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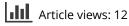
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BLACKS AND THE DIALECTICS

N ATTEMPTING TO APPLY the concept of the dialectics to the black experience we are, amongst other things, attempting to test the relevance of Marxism to blacks. Such an examination is necessary to avoid having to accept blindly the notions of Marx or rejecting him because he is a white theorist. Since "the correct ideology," according to Black Panther writings, "is an invincible weapon against the oppression in our struggle for freedom and liberation,"1 it is imperative that we look with renewed effort in all quarters - even in the land of "Babylon" - for a viable ideological position. We should try to sort out sense from nonsense in the ideologies of other oppressed peoples that are potentially relevant to us. After all, "one has only to remember that it was among the gentiles that the beliefs of the man who was crucified as King of the Jews became historically significant." It is equally invalid to reject Marx, as is commonly done, on the grounds that he was writing from and for a Western European experience. This is true, but we should also remember that blacks are intricately meshed into this European experience. The key necessity is that blacks themselves be the sifters, as the Panthers themselves are: "When we say that we are Marxist-Leninists, we mean that we have studied and understood the classical principles of scientific socialism and that we have adapted these principles to our situation for ourselves."2 What we intend to do is to show the black man within the process

of dialectical development. In fact, we intend to show that "racial" dialectics has developed hand-in-hand with the "economic" dialectics as stressed by Marx.

IN ITS MOST general form the "Dialectic," as used by Marx, refers to the process of conflict and reconciliation which goes on within reality itself, and within human thought about reality. It stresses the activist nature of man within the context of fundamental antagonisms which provide the motive force for change. Engels elaborated the notion of "Dialectics" which for him was "nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society, and thought." For him this general "law" of development embodies three aspects:

1 - The Law of Unity of Opposites, or the Interpenetration of Opposites, which argues that development stems from the contradictions or antagonisms which are endemic in it. It accepts occurrence of oppositions in society but sees some fundamental unity beneath these;

2- The Law of the Transition of Quantity into Quality, which sees everything as always in motion and development and which points to certain crucial or modal points at which a quantitative addition produces a qualitative change;

3- The Law of Negation of the Negation, which argues that development is progressive. The original state (thing), called Thesis, affirms a proposition, according to this law. The Antithesis denies or negates this. From the conflict there arises a Synthesis, which

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by DENNIS FORSYTHE

negates what was negative in the antagonisms and preserves what was positive. Thus the Synthesis embraces what is true in both the Thesis and the Antithesis, and thus brings us one step nearer to the ideal.

It will be shown that blacks are and have always been central in this dialectical process, though this fact is only now being recognized. We intend to show that the "Racial Dialectics" have been crucial. Racial conflict here refers to the relationship between categories defined as "blacks" and "whites." When this racial conflict is rooted within the dialectical framework outlined above, we arrive at certain postulates from our "Racial Dialectics:"

1 - The Thesis of modern history is slavery which was the fundamental all-encompassing movement which established a racial equation in which whites were defined as superior to blacks;

2- The Antithesis of modern history consists of all those black movements which developed as a reaction to slavery, and which advocated a racial equation in which there is reversal of racial positions – blacks are defined as superior to whites. Black movements of this sort took on an essentially "cult" or millenarian form;

3- The Synthesis of modern history will essentially consist of equality of the different "races," and this position can be indicated by all those black movements that aim at equality of blacks and whites.

Before the dialectical force or Thesis of modern history began, we can depict the "original state" of things as one of equilibrium between the two races,³ in which the notion of superiority and inferiority of the races was not prominent. We are told that:

The managers of the slave trade themselves, and others, testify that many of these African nations inhabit fertile countries, are industrious farmers, enjoy plenty, and lived quietly, adverse to war, before the Europeans debauched them with liquors, and bribed them against one another; and that these inoffensive people are brought into slavery by stealing them, tempting kings to sell products which they can have no right to do, and hiring one tribe to war against another, in order to catch prisoners.⁴

Even Columbus gives a description of the natural virtues of the Indians he met in the New World in their original state of equilibrium:

They are a loving uncovitous people, so docile in all things that I do assure Your Majesty, I believe in all the world there is no better people or a better country; they love their neighbours as themselves, and they have the sweetest, gentlest way of speaking in the world and always with a smile.⁵

ADDED TO ALL THIS internal equilibrium within these ancient black societies was the equilibrium between blacks and whites, Europe and Africa were on a par in the fifteenth century. Pointing to this, Bennett writes:

Europeans, noting these things, greeted Africans as allies and partners in trade. The recorded reminiscences of traders show that down to the eighteenth century, they had no conception of their victims as racial pariahs. On the contrary, many traders expressed that Africans were their equals and the superiors of many back home . . . Standing up to each other, as men and as equals, both Africans and Europeans profitted . . . Black and white kings exchanged letters filled with terms of royal endearment ("my fellow brother" and "my fellow queen"). They exchanged gifts and mistresses.6

THESIS: SLAVERY AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The foregoing remarks merely set the stage for the modern drama, whose first major act was slavery, initiated by Europeans. The slavery movement has been so consequential to world history that we can regard it as the thesis or the original sin in modern history, from which subsequent history has developed.7 It was this movement that established the racial "ideal" equation of whites dominating blacks. In retrospect, we can affirmatively assert that if any episode qualifies to be regarded as the original sin of modern history, it is the complete reduction of black men to the level of property, to the level of chattel, "black cargoes." (This seems more "sinful" than the abstract Marxian notion of the rise of private property.)

