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ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BLACK LABOUR AND THE RACIAL STRUCTURING OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ENGLAND

by

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Until quite recently, the study of race relations in Britain was limited to three main approaches. There was the study of racism as an ideology. This was often narrowly defined by writers such as Banton (1) to include only 'scientific racism', i.e. a systematic theory postulating the genetically determinate superiority of one race and the innate inferiority of another. There was the study of racist attitudes, which took diverse forms, most notably the problematic of 'prejudice' and the so-called 'stranger hypothesis' (2) which saw racism in terms of individual pathology or innate, transhistorical or 'natural' human characteristics. And lastly, by extension, there was the study of discrimination: the individual behaviour that followed from racist beliefs. This last current sometimes approached something like an anatomy of societal discrimination, but the latter was seen largely as the culmulative effect of individual acts of discrimination. The limitations of these idealist approaches have been demonstrated theoretically by marxists and left Weberians alike. They have been shown to be completely inadequate to the problems of explaining the economic and structural basis of racism, the relationship between race and class, and the role of the state and its institutions in reproducing a racially divided society. It has fallen in the main to Marxists, near-marxists and left Weberians to analyse the structural basis of racism, the existence of which was illustrated dramatically in the empirical findings in the two P.E.P. reports. (3) The latter measured racial discrimination in employment, housing and education as barying between massive and considerable, and their findings have made it difficult for any further serious research in race relations to confine itself to attitudinal factors alone.

Since then a growing body of Marxist theory of racially structured societies has emerged, (Hall and Sivanandan on Britain, Castles and Kosack, Nikolinakos and Gorz on Europe, and Wolpe on South Africa (4)), which, from an analysis grouded in Marxist theory of political economy, has sought to tackle some of these problems. Some of their work has been subject to criticism within a broadly Marxist and left Weberian terrain. The protagonists in these debates have approached the subject from different theoretical perspectives, but significantly they have addressed the same problems. These might be broadly delineated under four headings:

1) the role of immigrant labour in the social relations of production: the political economy of race.

2) the intersection of race and the class structure.

3) the role of the state and its institutions vis-a-vis race.

4) the role of racist ideologies.

The debates are often very similar to other classical debates in and around Marxism in that, at one level of abstraction, they are about the relations of determinacy or relative autonomy that subsist between the three levels of the social formation: the social and economic, the political, and the ideological. Not surprisingly, then, the arguments that are made against certain Marxist theories take familiar theoretical forms. The most important of these criticisms, and those that will be examined in this paper, are put forward by the left Weberian, John Rex, the proponents of the 'internal colony' theory, Blaurer and Tabb, and Gideon Ben-Tovim. Their criticisms are similar in each case and, as I will try to show, there is a degree of convergence in their own various theoretical positions.

The major criticisms of marxist theories of race can be schematically represented as follows:-

1) that marxism operates a class reductionism - in this case that marxism subsumes the specific forms of racial structuring in various societies under what it takes to be the basic class relations and their fundamental contradiction, that between capital and labour,

2) that marxism adopts an instrumentalist view of the state whereby the state is seen to act unproblematically in the interests of capital and at its behest,

3) that marxism treats ideology purely as the expression of class interests, that the analysis of the specific and relatively autonomous mechanisms of racist ideologies is vitaiated in a marxist analysis which is alleged to amount to an economic reductionism. The classic instance of this is said to be the 'ruling class conspiracy' theory of ideology, which presents racism as a philosophy propagated cynically by the ruling class to divide the working class and justify the super-exploitation of subordinate racial groups.

The debates are in fact by no means merely set pieces of theoretical contest, although the critiques of marxism are often made in easy schematic forms which frequently caricature and misrepresent the positions in question. This is true of both Rex and Ben-Tovim, as I will show. However, this does not obviate the fact that the theoretical arguments are vital, that they address the most historically specific and concrete problems in race relations, and that they are in fact advancing our understanding. This paper will argue that, although these critics have put forward

very pertinent arguments and forced critical revisions in marxist theory of race, the subsequent developments that have been made in the emerging marxist analysis prefigure a theory that is more adequate in many respects than the alternative formulations of its critics.

