilled native labor was spelled out by Lord Milner to a Deputation of the White Labour League. He said:

> Our welfare depends upon increasing the quantity of our white population, but not at the expense of its quality. We do not want a white proletariat in this country. The position of the whites among the vastly more numerous black population requires that even the lowest ranks should be able to maintain a standard of living far above that of the poorest section of the population of a purely white country. But, without making them hewers of wood and drawers of water, there are scores and scores of employment in which white men could be honourably and profitably employed, if we could at once succeed in multiplying our industries and in reducing the cost of living. . . . However you look at the matter, you always come back to the same root principle—the urgency of that development which alone can make this a white man's country in the only sense in which South Africa can become one, and that is, not a country full of poor whites, but one in which a largely increased white population can live in decency and comfort. That development requires capital, we have got capital, but it also requires a large amount of rough labour. And that labour cannot, to any great extent, be white, if only because, pending development and in subsequent reduction in cost of living, white labour is much too dear.[71]

Here, indeed, are the roots of Hertzog's Civilised Labour Policy, and apartheid's policy of Job Reservation. In the 1960s, when Nationalist leaders were confronted with hostility for the policy of apartheid, they always reminded their critics, especially in the West that:

> Parallel existence of the White and non-White peoples in this country has been a traditional policy, the monopoly of no one political Party. Hertzog and Smuts, no less than Malan and Verwoerd, advocated and implemented it, as did the British before all of them. There has never been a Party, nor a Prime Minister, elected to this House on the multiracial policy because it is, in logical effect, a policy of non-White domination. For any political Party to have employed that policy as its election platform would have meant its complete and utter destruction at the hands of practically all electors. In different forms which were mainly

> concerned with methods of implementation, the two major Parties in South Africa have, ever since Union, stood firmly by the traditional parallel system of partial separation — social and residential — and industrial integration. Both were agreed that the Bantu should have no voting powers which enabled them to be directly represented in this House.[72]

VI. Prelude to 1994

Anniversaries in the history of peoples and nations are important milestones. It is when they take stock of where they have come from and chart where they are going. If the Anglo-Boer War was the turning point in the history of South Africa and of Anglo-Boer relations, and if it was the result of that war that British imperialists, as a policy of so-called reconciliation, decided to make concessions to the Boers which would ultimately "hand" them the country in 1948, then 1994 must be regarded as an *even more significant* watershed in the history, not only of South Africa, but of the world. In 1994, South Africa opened a new chapter in its history. An understanding of what happened in the past will inform the strategies for the present and guide future actions.

Is it not remarkable that there would be no grand and official national celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Boer War, similar in scale to the celebration in 1952 of van Riebeick's tercentenary or to the past celebrations of Dingane's defeat at the hands of the Boers? On the contrary, the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 began a worldwide celebration that ushered in a new era in the history of South Africa. How ironic that after one hundred years, the white rulers of South Africa find themselves with nothing to celebrate on the anniversary of the Anglo-Boer War!

The Sharpeville Massacre of March 1960 and the struggles that marked its aftermath proved that the more dependent the white ruling class became on black sweat and skills for its prosperity, the more jealous it became of its monopoly over economic and political privileges, and the more finely it sharpened those instruments which ensured its hegemony.[73]

From 1960 onwards, white minority rule not only had to contend with internal revolt, for the first time it had to face worldwide condemnation, spearheaded by the newly independent African states and their compatriots in the non-aligned movement. The massacre of the defenseless protesters finally convinced the ANC and its allies that the days of resistance confined to non-violent and solely legal methods

was over. In March 1961, Verwoerd called a referendum so that white voters could make their wishes known about whether South Africa should be a republic or remain a monarchy. The ANC saw this as further entrenchment of Afrikaner arbitrary rule. Therefore, it called for a national convention in which representatives of *all* the people of South Africa could make their wishes known. If the regime failed to heed its call, the ANC called for a general strike to coincide with the declaration of the Republic scheduled for May 31, 1961.

In response, the apartheid regime declared a state of emergency, and put the country on a war footing. On December 16, 1961, Umkhonto We Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation) announced its fateful appearance with a series of bombings of government installations, while declaring:

> The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices—submit or fight. That time has now come for South Africa.

This development, even though dismissed at the time as a mindless pinprick, proved once again that the past is never past, but active in the present.

There is a tendency, when discussing the South African transition, to ignore the general anti-colonial struggles of which it was a part. In the whole of southern Africa, the atmosphere of the early 19th century, the so-called Kaffir wars, was back again. The push, instead of being from south to north, was now from north to south. There were armed struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. In each one of these countries, an event or a sequence of events signaled the need for armed struggle.