So thorough going was the right of possession of the slave's person and the consequent loss to the slave of even the right to personal security, that under the Virginia Law the killing of a slave by his master was not considered a felony, for the code logically reasoned that it cannot be presumed that prepensed malice should induce a man to destroy his own estate.⁸

Ex-slave Frederick Douglass mentions how the white world viewed him: "I was generally introduced as chattel – a thing – a piece of Southern property – the chairman assuring the audience that it could speak."⁹ "Iron Laws" and "Black Codes" developed in the slavery regimes to codify and crystallize this status—assignation of blacks: "A slave had no standing in the courts . . . he could not make contract . . . they could not possess firearms . . . he could not strike a white person even in self-defense . . . they could not assemble unless a white person was present."¹⁰ Slavery destroyed the Negro's family, emptied his mind, and impoverished his soul. A totalitarian system of dominance developed which incorporated vice, immorality, and brutality against blacks. Blacks were trained to accept their new roles as the inferior "race," and every instrument of persuasion — force, religion, law, threats, banishment — was used to destroy the independence of blacks and their original self-conception. The fundamental racial "opposition" was thus laid:

The Negro became a contrast conception. He was black to the white man's white. He was the devil to the white man's God. He was dark to the white man's light . . . One was born white and in this respect one inherited the earth. Propelled by this psychic dynamism the white age expanded, puffed up, exploded, and rolled across the face of the earth, absorbing the consciousness and the souls of men born black, red, and brown.¹¹

IN SHORT, slavery was like a great white whale aimed at devouring blacks. So we find the history of blacks "destroyed"; he was totally subjugated to white domination and was uniquely dehumanized to the level of property. So complete was this "white over black" equation established that there was very little chance of escape. Says Jordan, "The spectre of Negro rebellion presented an appalling world turned upside down, a crazy nonsense world of black over white, an anti-community which was the direct negation of the community as white men knew it . . . Abhorrence of Negro rule united all white men."12 The basic feature of American society from then onwards was that "white power is the ambience of black being. Negro responses on all levels are adaptations to the reality of white power."13 Any threat to this white dominated world was suppressed with severe brutality. For example, during the period of Radical Reconstruction the deposed, disenfranchised, and "humiliated" whites reacted with a reign of terror unsurpassed in the annals of American history. John Hope Franklin writes:

Secret societies grew and spread when it became apparent to Southerners that their control was to be broken by Radical Reconstruction. For ten years after 1867 there flourished the Knights of the White Camellia, the Constitutional Union Guards, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, the Council of Safety, the '76 Association, and the K.K.K. Among the numerous local organisations were the White League of Louisiana, the White Line of Mississippi, and the Rifle Clubs of South Carolina. Southerners expected to do by extra or illegal - means what had not been allowed by law: to exercise absolute control over the Negro, drive him and his fellows from power and establish "white supremacy." Radical Reconstruction was at all costs to be ended and the tactics of terrorists' groups were the first step of Southern leaders towards this end.14

From these and other considerations slavery can legitimately be regarded as the original sin in modern history. In fact, it has been regarded as "a height of outrage against humanity." ¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson regarded slavery as "contrary to the light of nature, to every principle of justice and humanity." ". . . Man-stealing," he says, "is to be ranked with enormous crimes."¹⁶

What then explains this development of the Thesis from a non-existence, to a tendency, and eventually to an organized movement with such traumatic consequences? It is commonly agreed that the first black immigrants to the United States seemed to have had the same industrial and economic opportunities as white servants, and were "serfs" rather than "slaves." Says Bennett:

Within the confines of this system, which can only be called equality of repression, Negroes fared about as well as whites. They held real property and transferred it, sued in court, and were sued. Some Negroes voted and a few held the minor offices of beadle and surety. In a limited sense, then, the Jamestown experience was an open experience.¹⁷

It is now agreed that the factors that caused the degradation of blacks were "market forces," or the economic dialectics of capitalism. Stanley Elkins finds it pertinent to ask: "Why should the status of 'slave' have been elaborated in little more than two generations with such utter logic and completeness to make American slavery unique among all such systems known to civilization?"¹⁸ His answer points to the economic dynamics:

A growing system of large scale staple production for profit was free to develop in a society where no *prior* traditional institutions, with competing claims of their own might interpose with sufficient power to retard or modify its progress . . . Capitalism became the main dynamic force; Europeans stressed personal achievement and America was the ideal spot for working this out.¹⁹

A similar argument was advanced by Oliver Cox:

Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world-wide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced back to the policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America.²⁰

Racism was thus a logical adjunct to the commercialization of black labor. In the capitalistic plantocracies that developed, blacks were "treated at best like a 'stern but just' father would deal with backward children; at worst like special and expensive species of livestock whose labor was to be exploited for the greatest economic gain."²¹ It was the maxim of slave management that "the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth."²²

THE BRITISH EMPIRE, in fact European history, became a magnificent superstructure of American commerce and naval power on an African foundation. In sum, then, due to the slave trade, capitalism, and imperialism, "White Europe became a single group opposed to the rest of the world, and a new and terrifying idea was invented: the idea of subordination and superordination based on skin color."²³ "Europe," continues Bennett, "emerged now as the Great Subject in counterpoise to the non-white Other . . . There was

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something amoral about this spirit, something demonic, faustian, and recklessly individualistic."²⁴

It is evident therefore that the Marxist emphasis on economic exploitation provides the valid explanation for the emergence of slavery and its development. Marx himself specifically admitted that "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where labor in black skin is branded." Thus during the Civil War, Marx and Engels "exerted every effort to get the Lincoln Administration to issue an early Emancipation Proclamation, thus making slavery in name the central issue of the war . . . They made every effort . . . to prevent the British government from siding with the Confederacy."25 Further, in his letters to Abraham Lincoln, Karl Marx spoke of the Civil War as "the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the restruction of a social world."26 But this is as far as Marx is relevant at this stage. Beyond this, Marxism provides a justification for the enslavement of blacks and the spread of European imperialism. Marx commends, in fact applauds, capitalism at many points; but for blacks this has meant nothing but a system of negations. For Marx, capitalism is a necessary step towards final salvation since only this can create the economic and technological infrastructure necessary for a rounded development of individuals. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx wrote that the Bourgeoisie:

. . . draws all, even the most barbaric, nations into civilization . . . and has rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of Bourgeois, the East on the West.²⁷

In effect, Marx visualised the history of the Third World merely as an appendage of Europe. Thus, for him Africa and Asia, before the coming of the white man, was "static" and without "any history at all." He used epithets like "barbarian," "semibarbarian," "nations of peasants," and the "Asiatic mode of production" to refer to these societies. He reasoned that since these traditional societies lacked internal dynamics for development then some external factor was necessary. Noting this, Avineri summarized this Marxist stance:

Just as the horrors of industrialization are dialectically necessary for the triumph of Communism, so the horrors of Colonialism are dialectically necessary for the world revolution of the proletariat since without them the countries of Asia (and Africa) will not be able to emancipate themselves from their stagnant backwardness.²⁸

MARX'S WHITE ethno-cultural bias, which was built into his model, can also be seen in his denial of the validity of all such notions as "Traditional Chinese Communism" or "African Communism." Nowhere does he admit to the possibility of "genuine virtues" in traditional Third World countries. Instead he writes:

We must not forget that these idvllic village communities . . . had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind . . . making it an unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies . . . We must not forget that this indigenous, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence, evoked on the other part, in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbound forces of destruction . . . We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances,29

This use of the dialectical reasoning boils down to a conservative acceptance of things-as-they-were, including the subjugation of blacks. Thus, just as Marx accepted the presence of the English in India,³⁰ Engels applauded the French conquest of Algeria as "an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilization."³¹ It is evident that blacks cannot accept this type of reasoning which boils down to a denial of the culture and history of their societies before the exploitative presence of whites. The orthodox Marxist framework, argues Nyerere,

gives capitalism a philosophical status which capitalism neither claims nor deserves. For it virtually says, 'Without capitalism and the conflict which capitalism creates within the society, there can be no socialism.' This glorification of capitalism by doctrinaire Socialists, I repeat, I find intolerable.³²

ANTITHESIS: BLACK MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS

From a study of black social movements it becomes evident that many of the most important ones reacted to slavery – the Thesis – radically and negatively, by advocating a philosophy embodying black superiority to whites. In other words, these movements constitute an Antithesis of modern history, the second stage in the dialectical process. They took the form, essentially, of millenarian and cult movements.

By nature millenarian movements are characterized generally by:

• Their apocalyptic view of the future;

• Their radical rejection of the present as totally unacceptable;

• Their ambivalent attitude towards their past;

• Their collective orientation on behalf of "the chosen people;"

• Their view of salvation as a merger of the spiritual with the terrestial, which may be effected by supernatural power or by human effort;

• Their messianic nature, revolving usually around a "prophet";

• Their high degree of emotionalism and the minimal degree of organization;³³

• Their stress on the virtues of the "original state," which in this case, refers to the period before the coming of whites to Third World countries.

Black millenarian movements characterize much of the reactions against white supremacy, and are dialectical offshoots from the Thesis. Thus, they retain certain of the elements found in the Thesis such as a large amount of religious zeal and the ab-

soluteness of their claim. These millenarian movements predict a complete radical utopian change by means of one episode, usually the intervention of a saviour. Their essence is the hope of a complete radical change in the present in which present problems and grievances would be destroyed or eliminated.³⁴ These movements are strung all over the globe and are found wherever Europeans have established their supremacy. They range from movements among the Plains Indians, the Cargo Cults of Melanesia, Polynesian cult movements, to Noble Drew Ali, Father Divine, the Black Muslims, the Black Jews of Harlem and the Ras Tafaris - to name just a few. Even many of the most consequential slave revolts were millenarian to the extent that they were permeated with these traits. Of course, the degree of millenarianism in each case will vary and the fervence in which they advocate a racial equation of black supremacy. A few examples will be cited.

Noble Drew Ali who became "Messiah" of the first Moorish Science Temples in the United States, 1913, laid claim to the "Asiatic" origin of blacks, rejected the white man's Christian religion, and predicted that whites were soon to be destroyed and that the "Asiatics" were soon to be in control; this apocalypse, which involved the destruction of whites, was to be dignified by the appearance in the sky of a star within a crescent moon.

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HE BLACK MUSLIM movement, with a membership of over 100,000, certainly qualifies as fitting the Antithesis reaction. Their prophet, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, in his teachings of "Yacub's History," has elaborated the myth that "Out of the weak of the black nation, the present Caucasian race was created" — in other words, that whites, "blue-eyed devils," are unfortunate abberations of history who have been given 6,000 years to rule, after which blacks will emerge triumphant. In preparation for the imminent apocalypse they advocate racial, economic, and social separation.

The "Black Jews" form a millenarian group reputed to be 350,000 large in world membership (Order of Ethiopian Hebrews), and 10,000 strong in the United States.³⁵ Rabbi Matthew, leader of the Harlem Black Jews, preaches that:

This is the Gentile age and it is coming to an end as did all other ages . . . In this ungodly world which is filled with idolatry, the Gentiles have had their day. The utter destruction which will be brought by an atomic war in the year 2,000 will leave none on earth and will usher in the theocratic age -when God will rule and the Children of Israel will return to their country.³⁶

Not only this belief in the imminent apocalypse is held, but they also believe:

. . . that the so-called Negroes are really the lost tribes of the House of Israel. As such they believe that they have recovered their true identity and their true religion — the law — which makes them simultaneously independent of and superior to the whites who enslaved them.³⁷

The Ras Tafari millenarian movement originated in Jamaica and has spread to other places, including North America. It originated in 1930 and proclaimed Marcus Garvey as the "world's greatest statesman." In its outward form the movement is more like the Hippies of North America, but in its doctrinal aspect it is more like the Black Muslims. It preaches that white men possess an inherent wickedness, and that "blacks are superior — in fact they were civilized when the white men were living in the caves of northern Europe."