To make the issue clearer I will start with the work of the black American sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox and the criticisms that have been made of it. His major work 'Caste, Class and Race' (5) is quite monumental in its range and often contradictory in its theory. However, it is always made to stand in for marxist theory of race as a whole and said to represent its quintessential errors. John Rex and Gideon Ben-Tovim both use some of his cruder formulations as an occasion for a vicarious attack on a whole range of marxist currents, and Rex in particular invariably generalizes his criticism of Cox to criticise all marxist writing on race. Cox's main errors are seen to be threefold. Firstly, in the estimation of both Rex and Ben-Tovim (6), his theory of racist ideology is a 'ruling class conspiracy' thesis.

Ben-Tovim quotes Cox as saying:
'race prejudice is a social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatizing some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources or both may be justified..... the capitalist exploiter will devise and employ race prejudice when that becomes convenient.' Secondly, Rex criticises Cox for reducing race to class; for representing the mode of exploitation of blacks in America as typical of that experienced by the white working class and thus 'failing to note..... that that exploitation (of the white working class) is essentially the exploitation of free labour in the labour market, whereas the exploitation and oppression of the negro has resort to many forms of compulsion other than purely market ones'. Not only did Cox pay inadequate attention to the specificities of racial exploitation, he also avoided the question of the racial division of the working class. This crucial evasion was accomplished on the one hand by stressing the essential unity of the working class 'by positing an entirely hypothetical future in which the worders of the world will indeed unite', and, on the other, by explaining away present divisions as the product of a ruling class conspiracy. To Rex, Cox thus utterly 'fails to explain the actual motivation of poor white racism.' (7) Lastly, both authors have criticised Cox for holding to a theory that racism was entirely the product of capitalism, and its rise contemporaneous with it. The latter criticism is quite correct and Cox's denial of pre-capitalist racism,

particularly classical slavery, on the grounds that it was based on an ideology of white cultural superiority not biological superiority, is spurious. As Cox himself points out elsewhere (8), racism can take different idological forms, (at present western European racism takes the 'cultural superiority' form most frequently), and different ideological forms can achieve similar effects as necessary conditions for exploitation of various kinds within different modes of production. This particular error, however, is not as critical as the first two which are at the very heart of the problem of theory today.

That Cox held to a conspiracy theory of racism is beyond much doubt, so is the contention that, in itself, it is an inadequate explanation of the origins of racism, although from Cox's standpoint in America of the 40s (9a) it had considerable credibility. When applied to the present western capitalist states it is less than half the story. Racism in this present context is both an ideological mechanism, often encouraged by the ruling class for justifying the super-exploitation of blacks, and an effect of the particular racial forms in which minorities are exploited; those effects being the fragmentation of the working class, both in terms of its short term material interests and its consciousness. The important point, however, is that for a dominant racist ideology to gain purchase on popular consciousness, it must work on the grounds of real objective divisions within the working class. It was these that Cox was unable to explain and Rex is right to ascribe this to, amongst other things, a theoretical class reductionism on Cox's behalf. However, Cox's class reductionism is by no means a classic case of marxist economism. In the first place, Cox's analysis of caste systems in India is quite the opposite of an economism: in fact it is scarcely grounded in economic analysis at all. In the second place, Cox pays considerable attention to analysing the specific, qualitatively distinct, forms of economic exploitation and political oppression suffered by blacks in America. This involves him in extended and complex discussion of, for example, the ideological role of lynching (if one can speak of such a practice as ideological even in one of its aspects). In the third place, Cox is well aware of the racial divisions in the working class (how could he not be) and in his analysis of poor white racism concludes 'the poor whites themselves may be thought of as the primary instrument of the ruling class in subjugating the negroes.' (9a) Divisions in the working class are thus addressed but inadequately explained in terms of ruling class conspiracy theory. That is to say, these divisions are held to be artificially maufactured by ruling class propoganda and are not based on any real, objective class

divisions.