> In the Guinea-Bissau the signal event was the bloody repression, in which fifty workers were killed and many injured. In Mozambique it was the 1960 Muenda massacre of 600 at a peaceful meeting. In Angola it was the killing of thirty and wounding of 200 at a meeting in Calete to protest the arrest of MPLA leader Agostino Neto, combined with the brutal repression of the Maria uprising led by a militant Christian sect. In Zimbabwe a series of preparations for armed struggle were prompted by the settlers successful Unilateral Declaration of Independence, which shattered any remaining illusion that Britain might act against the interest of its kith and kin to enforce majority rule. In Namibia, the turn to armed resistance occurred immediately after the abortive 1966 judge-

> ment of the International Court of Justice, when the process of international and legal pressure had been tested to its limits and found wanting.[74]

Southern Africa in the 1960s was not only the stronghold of the old European empire. It was also the most promising area of the new American empire. Here was produced one-fifth of the world's copper and tin, nearly one-fourth of its manganese, more than half its gold, 80% of its cobalt, and 98% of its industrial diamonds. More than half of the world's known supply of uranium lay in the Congo, Namibia, and South Africa. These economic realities made the region a Cold War arena. Much was at stake for the United States, Britain, and their imperialist allies with the outcome of the decolonization process. The *Chicago Tribune* commented at the time:

> The public investment of the United States money in Africa runs into more than a half-billion dollars, and private investment may even be as much or more. Imperialism would be a nasty word to describe our expanding interests in Africa but the list of American projects to develop the vast military resources of this continent suggest that the nineteenth century imperialism of England, France, Belgium, and Portugal is a child's play. . . . However we may feel ideologically, we are politically and financially increasingly committed to the Empire—either our allies' or our own in competition with theirs. How much of our billions in foreign aid to France, Britain, and Belgium has gone to strengthen the machinery of colonialism? . . . Whether we give or invest, we invite responsibility. And in view of some of our allies at least, we are at last learning to discharge that responsibility in a proper fashion.[75]

The editorial also noted the behavior of U.S. representatives on the Trusteeship Council, which it said showed the United States' support of South Africa.

> Thus at a time when the protection of the Western World's vested interests in Africa south of the Sahara has become seemingly a matter of life or death that winds of revolution are sweeping across the continent. If the white man has ever before been so keenly aware of the value of Africa's resources, the black man has never before been so keenly aware of the values of freedom. . . . The United States is in Africa to stay, just as it is in Europe.[76]

One of the most nonsensical arguments from the apologists of imperialism is that Africa today is being marginalized because it has no economic importance to the world economy!

In the period after 1963, when Mr. Mandela and his compatriots were sentenced to life imprisonment, white supremacy, with the help of the United States and its allies, appeared triumphant. But even with the odds against them, the spirit of resistance of the peoples of southern Africa was not broken; far from it. In 1975, the people of Mozambique and Angola became independent. In 1976, the situation in South Africa changed dramatically. The Soweto student revolt opened the log jam. From 1976 onward, black resistance took a dramatic and menacing turn. To extricate itself from the crisis, the South African regime formulated what it called "total strategy" and embarked on a dual strategy: unparalleled repression on the one hand and, on the other, "reform" of apartheid, which included "granting" independence to the reserves (now called bantustans) of the Transkei, Ciskei, Boputatswana, and Venda. The regime also "reformed" the laws governing African labor, and gave the coloureds and Indians constitutional dispensation. The tricameral constitution of 1983 gave the illusion of sharing power while maintaining firm white control. These moves were seen by certain sectors of the Afrikaner establishment as a thin end of the wedge, which would ultimately undermine white minority rule and lead to an irreparable split in the National Party.

The independence of Mozambique and Angola in 1975 and Zimbabwe in 1980 changed the geopolitics of southern Africa. The writing was now on the wall for the white minority regime in South Africa that its days were numbered. The intensification of the popular struggles in South Africa and the defeat of South Africa's expeditionary forces in Angola did immeasurable harm to the prestige of the white regime's armed forces. The shock was even worse because it was with the help of socialist Cuba that the victory of the MPLA movement in Angola was achieved. The split in Afrikanerdom between the so-called enlightened (*Verlgte*) faction and the hide bound (*Verkrampte)* faction caused the white bourgeoisie to take a deep look at what it stood to lose if the extreme elements in the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie triumphed. It was similar, in a way, to the deep look by Smuts following the defeat of the Boer forces in 1902.