Black men are the Ethiopians. They are the true Israelites, once the greatest people in the world. God is black, Christ was black, Solomon was black, and black Jamaicans are reincarnations of the ancient Hebrews.³⁸

For them revenge is part of the dialectic:

In Ethiopia, the white man will have to serve us. Isaiah 14 says: '... and the House of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors,'³⁹

Interesting to note is the fact that for them, the MauMau revolt in Kenya, 1952, was angels of deliverance sent by Haile Selassie to drive white men out of Africa. Ras Tafari proclaims: "Death to the white man and to the black traitors."

Millenarian movements are thus essentially a common response of the oppressed masses — it forms the religion of the dispossessed. They vary from the Ghost Dance among the Plains Indians, to the Cargo Cults among Melanesians, to the Ras Tafaris in Jamaica; but they all embody, as their essential essence, the projection of an era in which either whites are eliminated or they are subjugated to peoples of color.

SYNTHESIS: RACIAL EQUALITARIANISM

Following through the logic of the dialectical process we would expect to find a third tendency or set of movements which reject the racial and economic equations of the two preceding phases. There is ample evidence to suggest that there is such a Synthesis stake which is projected in such movements as the Garvey movement, Nationalism," "Black "Black Studies." "Black Power," the Black Panthers, and the aggressive decolonization movements in the Third World countries generally. These constitute the Synthesis since they all advance (1) economic systems which are neither capitalistic nor rigidly communistic, and (2) the notion of racial equality. These two tenets offer the possibility of ultimate equilibrium, that is, an equilibrium established on the basis of economic and racial equalitarianism. As Tocqueville long ago observed:

Almost all the revolutions which have changed the aspect of nations have been made to consolidate or to destroy social inequality \ldots . If, then, a state of society can ever be founded in which every man shall have something to keep and a little to take from others, much will have been done for the peace of the world.⁴⁰

HIRST, PROOF will be given as to the emergence amongst blacks of a distinct set of economic ideas. To begin with, the "transparency" between the historical inequality between the races and the capitalist order has developed amongst blacks. They now recognize the economic determinism of racism which has led to their own plight. In this respect at least, they have a favorable attitude to the Marxist explanation, this being that "the exploitation of the Negro is a refinement and extension of capitalism's exploitation of the worker, and that the best way to end the first is to end the second." Nehru, among many other black leaders, points to the relationship between capitalism and their plight:

Bengal had the first full experience of British rule in India. The rule began with outright plunder, and a land revenue system which extracted the uttermost farthing not only from the living but also from the dead cultwators . . . The corruption, venality, nepotism, violence, and greed of money of these early generations of British rule in India is something which passes comprehension . . . The British plunder began to arrive in London and the effect appears to have been instantaneous for all authorities agree that the Industrial Revolution began with the year 1770 . . . But the influx of Indian treasure and the expansion of credit which followed, no force sufficient for this purpose existed . . . Possibly since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder.41

With this awareness among black leaders goes the rejection of European capitalism and European values by blacks generally. Pinkney reports the opening line of a civil rights speech: "Children, I don't want to be like white folks. I want to be better than white folks."⁴² James Baldwin asserted that "the only thing that white people have that black people want or need is power . . . white people cannot, in generality, be taken as models of how to live."⁴³ One finds full expression of this line of reasoning in the impassioned plea of Frantz Fanon:

Come, comrades, the European game is definitely finished; we must find something else . . . Europe has acquired such a mad, disorganized speed that it is now out of any control, beyond any reason, and is plummeting at a terrific pace towards an abysm which we would do to quickly avoid . . . European achievements, European techniques, European styles must cease to tempt and demoralize us. When I seek the men in the European technique and style, I see a succession of negations of humanity, an avalanche of murders . . . Two centuries ago a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It has so well succeeded that the U.S.A. has become a monster where the sins, the sicknesses, and the inhumanity of Europe have reached frightening proportion.⁴⁴

It is in the light of these criticisms that blacks have been prone to respond to the ideology of Marxism as a potentially useful ideology. For example, in the United States, the "first Negro Socialist," in 1877, called for consumer cooperatives, condemned extreme wealth and poverty, and denounced the blight caused by capitalism: "Capitalism," says Peter Clark, "must not rule, but be ruled and regulated. Capital must be taught that man and not money is supreme, and that legislation must be had for me." 45 The miserable social condition, he argued, must be remedied by Socialism. Thomas Fortune, in his book published in the period also prefaced his text in the following manner:

Let us turn to the South and see if a black skin has anything to do with the tyranny of capital; let us see if the cause of the laboring man is not the same in all sections . . . as it is in all the world. If . . . I can incontestably demonstrate that the condition of the black and white laborer is the same, and that consequently their cause is common; that they should unite under the one banner and work upon the same platform of principles for . . . the more equal distribution of the products of labor and capital, I shall not have written this book in vain.⁴⁶

THIS SOCIALIST BIAS may also be seen in the work of Frederick Douglass who once asserted that "the American people must stand each for all and all for each without respect to color and race;" and later writing with the eight-hour day in mind, he stated:

Our sympathies as far as the elimination of work is concerned are naturally enlisted on the side of the laborers . . . the poor laboring white man is almost as much a slave as the black slave himself . . . Both were plundered by the same plunderers.⁴⁷ Du Bois must be added to the list of blacks seeing salvation in a socialist strategy. In December, 1910, Du Bois' *Crisis* published approvingly the report of a black conference entitled "Socialists in Oklahoma," which read:

It is a principle universally acknowledged by Socialists that although Socialism is primarily the movement of the working class for the overthrow of capitalist rule, it nevertheless must rush to the assistance of every oppressed class or race or nationality. The working class cannot achieve its ultimate grand aim of freeing itself from exploitation unless it frees all other elements of the community from exploitation. It cannot put any end to its own oppression unless it puts an end to all forms of oppression.⁴⁸

In his essay, "The Negro and Socialism," Du Bois himself argued that "the salvation of American Negroes lies in socialism," and that:

The footsteps of the long oppressed and staggering masses are not always straight and sure, but their mistakes can never cause the misery and distress which the factory system caused in Europe, colonial imperialism caused in Asia and Africa, and which slavery, lynching, disenfranchisement, and Jim Crow legislation have caused in the United States.

Last, but not least, the Panthers, through Cleaver, call for a black revolutionary movement "informed by the revolutionary principles of scientific socialism."⁴⁹

THE SOCIALIST orientation is thus the recurrent theme in the protest of peoples of color; at the same time, because of the uniqueness of their Third World position, they have sought a Synthesis in their philosophy by taking account of their uniqueness, arriving at a Third World view of democracy. Commonly called "Developmental Socialism," this Third World Synthesis is evident by such ideologies as "African Socialism," "the Maoist-Chinese Reinterpretation of Marxism-Leninism," "the Special Mixed Economy of India," "the Socialism of Indonesia," "the Burmese Way to Socialism," etc. Each constitutes a Synthesis between East and West, the Third World and Europe, spiritualism and materialism, old and new, generosity and greed. There is a common core of meaning and a common thread of logic that distinguishes the appeal of "socialism" in the developing world from that familiar to the industrialized nations. One observer noted:

The ideal of socialist harmony and brotherhood summarizes the good society to be achieved through development. Such leaders reject both the enforced lock-step harmony of totalitarian system and what they believe to be the atomic individualism of Western capitalism.

Jose Figueres of Costa Rico supports this mode of thinking:

What has happened is that while men argue . . . over . . . 'directed economy' and 'free enterprise,' events have been following, almost by themselves, the only possible road in present day society: a combination of the two systems . . . that tries to combine the advantages of both and reduce the defects of each. To that Synthesis of the two historic tendencies the name mixed economy is now applied.⁵⁰

Kenyatta of Kenya likewise formulated that:

As predictive models of what would happen to factory system societies, both Marxian socialism and laissez-faire capitalism have been failures. The economic systems in actual use . . . bear little resemblance to either model.⁵¹

Nyerere of Tanzania described his economic system as being:

opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man.⁵²

Both western liberalism and socialism, it is perceived, have concentrated too exclusively on the material aspects of human life. They have neglected the humanitarian and "spiritual" side of life, and thus Third World socialisms seek to return man to "psychological and spiritual integrity." **T**HE CONCEPT of "African Socialism" seems to embody the main thrust of Third World versions of socialism, and can be detected in the assumptions underlying the prescriptions of Sékou Touré, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kenyatta, etc. Included are the following tenets:

1 - The problem of continental identity, which points to its distinctiveness and to the prescription that African Socialism is to be molded more on the communitarian roots of traditional African society than upon the problems that suggested socialist ideas ir. Europe. Thus Nyerere defined socialism as traditional 'familyhood' which meant that 'every individual was completely secure in African traditional society . . . he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member.'53 You can see this in Nkrumah's claim that the African village community 'can only be described in its social manifestations as being socialist." and from Senghor we gather that the 'Negro African society is collectivist, or more exactly, communal . . . that we had already achieved socialism before the coming of the Europeans . . . (and) that our duty is to renew it by helping to regain its spiritual dimensions.'54

2- The attempt at planned economic development, the belief that only through state planning ,stimulation, and social mobilization, can Africa experience economic development;

3- The 'nation-state' stress which symbolizes the search for a doctrine that will mold diversities into a dynamic nationalism, and prevent the emergence of class and ethnic divisiveness.⁵⁵

Thus, in this Synthesis thrust, blacks have consciously selected those elements in both systems and have filtered these through their own indigenous cultures; they have rejected the liberal individualist philosophy, since for them the market was imposed from without, and thus economic planning and the role of the state is crucial. Contrary to Marxian analysis, in this area, the State is a liberating force since only it has the organizational capacity appropriate to the total task of modernization; they have no extra love for competing parties; in fact, single parties are favored because they are united in a single over-riding will to throw off foreign control and to create a pervasive loyalty to the nation state.⁵⁶ In fact, the one party system is in a way reverting back to former tribal consensus. In addition, there is a puritanism of the Communist society in, for example, Tanzania's economic goals, but there is the lack of blind submission to dogma, and an eagerness to experiment, and a sensitivity to public response.

We can now shift emphasis to the racial prescription involved in this trend towards the Synthesis, which is one of racial equality. This can be detected in the deeds and ideas of personalities associated with this trend. Marcus Garvey, supposedly an advocate of "black supremacy," was explicit in his call for racial equality: "Let no black man feel that he has the exclusive right to the world . . . and let no white man feel that way either. The world is the property of all mankind."57 Garvey continued: "We love all humanity because we feel we cannot live without the other. The white man is as necessary to the existence of the Negro as the Negro is necessary to his existence."58 From our distinct racial group idealism we find that no black man is good enough to govern the white man, and no white man good enough to rule the black man . . . In the twentieth century civilization there are no inferior and superior races. There are backward peoples, but that does not make them inferior."59 According to Garvey, his organization, the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), was merely concerned to assert that blacks were as good as any other, and therefore should be proud of themselves as others are.