The reason why Cox cannot explain the divisions within the working class adequately, and is thus forced back on to the theory of conspiracy, lies in his analysis of class to which Rex has already pointed. (Although Rex's summary of Cox's theory of class is caricatured). Cox's analysis of class is not a classic economism. His theory of social class is, in fact, an empiricist stratification theory. 'The social - class gradient is a status continuum. We think of it as including discrete strata only for the purposes of analysis and comprehension.' (10) Social class to Cox has no objective definition, let alone at the level of economic and social relations. 'The population is not objectively differentiated into classes'. 'Social class is, in fact, what people think it is.' Social class, then, is a continuum of status positions, perceived subjectively, and thus has no objective definition. A social class is not organised and has no collective class consciousness. If social class is defined in this way, there is no problem regarding the relations of the black and white working class. Qualitatively distinct modes of exploitation do not separate them since class at this level is not defined in terms of economic and social relations. Nor do divisions in consciousness have any salience in this analysis, since it does not expect to find class consciousness in social classes. Thus, although Cox is aware of the divisions and qualitative distinctions, they are not held to be pertinent at this level. On the other hand, political class is defined as the organised class, displaying class consciousness. In this theoretical disjuncture between social class and political class, the classic hegelian distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself is reproduced. However, Cox does not even follow the marxist usuage of this distinction since he does not define social class according to objective social and economic determinations. Instead, what there is of objective determinacy in his theory, is imputed in lukacsian fashion to the class-for-itself - the political class: 'as a function of the economic order, the (political class) has a potential existence, but as a result of agitation, it becomes organised for conflict.' (11) A revoluntionary class consciousness is thus imputed to the political class, but the basis for this unified consciousness is given very slender objective conditions in the social rela tions of that class, as social class.

Cox's failure to analyse the divisions in the working class and the basis of white working class racism, is a product of this theoretical

disjuncture between social and political class. The concept of social class is emptied of objective conditions, the racial structuring of the social and economic class relations of the working class being consigned to, and lost in, the empiricist plurality of conditions and factors which constitute it. The specificites of the social and economic class relations of blacks are appropriated theoretically only at the level of 'political class', and then subsumed under the typical capital labour relation:

'Here, then, are race relations; they are definitely not caste relations. They are labour-capital-profit relationships, therefore, race relations are proletarian, bourgeois relations and hence political class relations.' (12) The specificity of the relations by which race and class are ariculated are registered by Cox at the empirical level, but abandoned at the theoretical level of political class. The problem of the racial division of the working class, and that of racism, is, allowed to slip through the gap between the concepts of social and political class. Racial division is seen as the product of the fissure between social and political class; working class racism is merely the failure of the social class to achieve revoluntionary consciousness as a class-for-itself - a political class. Thus Cox sees the lesser degree of racism amongst workers in the northern states merely as an index of their higher class consciousness.

The political consequences attendant on this theoretical disjuncture are clear. The theoretical and political implications of the objective racial divisions in the working class are not analysed, but instead a unity is imputed at the level of political class which is largely abstract, the objective conditions for that unity not being made clear. The politics of race are totally subsumed under the politics of class struggle: 'racial antagonism is essentially political class conflict.' (13) Thus Cox denies the separate interests of the black struggle, and refuses the possibility of black self organisation and black leadership. Blacks in America, he says, will tail-end white leaders, since 'negroes are auxilliary in the american struggle for power.' (14)

Whatever the complexities and contradictions of Cox's work as a whole, Rex's original criticisms, that Cox reduces race to class relations, does hold. The failure to grasp the specificity of race relations and the precise mode of their articulation to class relations left a theoretical and political lacuna which various theories and political programmes have tried to fill. Rex's work contains amongst the most important of these theories, but before going on to consider them,

it may be revealing to dwell briefly on the work of several other writers who have propagated the notion of the 'internal colony'. This work provides an interesting juxtaposition to that of Cox, not only because it can be seen as growing out of this critical theoretical absence in Cox's work, but also because it dates from an America twenty years on from that which Cox wrote about, and a race relations situation considerably changed after the political developments of the Civil Rights Movement and the period of Black Power activism. Robert Blauner, whose article 'Internal Colonialism and ghetto revolt' was published in 1969, traces the concept of internal colonialism back to the late 50s when it was current among black activists. (15) It was subsequently more systematically developed in a book called 'Black Power' written by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, published in 1967. (16).