The dramatic developments received a big boost with the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983 and the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions in 1985. Everywhere in South Africa, the struggles

for liberation were gathering a new momentum: students, workers, and peasants were striking out against the apartheid regime in all directions. These developments accelerated the disorganization of the apartheid regime. In the summer of 1985, *The London Economist*, in a special issue on South Africa, described the situation that faced P.W. Botha as tantamount to what it called degenerative collapse.

Not surprisingly, those sectors with a lot to lose from the escalating conflict began to make tentative approaches to the ANC. In 1985, the major representatives of South Africa's monopoly capitalism made a pilgrimage to Lusaka to open talks with the ANC. These included representatives from the Premier Group, Barclays Bank, Sanlam and Barlow Rand. The leader of this delegation was Gavin Relly, chairperson of Anglo-American Corporation.

The impending defeat of the apartheid regime in the 1980s saw the fears expressed by *The Nation* editorial becoming a reality. To the Reagan and Thatcher administrations, the possibility of victory by the ANC alliance evoked their worst fears. Both stood for a capitalist white-ruled southern Africa in contrast to the "chaos" and "disintegration" in the black ruled "socialist" camp north of the Zambezi. However awful the oppressive system of apartheid was, any revolutionary alternative *must* be worse. Southern Africa, following the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique, became the theater of the Cold War as never before. Southern Africa's mineral resources were assets the West claimed as a matter of right. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. and Britain cast more vetoes to ensure that white minority regimes were protected from international sanctions. For example, between 1980 and 1988, the Western Powers vetoed twelve separate U.N. Security Council resolutions condemning apartheid South Africa—the U.S. vetoed all the twelve, Britain eleven, and France four. Six resolutions concerned South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia, and four concerned South Africa's aggression in the Front Line States. Because of these vetoes, South Africa enjoyed protection from the full weight of the international community after its brutal invasion of Angola when the U.S. vetoed (with Britain abstaining) a resolution in August 1981. In May 1986, both the U.S. and Britain used their veto after Pretoria attacked Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, killing innocent civilians. The following month, Britain and the U.S. vetoed another resolution condemning South Africa for further attacks on Angola.[77]

In 1986, following the declaration of the second state of emergency by P.W. Botha, public indignation and pressure in the U.S. and Britain increased for the imposition of sanctions against South Africa. Reagan and Thatcher tried to establish a moral equivalence between apartheid and sanctions. For instance, Reagan was forced to criticize apartheid as morally wrong and politically unacceptable; in the same breath, he agreed with Mrs. Thatcher that punitive sanctions were also immoral and repugnant. Pretoria, he said, was not obliged to negotiate with the terrorists of the ANC, but Mandela should be released, to participate in the political process. The strongest allies of blacks, Reagan insisted, were the Western businessmen who brought in their own ideas of social justice: capitalism is the natural enemy to such feudal institutions as apartheid.[78]

The Reagan and Thatcher years will be noted above everything else for the green light they gave to the apartheid regime to destroy the economies of the Front Line States. South Africa, the United States, Britain, and the Western Powers in general, never accepted the regimes that assumed power in Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Nor did they look favorably at SADCC. In order to negate these three states, the Pretoria regime adopted a three pronged strategy. First, South Africa, with the strategic support of the U.S. and Britain, did everything it could to prevent SWAPO from assuming power in Namibia. Second, Pretoria wanted to deny the ANC and SWAPO rear bases in Angola and Mozambique. Third, South Africa wanted to suffocate SADCC—the embryonic nine-nation grouping.

When the Reagan Administration assumed power in 1980, a fourth dimension was added. With the help of UNITA bandits in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique, South Africa at the maximum wanted to replace both MPLA and FRELIMO and at the minimum to have the two bandit organizations included in the coalition governments. From 1981, the South Africa forces occupied and pillaged the southern part of Angola while RENAMO wrecked havoc on the economy of Mozambique. The tragic death of President Samora brought a new danger that threatened to split Mozambique in two.

Destabilization proved a far more successful strategy for South Africa and its imperialist allies. Under the guise of *constructive engagement*, the apartheid regime was provided with the freedom from the threat of sanctions to wreak havoc on Angola and Mozambique, both through direct military intervention and through massive support of its surrogates. The continuing turmoil in Angola and the Lake region

as well as the devastated economy of Mozambique impose heavy burdens on the democratic government of South Africa.