FANON OFTEN depicted as an apostle of violence against whites, stands rather for "a world of reciprocal recognitions."⁶⁰ As he stated time and time again:

Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, its perversions. 62

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Fanon, in a word, sought ways to facilitate "a healthy encounter between black and white."

When we look at the Black Power movement we find similar commitment to the idea of racial equality. Says Walter Rodney, "Black Power is not racially intolerant. It is the hope of the black man that he should have power over his destiny. This is not incompatible with a multi-racial society where each individual counts equally."⁶³ Stokely Carmichael, leading advocate of the Black Power movement, was even more unequivocal and vehement in his call for racial equality:

Some observers have labelled those who advocate Black Power as racists; they have said that the call for self-identification and self-determination is 'racism in reverse' or 'black supremacy.' This is a deliberate and absurd lie. There is no analogy — by any stretch of definition or imagination — between the advocates of Black Power and white racists . . . The goal of black selfdetermination and black self-identity — Black Power — is full participation in the decisionmaking processes affecting the lives of black people, and recognition of the virtues in themselves as black people.⁶⁴

Gordon Parks, in his interview with Cleaver, asked him, "What will you build in the rubble (of revolution)?" Cleaver's reply epitomizes this Synthesis trend: "Social justice. If the blacks took power tomorrow and treated the whites like the whites have treated us for 400 years, I'd try to crush them too. We (the Panthers) promise to replace racism with racial solidarity."⁶⁵ Lastly, one sees this racial equation in the various philosophies of indigenous Socialisms in the Third World. "Socialism is not racialism," reads chapter three of Ujamaa. Rather:

Socialism is an attitude of mind. The basis of socialism is a belief in the oneness of man and the common historical destiny of mankind . . . The justification of socialism is man . . . the service of man, regardless of color, size, shape, skill, or ability. Without the acceptance of human equality there can be no socialism.⁶⁶

The Arusha Declaration also envisages the ultimate as the transcendence of local particularism by an encompassing universalism:

Our recognition of the family to which we all belong must be extended yet further – beyond the tribe, the community, the nation, or even the continent – to embrace the whole society of mankind. This is the only logical conclusion for true socialism. 67

SOME ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

One issue arising from this dialectical framework concerns the revolutionary role of blacks within the context of an on-going "race-war." The overall legacy of slavery, capitalism, and imperialism is the class of men known today as the "wretched of the earth," created by an agonizing past. The so-called "troublesome presence" of blacks is testimony of the ongoing "race war." Though capitalism was based on racism. this fact was neglected even by the radical critics of capitalism, who preferred to regard the white working class as the dynamic revolutionary element. They overlooked the fact that even if the immiserized workers manning the factories of Europe were "Hercules in a cradle," it was the blacks who, as prior entities, cultivated the raw materials for those factories and were themselves Hercules outside the cradle just waiting to be unchained.

De Tocqueville was the earliest and most perceptive analyst to have pointed to black revolutionary potentiality. "If ever America," he says, "undergoes great revolutions they will be brought about by the presence of the black race on the soil of the United States."⁶⁸ Jefferson also pointed to a race war and to "the extermination of the one or the other race" if the slave dilemma was not resolved in his lifetime. Says Jefferson:

Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites, ten thousand recollections by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinction which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.⁶⁹

Martin Delaney is to be noted as one of the first to predict that "the question of black and white would one day decide the future of the world." This notion was forcefully developed by Du Bois at the early part of this century – that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line. Today this idea seems confirmed. Ronald Segal agrees that "the two colors are physically clashing in a dozen parts of American cities . . . or in the engagement of guns in South Vietnam and Angola."⁷⁰ He added:

It is the correspondence of rich with white and poor with colored across so much of mankind that promises by adding to the insurrection of poverty the passion of race. The economic may well be the dominant cause; but the racial may become the dominant identification.⁷¹

EVEN IN THE internal politics of the United Nations we can see the alignment of forces along color lines. The "non-white power bloc," says Lomax, "has shaken the United Nations to its foundations.⁷² The protests in the gallery of the United Nations against the murder of Patrice Lumumba in February 1961 are indicative of the mood of our times:

The demonstrators in the U.N. gallery interpreted the murder of Lumumba as the international lynching of a black man on the altar of colonialism and white supremacy. Suddenly, to them at least, Lumumba became the Emmett Till and all of the other black victims of lynch law and the mob.⁷³

The popular acclaim given to Castro by the ghettoites of Harlem in 1960 is also symptomatic of the increasing black revolutionary consciousness. What all this indicates is best summarized by Harold Cruse:

The 'class struggle' is now supra-national - a struggle between western nations and the colonial and semi-colonial world. It is a struggle between blocs and developing blocs - Common Market vs. Africa; U.S. vs. Latin America; U.S.S.R. and China vs. the West . . . It is a struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots,' the world of supra-developed capitalism vs. the underdeveloped world. In this worldwide struggle, the U.S. is the key

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supra-developed nation and exerts a tremendous political, military, and economic influence towards the ultimate outcome of this worldwide struggle.⁷⁴

From an impressionistic glance at the world scene, and also from a more serious analysis, it seems that blacks represent potentially the main revolutionary force. European societies seem to have experienced three main historical themes in chronological sequences:

1 – The Liberal humanitarian movement aimed at political reforms and political power by the rising bourgeoise;

2 - The socialist movement of the working classes based on dialectical materialism, and agitating for economic welfare and security;

3- Now the contemporary existentialist concern with psychiatric and psychological spheres, defined as "the phenomena of a man crying out with indignation because his society has not supplied him with a sense of personal worth and identity."75