Blauner's starting point is the inadequacy of the class reductionist viewpoint. He says: 'Important as are economic factors, the power of race and racism in America cannot be sufficiently explained through class analysis.' (17) Through the development of internal colonialism theory, however, he claims it can. The latter's gives hope of becoming a framework that can integrate the insights of casts, and racism, ethnicity, culture and economic exploitation into an overall conceptual schema.' (18) By positing a colonial relationship between blacks and whites, it clearly gives a basis, by analogy with national liberation movements, for a programme of autonomous black political organisation. Such was its value to black power leaders. The common denominators between colonialism proper and internal colonialism are seen to be racist ideology, political oppression of blacks by whites, the technological superiority of whites, and white cultural imperialism which, through the period of slavery, destroyed the African culture of the black slaves and continues to subordinate Negro American culture. 'A common process of social oppression characterized the racial patterns in the two contexts, 'says Blauner, 'despite the variation in political and social structure.' (19) In many ways, the analogy and its extended development in both Blauner's article and Tabb's book 'The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto' (20), provides many useful insights. It concentrates on the specific forms of political oppression and economic exploitation of blacks in the modern metropolis; it draws out the historical origins of modern racism in colonialism and continued pertinence of that history, and has a great deal to say about life in the ghetto in America and its proximate forms in Britain, particularly the forms of social organisation in the ghetto which have provided the material base for a black cultural revival and associated politics,

both in America and, more recently, in Britain.

However, despite the purchase that the idea of internal colonialism has at the ideological and political level, it does not provide the basis for an 'overall intellectual schema' such as Blauner proposes. The analogy between the internal colony and the colony proper cannot be sustained when other levels of the social formation are considered (except in certain specific historical situations e.g. South Africa - and these authors are rarely historically specific). The ghetto cannot be considered as a unit apart either geographically, economically or politically in the sense that the external colony is. Whatever the particularities of business in the ghetto, it must be seen as part of the national economy, whereas the metropolis/colony relation is essentially a relation between two modes of production, one in a position of dependence on the other. Similarly, whatever their distinctive character afforded by their location in the ghetto, the public institutions there are part of the national and local state apparatus. When it comes to describing these social and economic relations, internal colonialism is no more than a metaphor. Furthermore, on the crucial question of the articulation of race and class relations, the theory is inadequate. As Wolpe says: 'The theory of internal colonialism is unable to explain the relationships between class relations and race or ethnic relations. As a consequence, the latter relations come once more to be treated as autonomous and in isolation from class relations.' 'To this extent, 'he adds, 'there is a close convergence between internal colonialism and conventional race relations theory.' (21)

If Cox's work tends to subsume race relations under class relations, and reduce ideological and cultural factors to expressions of economic interest, whilst the internal colony theorists have abstracted race from class relations, and emphasised the autonomy of ideological factors (at the expense of economic analysis), John Rex's work can be seen as occupying a midway position. His work invariably gives due weight to the specificity of race and cultural relations, whilst not abandoning economic and class analysis. He says in his most recent book: 'There has to be a theory of the interpenetration, overlap and conflict between class structures and race relations structures,' (22) and his writings, taken together, do approach such a theory.

In many ways Rex's project would seem broadly in line with that followed by many modern marxists (23), who, in an explicit attempt to avoid economic reductionism, attempt to analyse the social formation as a 'complex unity' of economic, political, and ideological instances articulated in complex but precise relations of determination and