VII. Mandela's Release in 1990

> If we really want to lose everything, then we must hang on to everything now.[79]

On February 2, 1990, President F.W. de Klerk, who, in a power struggle within the National Party, had replaced P.W. Botha, announced that on February 11, Nelson Mandela would be released from his life term prison sentence and that the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, and other organizations would be unbanned. He also expressed the hope that a new constitutional settlement, including all the people of South Africa, would be negotiated. With that announcement, the history of South Africa had turned full circle. The scene at Groote Schuur (the house that Cecil Rhodes built), where F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela sat at the same table and talked about a new constitutional order for the country, was something no one expected to happen in our lifetime. It was as if the ideology and the infrastructure, which had attempted to strangle people's minds for nine decades, had collapsed overnight.

The symbolism of the place where the talks took place was as important as their substance. It was the "first truly serious meeting" between the white government and the ANC in 78 years, Mandela observed. The event, he went on, was "freighted with deadly weight of the terrible tradition of a dialogue between master and servant." To overcome that burden, Mandela asked "all who are hostages of the past to transform ourselves into new men and women who shall be fitting instruments for the creation of a new South Africa."

These developments had no precedent in history. It was the first time that a ruling racist regime of any white settler country had begun what would lead to a fundamental change in the constitutional structure of the country. This really was Act II of the South Africa Act of 1909, which had led to the creation of the Dominion of the Union of South Africa in 1910. It was also an admission that South Africa was not and could not remain a "white man's country," but, in the words of the Freedom Charter of the ANC, it must belong to all who live in it. From May 1990, the NP and the ANC began the tedious process of negotiating the modalities for dismantling white minority rule. Diffi-

cult as the process would be, nobody doubted that the people of South Africa shared the need to create a new constitutional formula in order to escape the crippling legacy of colonial conquest and its distorted psychological legacy.

The very acknowledgment that the ANC could not be ignored was a major achievement. From 1912, the ANC had been the custodian of the national aspirations of the African people under the most difficult circumstances. Even more striking was the unbanning of the Communist Party of South Africa. One of the first measures taken by the NP after it came to power was to pass the notorious Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. The chief reason for the Act had been to defend "white" South Africa from the twin dangers of black nationalism and "communism." Now all that fear seemed to have been jettisoned. On February 11, Nelson Mandela walked out of prison arm in arm with his then-beloved wife, Winnie.

Mandela's release itself was a global event, transmitted around the world by satellite. The celebration that followed, especially Mandela's whirlwind visit to the U.S., underlined the scale of the defeat that de Klerk and the international forces of imperialism had suffered. The man the regime had sought to condemn to oblivion in 1964 had not only survived, but had come out a world statesman. The organization, for whose politics he had been convicted, had emerged as a major negotiating partner. The ANC, in its revised strategy, acknowledged the momentous nature of these events:

> All these developments represent a major victory for the forces, led by the ANC, which have struggled for many decades for the destruction of the system of white minority domination and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial democracy. The immediate issue on the agenda was the question of political power. To effect the transfer of power into the hands of the people as a whole was and still is the most crucial and immediate challenge facing the national democratic movement.[80]

Even with the start of the negotiations, the ANC could not lose sight of the fact that the regime still retained the capacity to implement counterrevolutionary measures on a whole range of fronts. "The white ruling group," the 1990 Guidelines on Strategy stated, "has entered the negotiations process with its own agenda: a radically reformed system of apartheid which will retain the essentials of white domination, of

economic, political, and social institutions of our country." Developments in South Africa from 1990 to the eve of the elections vindicated this analysis.

VIII. The Meaning of 1994

Looking back at the period from approximately 1806 to 1994, one is struck by the monumental efforts white settlers made to reduce Africans into nothing else but pure labor power. This effort involved politics of sheer domination unmediated by any human compassion. Almost 84 years after Britain created the edifice of white minority rule, under the leadership of the ANC those whom Fanon called "damned of the earth" woke up from the dead to rejoin the living. As Nadine Gordimer put it, the election of the African National Congress as the head of the transitional government in May 1994, was not just a new beginning.