All three themes are now superimposed in the case of blacks - thus they have three revolutionary aspirations combined, and this makes their conflict more potent. This potential dynamism is in sharp contrast to the white working classes, the Marxist historical force for change. Recall that in 1912, Hubert H. Harrison, a black socialist, taking issue with Rudyard Kipling, wrote in the International Socialist Review about "The Black Man's Burden." It is the black man, he argued, who bears the worst burden of toil and deprivation, of exploiting and oppressing. Later in the same magazine, in an article entitled "Socialism and the Negro" he said, ", , , the Negro is the most ruthlessly exploited working class in America." The white worker in contrast is, or has become, an appendage of capitalist affluence, oftentimes at the expense of black workers. The Panther manifesto clarifies the position:

We have in the United States, a mothercountry working class, and a working class from the black colony. There is a difference between the problems of the mother-country working class and the working class from the black colony... The key area of confusion has to do with falsely assuming the existence of one all-American proletariat . . . The white working class has made some inroads into the capitalist system, carving out a comfortable niche for itself . . . The working class of our time (as a whole) has become a new and skilled industrial elite.⁷⁶

ACCORDING TO Cleaver, and also Frantz Fanon, it is the black lumpenproletariat those who have no secure relationship or vested interest in the means of production and the institutions of capitalist society which is the chief revolutionary force, as is evidenced by the street-enacted nature of protests in the United States, which is due to the fact that the black lumpen is outside of institutions like universities and factories where they could protest.

The black candidate for revolutionary potentiality has further theoretical support. For authentic liberation there is a need for the development of new institutions by new men with new needs. This is why Marx had envisaged the proletariat, because this class was "free" from the repressive and aggressive competitive needs of capitalist society and therefore, at least potentially, the carrier of essentially new needs, new goals and new satisfactions. Marcuse states the qualifications of the revolutionary as "a man who rejects the performance of principles governing the established societies . . . who has rejected the hypocritical puritan morality . . . with a good conscience of joy and pleasure."77 This seems to match the description of the position and values of blacks, as described by Charles Keil and Norman Mailer, etc.⁷⁸

This fact accounts for the phenomenon of the "white niggers" who have supposedly formed a white youth subculture based essentially on black values, black life styles, and a black vocabulary, and constituted of such white groups as the Hippies and Yippies. It is no exaggeration to say there is a scramble nowadays to be a "nigger" by various white groups. At one time or other, white workers, women's groups, students, Jews, French Canadians, and other oppressed groups have regarded themselves as "niggers." This is implicit evidence that blacks are perceived as the most oppressed group historically, and hence potentially most unremitting in revolutionary fervor. Relating this to the Marxist theory of the dialectics, Harold Cruse noted:

It is the implied function of the dialectics to correctly perceive which classes are being brought to the forefront of social consciousness by blind material forces . . .79

The Marxian theory of Knowledge (dialectics) implies that if the backward peoples of the world are carrying themselves into the mainstream of socialism instead of being led there with the aid of the advanced nations as Trotsky saw it, then the backward peoples must replace the white working class as the 'chosen people' of the dialectical functionings of world society.⁸⁰

The working of the dialectics as described in this framework, thus sees revolutionary struggle revolving around blacks who have become "the most revolutionary." Noted Cruse, "The whole western world is in serious trouble because social revolution is today the perogative of the colored peoples."⁸¹ So even the Marxists trail behind blacks in search of issues and programs.

Racial conflict is the jugular vein in modern history and, as such, is the central theme capable of arousing the enthusiasm and focusing the energies of discontented groups. The Black Revolution is the chief "carrier movement" upon which other groups may superimpose their struggles and thus form a collective thrust for change, since the main problem of the century is the economic adjustment between the color blocs. If a specter is haunting the world today, it is the specter of Black Power rather than Communism. If the "history of all hitherto existing societies is the class conflicts," the politics of the present seem definitely to revolve around racial conflicts in convergence with other conflicts. Thus, the popular idea that "ideology is dead," and that we now have "consensus politics" due to increasing affluence applies more to traditional analyses of class conflicts; now we have the emergence of racial ideologies.

The second issue arising from this framework concerns the motor that pushes dialectical change along. What, in other words, is the basic propellant in the process of dialectical change? The answer seems to be embodied in the terms "confrontation," "conflict," and "power." In his Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel, in a chapter entitled "Lordship and Bondage," shows how the master-slave relationship develops a dialectical dependence of the master on his slave. Hegel then postulates emancipation through the realization that the master is, in the last resort, dependent upon the slave. This suggests to us the necessity of a subjective realization of potential power in the form of black consciousness. In the case of blacks, there has always been some residue of this underneath the masks worn by blacks, as in most other conflict situations. Even totalitarian regimes cannot prevent this. Camus' Rebel also agreed that it is only when the slave stops accepting definitions imposed upon him by his master, will he be free. Where there is an executioner/victim relationship, the victim will have either to move to a position of equality or try to conquer the executioner by use of force or by any other means the executioner utilizes to oppress him. The implications of all this, filtered through the mind of Fanon, is that the supreme duty of blacks is not renouncing one's freedom through one's choices, not accepting the present as definite.