dominance. Rex pays full attention to all these levels and is not oblivious to the importance of their structural inter-relations. In his analysis of racist ideology, he explicitly rejects the idealism of writers such as Banton and subscribes to what is roughly a materialist view, emphasising, in his words, 'the dependence on these belief systems (i.e. racist ideologies) on underlying structures.' (24) He is also resolutely opposed to parsonian functionalism on the grounds that he believes conflict models of capitalist societies to be more accurate than concensus models. All of which, particularly in the light of the solid grounding of his theory in economic analysis, makes it, at first sight, surprising that he takes such pains to distance himself from what he takes to be the marxist mode of analysis. An immediate explanation for this might seem to be that Rex exaggerates his differences with marxism as a whole, by ignoring, to his cost, recent marxist work, to which his theoretical positions are quite close, and concentrates solely on certain economistic currents within marxism, to which his theory is indeed opposed. That is to say he caricatures marxism as a whole by taking economistic marxism to represent all marxism. This is, as I demonstrated in the case of Cox, the form his debate with marxism commonly takes. This procedure is certainly confused, but it is no accident. It is symptomatic of the real differences that exist between Rex's theoretical problematic and all marxisim. The fact is that, although Rex combines elements of a Marxist and Weberian approach, the synthesis is, as Hall points out, 'secured in an essentially Weberian terrain.'(25)

The strength of Rex's position can be seen from his analysis of the South African situation. To put it crudely, Rex, because he is not entrenched in the crude eurocentric categories of some marxist analysis, can demonstrate the specific effects of the racial contradictions in that society, in a way that marxists have often failed to do. This amounts to a demonstration of the primacy of the racial contradictions with respect to the classic capital/labour contradiction. Rex's contention is that the latter is a eurocentric category, inadequate to the analysis of a country such as South Africa. It is the stubborn adherence to the primacy of this notion on the part of marxists which, Rex argues, bedevils their attempts to understand South Africa. Although Rex reaches the position that racial struggle is dominant in South Africa, and that class struggle is strictly subsidiary, he reaches this conclusion without abandoning an analysis of the social relations of production. On the contrary, his argument is based on the assertion that in South Africa there is a dual labour market - one for blacks and one for whites - and two categories of labour: free white and unfree black labour. These are both essential insights about the social relations of production in South Africa, and, as Rex correctly

points out, are not easily elicited from a simplistic belief in the invariable primacy of the capital/labour contradiction. As he says: 'There are a number of different relationships to the means of production more subtle than can be comprehended in terms of a distinction between owners and non-owners and.....each gives rise to a specific class situation.' (26) Now, such categories can, in fact, be derived from marxist theory of social relations of production, when the existence of two modes of production within a single state is posited, and such a possibility would not have been anathema to Marx. Wolpe, in fact, develops a theory on just such a proposition, analysing the relations between the dominant capitalist mode of production, and the dependent pre-capitalist mode in the subsistence economy of the reserves. (27) It is not my purpose to analyse the debate any further, or to say whether Rex's or Wolpe's formulation is the more adequate. The point I am trying to make is that Rex's method, well grounded in economic analysis, but from a theoretical position well clear of marxism, has allowed certain insights into the specificty of racial structuring that force important revisions on marxist theory.

Such is the virtue of left weberianism when it comes to the analysis of the articulation between race and class. The shortcomings become apprarent when we consider the western captialist metropolis - in this case Britain. Crudely, the problem is that, whereas it may be fair to posit the primacy of the race contradiction over the capital/labour contradiction for South Africa, the same cannot be said for Britain. Sivanandan puts it with characteristic acidity: 'Marxist theory must adjust itself to the fact that there is in South Africa only one reified class of proles (sic), and they are all black.' However, 'the major contradiction in both Britain and America is still the classic capitalist one between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.'(28) To be fair, Rex does not analyse the race situation in Britain as though it were South Africa. However, when he opens his early book 'Race Relations and Sociological Theory' (29) with the question as to 'whether there is not a sense in which "race war" is not a more important central structural and dynamic principle than class war,' there is already a sense in which the answer is implicit in his theoretical problematic. The reason for this is that weberianism involves a specific form of theoretical pluralism which, when it comes to the analysis of class tends towards a culturalist emphasis on ideological determinations, rather than on social and economic ones. A culturalist reading of the relations between the black and white working class will inevitably tend towards a theory of two, racially distinct, classes. This is because at the ideological level

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racial division is so dominant within the working class.