> It was a resurrection; this land rising from the tomb of the entire colonial past shared out among the Dutch, the French, the British, and their admixture of other Europeans, this indigenous people rising from the tomb of segregated housing, squatter camps, slum schools, job restrictions, forced removals from one part of the country to another; from burial of all human aspirations and dignity under the humiliation of discrimination by race and skin; this people rising, for the first time in history, with the right to elect a government: to govern themselves. A sacred moment is represented in the act of putting a mark on a ballot.[81]

It is certainly tempting to see in the triumph of the ANC and its allies a watershed dividing the period of colonial dominance in Africa from that of the abdication in the white redound. The NP, which was formed in 1914 to represent the national aspirations of the Afrikaners who had suffered defeat in the Anglo-Boer War, had reached its apogee in 1948 when it assumed power and began a program to finally solve the "native problem." The 1913 Land Act made 87% of South Africa a "white man's country" where Africans were allowed only if they came to sell their labor power. If 1948 marked the apogee of Afrikaner nationalism, 1960 marked the nadir for African hopes. In 1960, the ANC and the Pan African National Congress had been summarily banned because of their demand to share power in a unified South African state. Debating the Unlawful Organizations Bill (which

gave the legal authority to ban the two movements), the Minister of Justice, when describing the actions of the two Congresses as revolutionary, said, "What they want is our country."[82]

In 1966, at the fifth anniversary celebration of the declaration of South Africa as a republic, Dr. Verwoerd, the erstwhile prime minister, declared that, "Although we are young, we are a nation in South Africa to whom all belong, and all of us can say with pride, this is our country."[83] On another occasion, Verwoerd pronounced that "South Africa was a piece of Europe at the tip of the African continent."[84] In other words, the apartheid system was more than an oppressive and exploitative legal structure with far-reaching social and economic consequences. When we talk about "white South Africa," we are talking about a state that did not accept the African as a legitimate part of the country. Segregation as it evolved into apartheid became the state policies to mobilize the force and violence necessary to regiment black labor as an alien and coerced force.

It might be useful at this point to remind ourselves of an event in January 1947, when the Dominions Office had become the Commonwealth Relations Office. *The Times* marked the occasion in a leader tinged with regret for vanished forms:

> The historic word Empire, however it may have been misrepresented abroad, calls for no apology.... It commemorates the centuries in which the British have striven, first to work out the conception of political liberty for themselves, and then to communicate that liberty to all the peoples who share their allegiance. The goal and achievement are now summed up in a title that is proof against detractors, the British Commonwealth of Nations.[85]

"What did it then amount to," asks Grierson, "that concept of which Lord Roseberry had spoken, over which Smuts had theorised, and into which the 'Empire' was being dissolved?"

> Any photograph of a Commonwealth Conference in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War will supply the answer — a small group of white men standing protectively around the British monarch on the Buckingham Palace lawns. 'The Commonwealth is a closed group,' said the Honourable D. F. Malan, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, in the spring of 1951. 'The Commonwealth can...exist only as a result of an essential identity of interest between all its members.'[86]

This is the irony of ironies, that Smuts and Malan, the racists to the core, could define the nature and principles of the Commonwealth! South Africa, having been forced to leave the Commonwealth, would, after the triumph of Mandela, rejoin it again.

A. The Inauguration of the Government of National Unity

"On 10 May 1994, amid an atmosphere that was joyous, moving and solemn," writes Judd, "Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the State President of the Republic of South Africa."[87] The ceremony ended 350 years of white domination in South Africa. Mandela, with his calm and dignified bearing sometimes dissolving into small and spontaneous displays of pure pleasure, swore "to be faithful to the Republic of South Africa, so help me God." In his inaugural speech, the new State President announced that "The time for healing of wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us." He concluded with this promise: "Never, never and never again, shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another."[88]

The end of white domination had enormous international significance. The event itself was witnessed by one of the largest gatherings of world leaders of all political persuasions. President Fidel Castro of Cuba, the long time nemesis of the United States, received the loudest and most prolonged ovation. He shared the stage with the United States First Lady Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore; so did Libya's Moammar Gaddafi and Yassar Arafat of the Palestinian Liberation Organization — more bogeymen in American politics. To those who formulated Nixon and Reagan policies in the 1980s, President Mandela shared the stage with what had seemed a lost generation of "freedom fighters," if they were charitable, or "terrorist," if they expressed their true feelings. Included on the stage were Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, and Joe Slovo.

In the background, there were grim-faced, uniformed pillars of the soon-to-be-discarded Anglo-Afrikaner white supremacist state who stood, in the words of Judd, "like undertakers or godfathers" in the burial of the old order.