THE CHIEF DIALECTICAL mechanism for change is thus conflict, a restless assertation of one's self-consciousness on the "Other," because "human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies."82 Conflict is necessary for it implies a rejection of a world imposed from without. Freedom cannot be given; it has to be taken or rather, the freedom that is potentially mine has to be made into a reality on my own strength. Hence, such a notion as "ordered" desegregation is a fraud, for there has never been an instance in the history of the world where an oppressed people have been educated for freedom by

THE BLACK SCHOLAR SEPTEMBER, 1971 their masters. Frederick Douglass predates Fanon by nearly a century in seeing conflict as the categorical imperative:

Those who profess to favor freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without ploughing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful wrath of its many waters. Power concedes nothing without demands - it never did and never will.83

The key resource in this conflict is power since this is the basis of the racial imbalance. What is needed is the rearrangement of the potential of political and economic power forces that had joined to produce the present legacies. It is instructive to note the role of power in cases where racism is absent; the absence af anti-American, or anti-British, or even anti-German racism is due to the historical strength of these nations. Every group looks for a weaker group as a contrast entity to establish its own loftiness in a situation of competitive scarcity. As early as 1852, Martin Delaney pointed out this truism: "the claims of no people . . . are respected by any nation until they are presented in a national capacity."84 Garvey likewise echoed the need for power: "Races of people are only safeguarded when they are strong enough to protect themselves."85

THE BLACK REVOLUTION will have occurred only when there has been substantial shifts in the power relations and statuses of the social groups in favor of blacks. Precise tactical maneuvers will depend upon the particular local context. But within the context of the dialectical development we can predict that the tactics become progressively refined, since blacks will draw upon the lessons of their predecessors. Each generation must take and maintain its freedom itself. Each tactic, each strategy, each protest is positive, but there seems also to be this dialectical development (quantitatively) towards more effective movements and strategies. This is why the Black Power movement at the current period seems central, for it seems to have arrived at a full grasp of the centrality of power. Says Bennett, "The key to this struggle, the key to all group struggle is not race but conflict, not words but power."⁸⁶

Nevertheless, we should note that the main themes persist from one era to the next so that major movements and tactics in the next era retain much of the symbolism and elements of the preceding era, but only insofar as they can be incorporated into and subordinated to the newly emerging themes. Thus, black Millenariam movements become secularized over a period of time and are transformed into movements nearer to the Synthetic type - the latter being more effective. John H. Clarke in an interview with Malcolm X, then Minister of the Black Muslims, said: "Our religion is mainly trying to find a way for the black man to get some heaven while he is still down here on earth."87

The religious messianism, escapist and apocalyptic tenets of these movements tend to decline at the gain in a concern with more concrete economic, political, and social issues. At the same time it is equally noteworthy that the more modern movements like Black Power often retain a few elements of the preceding stage (Antithesis) like its millenarian component. One sees this in the optimistic fundamentalism of Fanon:

On the field of battle (with) its four corners marked by the scores of Negroes hanged by their testicles, a movement is slowly being built that promises to be majestic. And at the top of this movement, I can see a white man and a black man hand in hand.⁸⁸

In sum, black millenarian protests have given rise to a more secular type of "scientific" socialist protest filtered through black indigenous culture which is a similar development to the religious and messianic fervor in which whites defended slavery, which was later transmitted into a more "scientific" rationalization of slavery.

CONCLUSION: UTILITY OF THIS MODEL

The dialectical approach just outlined has both empirical and heuristic validity.

It has descriptive value because a study of black social movements in a time related sequence seems to point to this dialectical pattern of Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis. Even on a microscopic level, a study of certain key black personalities reveals this pattern of development. The biographical history of men like Fanon, Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver and Rap Brown starts from: an acceptance of white supremacy (Thesis) to the vehement espousal of black supremacy (Antithesis), and ending up accepting racial equalitarianism (Synthesis). These men eventually ended by defining blackness as essentially "a state of mind."

This schema is also heuristically useful to the extent that it introduces order into an otherwise chaotic history, by pointing out the main trends in the direction of black social movements. It provides a typological schema for the analysis of black-white relationships over time.

Equally important, this framework provides an evaluative tool or an ideological framework which, if accepted, provides the means by which we can judge men and assess tactics and goals. To begin with, we could say that both the Thesis and Antithesis are "fantasies," since both are religious in nature and have certain self-negating traits. In the light of this, an "Uncle Tom type" would be a black man who accepts the formula of white supremacy; the "black supremacists" are those who accept the formula of black supremacy; a "black radical or militant" is one who, on the basis of knowledge of the racist and capitalist nature of the world, advocates a world of racial equalitarianism.

This framework, in addition, recommends tolerance towards other blacks even though they may be outside of one's tactical gambit. The only absolutist stress of the dialectics is that blacks should constantly search out ways which they think can improve the position of their people. Open-endedness and a "trial-and-error" outlook are basic to the dialectical process.

LASTLY, THIS model imparts a degree of optimism and a degree of certainty about eventual triumph on the part of blacks; without this modest hope in the future there would be resignation rather than struggle, despair rather than striving, a stulsifying past rather than a fragrant future. Rather than seeing men - black men - being totally subjugated to outside forces ("Them," "God," "Whites") this approach pushes black men to the center of the stage with a supreme command: "Act! . . . Make Your Own History! . . . No excuses tolerable; . . . " We are thus not lulled into inactivity by the belief that progress toward equality is inevitable, and that given time, we will be boomeranged towards freedom and the "good life." Equality is never a gift bestowed upon the passive; it can be won by struggle and lost by inertia.

FOOTNOTES

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- 3. The notion of the "original state" is the equivalent of the Garden of Eden in traditional Chris-tianity or Primitive Communism within the Marxist schema – all conditions of relative har-mony and peace!
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- 31. The Northern Star, Jan. 22, 1848. Quoted in Avineri, p. 15.
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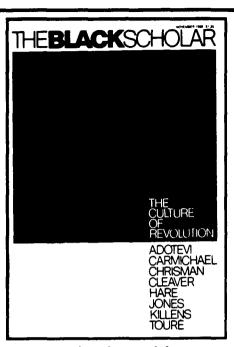
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