Rex's position on race and class in Britain is not, in fact, quite as simple as this. The above describes a theoretical tendency only. What then is Rex's substantive analysis of the position of blacks in the class structure? His most frequent designation is that of underclass. In classic weberian fashion, he sees classes existing in each of the market situations, and in each of the primary markets: employment, housing and education, he sees the position of blacks as that of an underclass. 'In a narrow Weberian sense, we may speak of class and underclass in each of the allocative systems, such as employment, housing and education, but class and underclass formation takes place across all these sectors.' (30) Rex's descriptions of the various mechanisms which operate to put most black people at the lowest positions in all of these areas are very comprehensive and often genuinely improve our understand of how institutional racism works. His extensive analysis of the position of blacks in the housing market is probably the most important instance of this. There are, however, two major problems at a theoretical level.

Firstly, if there are as many class structures and class struggles as there are market situations, the notion of class loses all its force. It loses all the explanatory power that Marx discovered in the concept by virtue of what he called the 'force of abtraction'. If we are to talk about different classes in each of the various market situations, then unless we can discover a relation of determinacy between the various markets, and the classes therein, the latter can no longer be thought of as classes, but only as a plurality of status groups. Rex is aware of this problem but says that such relations of determinacy cannot be proved. He claims this with regard to the underclass position of blacks, despite his own empirical demonstration of the replication of that position in each sphere. By way of a nod towards this paradox he says: 'Although there is more subjective awareness in Britain than in most other societies of the interdependence and unity of various situations of class conflict, it is still the case that actual behaviour is situationally determined, so that there is a multiplicity of separate experience of class conflict.' (31) Thus there is no theory of determinancy existing between different market situations. The consequence is a plurality of class structures where class ceases to be a fundamental category.

What does it mean to say that class is a fundamental category? This is a crucial point in marxist theory and one where it is in clearest contradistinction to Weberianism. In marxism, class is, first of all,

defined by the relationship to the means of production. This is itself is complex and is not merely a question of ownership or nonownership as Rex assumes. The place of a class 'agent' in the social relations of production involves a number of other factors which relate to control of the labour process and the social division of labour in general. It is on the basis of these relationships that class is said to be defined principally at the economic level. That is not to say that it is defined solely at this level. As Poulantzas says: 'Marxism states that the economic does indeed have the determinant role in a mode of production or a social formation, but the political and the ideological also have a very important role.' (32) He goes on: 'it may be thus said that a social class is defined by its place in the ensemble of social practices.' However, this multi-layered determination of class is not a pluralism as in Weber. It is a complex unity where the principal determinacy lies strictly in the economic relations. There are two main points here: 1) class is a unity, albeit a complex one, involving both relations in production and also those in distribution and the other spheres - Rex's markets. This is clearly distinct from Rex's plural notion of class. 2) This unity is constructed in dominance - the dominance of production over distribution, and the economic over the ideological. This is clearly spelt out by Marx in a famous section from Capital vol. III:

'The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of the production itself and in turn reacts upon the determining element .....it is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers - a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby the social productivity - which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. This does not prevent the same economic base - the same from the standpoint of its main condition - due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial divisions, external historical influences etc. from showing infinite gradation and variation in appearance.' (33)

In this quote Marx holds together both sides of theequation. Both the fundamental generative and determining class relations at the economic level, and the specific variations that result from particular empirical factors - most pertinently here - race. It is the latter that Rex grasps most securely - the specific, qualitatively disctinct, effects of racial structuring on class. And being a sophisticated Weberian, who

traces the connected structural operation of various social phenomena, not least the economic ones, his analysis of the black underclass is by no means a mere empiricist addition of statistical disadvantage in various spheres - it demonstrates correctly 'that the difference between the minorities and the (white) working class is not simply quantitative but qualitative.' (34) Nevertheless, it is still inadequate from a marxist point of view in that qualitative distinctions are drawn without an adequate prior analysis of the complex structural determinations, principally economic, which constitute class, and therefore an analysis of the working class which reveals its essential structural unity, into which qualitative racial distinctions are wrought.