> In a sense, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, based on the irrefutable triumph of the African National Congress in the preceding general election, may be seen as one of the last and, arguably, one of the most dra-

> matic and moving transfers of power within a country which had formerly been among the most prosperous, controversial, valued and bitterly contested within the British Empire and the Commonwealth.[89]

The "new" South Africa was born amidst profound relief, a palpable desire for reconciliation, overwhelming optimism, and genuinely high hopes for the future. Even with all the birth pangs, the GNU has managed the transition with remarkable success. How will South Africa escape what President Mbeki, on the occasion of the adoption of the Republic of South Africa Constitutional Bill, called an "immoral and amoral past"? It has, first and foremost, to do with the character of the ANC and the nationalism that it represents. That is, the long established traditions of building a "broad church," or a "hegemonic" organization that does not seek to define itself in exclusionist, or narrow ideological terms.[90]

Also, in 1990, when de Klerk released Mandela and unbanned all organizations, neither side had defeated the other. "The corollary of this was that both sides continued to dispose of sufficient strength to inflict casualties on each other."

> Equally important, each side understood clearly that because the other had these possibilities, continuation of the conflict meant that whoever sought to assume a militant posture, summarised in the slogan 'The Struggle Continues,' would have to accept that they too would be severely bled and weakened, to the point where any victory they secured might very well result in them as victors having to preside over a wasteland.[91]

This, then, was the context of the much-maligned policy of reconciliation. Does reconciliation mean ignoring the injustices of the past and present? The answer to this question raises even more questions. For instance, could reconciliation have taken place without democracy? *Peaceful* transformation entails compromises, and some of these are extremely painful to the victims. Mbeki, in an interview in the *Cape Times*, underlined the problem:

> Within the ANC, the cry was to 'catch the bastards and hang them.' But we realised that you could not simultaneously prepare for a peaceful transition while saying we want to catch and hang people. So we paid a price for the transition. If we had not taken this route, I don't know where the country would have been today. Had there been a threat of

> Nurenberg-style trials over members of the apartheid security establishment we would never have undergone the peaceful change.[92]

Are these just excuses of a regime that has lost its way and betrayed the revolution? That is, has the ANC become an instrument of the African petty bourgeoisie? In the discussion document, *The Character of the ANC*, the question of shifting class alliances is addressed:

> While the overwhelming majority of the poor, unemployed and marginalised are black, the last few years have seen the rapid development of a new black, upper middle-class. The gap between the richest ten-percent of blacks and the majority has grown very rapidly. Many ANC's leading cadres have benefited directly from these new realities. The promotion of tens of thousands of formerly oppressed is a progressive development, but it does need us to be thoughtful on this issue. We must ensure that the ANC continues to represent the interests of the great majority, and not, narrowly, those of an emerging new elite. What is now needed is not a "poorer the better" moralising outlook. Rather, we must ensure that both ideologically (in the values and policies we develop) and organisationally, the new powers, wealth and privileges do not become an end in themselves, but are used in the service of the national democratic struggle. The best means for ensuring this strategic objective is keeping the movement, mass participatory character of the ANC. This is the best antidote to the danger of our organisation being transformed into a narrow, professionalised machine, enjoying support, but not empowering mass participation.[93]

IX. Conclusion

This essay put into some historical perspective South Africa's transition to democracy. The task is enormous. The travails of nation building in the modern world are well known. Following the end of white minority rule in 1994, the GNU began to redefine the character of the new South Africa. Today a new flag and a new anthem — made up of the national anthem of the movement and the Afrikaner anthem — have been accepted. In building a nation, there are many traditions to be taken into account. There are many wounds to be healed. In a multiethnic country like South Africa there are many sacred traditions and "illustrious" predecessors to be taken into account. The nation is a common project for the present and future. The tragedy of white minority rule was very much in the minds of those who crafted the

South African Constitution. Given the crimes of the white minority, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was appointed. The rationale was simple—*a capacity to feel shame for the crimes of the past had to be part of any healthy national consciousness.*

Looking at the achievements of the GNU, it would be difficult to disagree with Anthony Lewis who recently visited South Africa. He wrote in *The New York Times*:

> Of all countries, South Africa cannot be separated from its past. Not long ago it was a country where people were tortured and murdered because of their politics. A country where, because of their race, husbands were systematically separated from their wives. A country where a small minority, defined by race, held all economic and political power. Given that history, it is something of a miracle that South Africa today is a normal country with social and economic problems. The problems are large, but they can be debated in freedom. Tyranny is only a memory.[94]

Lewis touches on two important issues: that South Africa cannot forget its past and that though it is now a "normal" country, it has enormous socioeconomic problems. The black-white economic disparities are a thing to behold. They are not an act of nature but were humanly created. It is important to always remind ourselves that for those who wished to create capitalist relations of production, the foundation stone of their endeavor was the restriction of land ownership to the white minority and the exclusion of the black majority from any share in property. As I have said, the 1913 Land Act epitomizes the inequity of this restriction. It is interesting to recall the agrarian changes that accompanied the Industrial Revolution in England. There we find the author of the Gloucestershire *Survey* of 1807 recording without embarrassment the forthright opinion that the "greatest evils to agriculture would be to place the labourers in a state of independence [i. e., by allowing them to have land] and thus destroy the indispensable gradations of society." "Farmers like manufacturers," said another writer of the time, "require constant labourers—men who have no other means of support than their daily labour, men whom they can depend on."[95]

To say that wealth and poverty are two sides of the same coin in a capitalist society may have been forgotten in the former metropolitan countries. But in South Africa the fact that poverty is concentrated mostly among Africans is a constant reminder that white wealth was achieved through the instrument of economic pressure. Monopoly,

usury, and actual expropriation were due to the dispossession of indigenous owners. The South African white capitalist class is a creation not of thrift and abstinence, as economists have traditionally depicted it, but of wholesale and unconscionable dispossession of Africans by dint of economic and political advantage.

This raises the question of the suitability of affirmative action. Can it work in a country where inequalities were entrenched by law? Coincident with legal imposition of discrimination was the growing exclusiveness of white trade unions, which barred African employment in any skilled or semi-skilled work. In the past six years, the ANC government's initial priority has been to improve employment opportunities for victims of apartheid, and it has pursued an aggressive policy of equity in the labor market. Tough new legislation has been passed to ensure that those who were discriminated against have a fair deal. The Employment Equity Act, passed in 1999, is the cornerstone of the new affirmative action policies. Until the labor market is democratized, South Africa's newly won freedoms will remain a chimera.

Affirmative action has evaded the central truth about South African democracy in the first place and in capitalist countries in general. Today there is a great deal of clap-talk about democracy as a precondition for economic development. In this talk, the market is seen as the panacea for all economic ills. Since the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, socialism is pronounced dead and capitalist globalization is the new mantra. However, isn't globalization really the ideology of a new stage of capitalist hegemony that acts without restraints? Indeed, current globalization with its challenge to the nation state, underlines even more that, **under capitalism, democracy is always restricted to the political domain, while economic management is held hostage to non-democratic, private ownership of the means of production.** Such a democracy is incomplete, even by the standards of the West itself.

Finally, it is important to remember that capitalism is predicated upon the egotistical and individualistic nature of human functioning in a marketplace that crushes and overrides the sense of community and comradeship. ◉

Notes

1. Simonses 1969: 31.
2. Morris 1978: 66.
3. Kuper 1969, 1977; Van den Berg 1957; Adam 1971; Davernport 1987, Adam et. al. 1997.

4. O'Dowd 1978.

5. For the writings of the neo-Marxist school, see *South African Capitalism and Black Opposition*, edited by Martin Murray (Cambridge: Schonkman Publishing Co., 1982).

6. Wolpe 1980, 1984, 1988; Davies et. al. 1984; Fine and Davis 1985.

7. Marais 1998; Adam et. al. 1997; Adam and Moodley 1997.

8. Marais 1998: 2, 5.

9. Ibid.

10. It is true that a tiny minority of Africans were granted the qualified franchise in 1853, until it was abolished in 1936, and that the Coloured vote was only abolished in 1953.

11. Proudhon 1924: 344. (Quoted in Marshall 1993: xvii).

12. Magubane 1979, 1982, 1987.

13. Simpson 1987:12.

14. Margaret Thatcher's exasperation is not new. Anthony Trollope, the British novelist, in his influential book *South Africa* (1878: 45), revealed a basic aspect of the imperial frame of mind, e.g., the belief that the suffering of the Africans does not matter if they conflicted with that of the British settlers. As he put it: "Of all the questions which a conscientious man has ever had to decide, this is one of the most difficult. The land clearly belongs to the inhabitants of it—by as good a title as England belongs to the English or Holland to the Dutch. But the advantage of spreading population is so manifest, and the necessity of doing so has so clearly been indicated to us by nature, that no man, let him be ever so conscientious, will say that throngs of human beings from the overpopulated civilized countries should refrain from spreading themselves over unoccupied countries partially occupied by savage races. Such a doctrine would be monstrous, and could be held only by a fanatic in morality. And yet there always comes a crisis in which the stronger, the more civilized, and the Christian race is called upon to inflict a terrible injustice on the unoffending owner of the land. Attempts have been made to purchase every acre needed by new comers — very conspicuously in New Zealand. But such attempts never can do justice to the Savage. The Savage man from his nature can understand nothing of the real value of the article to be sold. The price must be settled by the purchaser, and he on the other side has no means of ascertaining who in truth has the right to sell, and cannot know to whom the purchase money should be paid. But he does know that he must have the land. He feels that in spreading himself over the earth he is carrying out God's purpose, and has no idea of giving way before this difficulty. He tries to harden his heart against the Savage, and gradually does so in spite of his own conscience. The man is a nuisance and must go."

15. Margaret Perham 1962: 103.

16. Jean-Paul Sartre 1976: 111.

17. Alexander Wilmot 1895: 2–3.

18. Cairns 1965: 238.

19. Lord Bryce 1969: 477.

20. Plaatje 1916: 99.

21. Ibid., 96.

22. Milner Papers, Vol. I: 180.

23. Moore 1966; Hilton 1976.

24. Thabo Mbeki 1998: 16.
25. Simonses 1969: 23.
26. Ibid., 23–24.
27. Hannah Arendt 1951/86: 175–6.
28. Hancock and Van der Pool 1966, Vol. II: 337.
29. *Cape Times*, 3 March 1909.
30. Warramantly 1980: 68, *Apartheid, The Closing Phases?* Melbourne, Lantana.
31. Judd 1996: 163.
32. Ibid., 155.
33. Calpin 1969: 28.
34. Ibid., 32.
35. Judd 1996: 133.
36. Williamson Part VI, 1931: 237.
37. Quigley 1981: 53–54.
38. Caplin 1968: 105.
39. Jay 1981: 202.
40. Sacks 1967: 24.
41. Ibid.
42. Krüger 1968: 18–19.
43. Arendt 1962: 199–200.
44. Quoted in Gregory 1962: 65.
45. An interesting aside to the formation of the company was the disagreement about what to name the new company. Oppenheimer suggested the name "African American," but W.L. Honnold, who had left South Africa for America to take up a position as assistant to Hoover, had a problem with the name because, in his words, "African-American would suggest on this side our dark-skinned countrymen and possibly result in ridicule." On July 6, 1917, Oppenheimer replied: "After full discussion Hull, consider it very necessary that American identity should form part of Company's title. Suggest that Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa Limited." In Gregory 1962: 86, 89.
46. Dutt 1936: 233.
47. Quoted in Dutt 1936: 136–7.
48. Quoted in Füredi 1998: 66.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 67.
51. Simonses 1969: 613–4.
52. Allighan 1961: 73.
53. Krüger 1969: 310.
54. Col. 4150.
55. Col. 4171.
56. Ibid.
57. Quoted in James 1994: 197.
58. Grieson 1972: 93–4.

59. Seeley.

60. Biddiss 1977: 114.

61. Robinson and Gallagher 1961: 9.

62. James 1994: 209–210.

63. A.E. Haddon 1921: 39.

64. "Within the spectrum of Anglo-Saxon prejudice," writes Huttenback, "it was better to be English than Irish, but more important to white than black. Irishmen and other non-British might be objects of opprobrium, but they were at least not as strange and different as the peoples of Africa and Asia." In Huttenback 1976: 18.

65. Biddiss, 113–4.

66. De Kiewiet 1943.

67. SANAC 1905: 79.

68. Johnson 1977: 67.

69. Simonses, 42.

70. Moore, Jr. 1966: 432.

71. The average cost of Europeans employed in the mines in 1904 was 295 pounds per head; of the native labourers, 46 pounds. This disparity made it impossible for white labour to compete with black labour in fields of manual labour. In Milner Papers, 459.

72. Dr. van Wyk cited in Allighan 1961: 85.

73. Slovo 1976: 108.

74. Ibid., 183–4.

75. *The Nation* 26 (December 1953): 557.

76. Ibid.

77. Curtis 1998: 183.

78. Simpson 1987: 14.

79. Donald Masson, retired president of the Afrikaner Institute of Commerce, June 1986, quoted by Simpson 1987: 11.

80. ANC 1991: 1.

81. Nadine Gordimer 1994.

82. Fine and Davis 1990: 220.

83. Quoted in Hepple 1967: 185.

84. 1966: 705–6.

85. Grierson 1972: 298.

86. Ibid.

87. Judd 1998: 410.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., 411.

90. ANC 1998: 4.

91. Thabo Mbeki 1998: 54.

92. Mbeki interview in *Cape Times*.

93. Umrabulo, no. 3.

94. Anthony Lewis, *New York Times* (16 August 1999).

95. Dobb 1963: 222.

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