This Weberian refusal of the principal determinacy that lies in the relations of production has a double effect. In the first place, it yields a plurality of class 'structures' without any notion of the determinate structure of the whole. Thus, although the class formation is said to constitute a structure, the word structure has little theoretical value since it carries with it no notion of the principles governing that structure. It is merely a discriptive tern signifying an indeterminant arrangement of elements. Given this pluralist understanding of structure there follows the second consequence which we might call culturalism-in-the-last-instance. Since Rex denies that there is any underlying determinacy governing the structure, when forced to define a class he falls back upon the culturalist definition of class as class consiousness. This is because amidst this indeterminate medley of class indices, the empirically verifiable existence of class consciousness seems the surest basis on which to define class in such a way that it may contain some kind of generality, This is a characteristic Weberian solution since Weberian methodology does not allow for the possibility of the objective analysis of any social relation outside of the social actor's own perception of that relation. This of course leads to a theoretical relativism where class is what people think it is.

Although Rex's own methodology allows only for the existence of a plurality of market classes, thus logically pre-empting an analysis of class in general, 'Colonial Immigrants in a British City' does not stop at such a pluralism. Here Rex and his co-author, Sally Tomlinson, do attempt a general analysis of the class structure. In order to overcome theoretical difficulties the Weberian concept of the 'ideal type' is introduced. There are then said to be two ideal typical 'classes' amongst the workers: the white working class and the black 'underclass'. The ideal typical white worker is portrayed as a labour aristocrat with priviledged

job security and a healthy share in the benefits of the welfare state. The ideal typical black worker has an inferior position in the labour market and does not participate equally in the welfare deal. This distinction between the white working class and the black 'underclass' is buttressed by the assertion that they each have a separate class consciousness. Here Rex and Tomlinson introduce their major theoretical innovation - the quasi Marxist concept of an 'underclass-for-itself'. The white working class thus has the consciousness of a class schooled in and fattened on colonialism, not only urredemably incorporated into the capitalist system but also ideologically opposed to the black underclass from whose exploitation it benefits. The black underclass has its own 'underclass' consciousness formed in the knowledge that it is exploited by the entire white social structure. Although some evidence is given for the distinction between white working class and black underclass at an economic level, the theory rests heavily on the distinctions drawn between black and white class consciousness. This is in line with what I said above about Rex's inherent tendency toward culturalism.

There are several criticisms that might be made of this analysis. Firstly the characterisation of the typical white worker as a 'labour aristocrat' is demonstrably false, sharing with much liberal theory a mythical belief in widespread social mobility and 'embourgeoisement' together with a complete neglect of the position of women. Secondly, as I will attempt to show in the next section, a class analysis which starts from the economic and social relations of production demonstrates the fallacy of the assertion that blacks from an underclass, outside the working class, whatever the qualitative uniqueness of their position within it may be seen to be. The notion of blacks forming a class 'outside' the class structure is in fact, theoretically incoherent. Since the term 'structure' is necessarily inclusive, it is only possible to talk of a class 'out-side' the class structure if the term 'structure' is emptied of its theoretical content. This is what happens in Rex's analysis.

This class analysis has serious consequences for the analysis of the politics of race relations. In their chapter 'working class, underclass

and third world revolution', Rex and Tomlinson present two alternative scenarios for the political future of blacks in Britain. One is 'optimistic', the other 'pessimistic' and both, I would argue, suffer from the misconceptions of the class analysis which inform them.

In the 'optimistic' scenario a picture is drawn of the integration of blacks through gradual penetration into the class structure and subsequent equal participation in the 'welfare deal'. This would be an integration where cultural autonomy would be vouchsafed by vigorous independent ethnic associations and pressure groups. The implication is that with the gradual penetration of blacks into the class structure what they call'the race relations problem' ceases to exist. The false assumption here is that penetration into the class structure would secure social mobility and freedom from explitation. It is false because the black community is already in the class structure. The exploitation and lack of social mobility from which it suffers testifies to the exploitation of the working class in general. The exploitation of blacks is a particularly intense, racially mediated, form of the class exploitation to which the entire working class is subject. The idea that racial oppression caases when the minority group enters the class structure isthe American myth of race relations - the 'Irish immigrant to president in three generations' story - the celebration of social mobility in a 'free society' which is a sick joke to the American black. When Rex postulates that Asians have a stereotypical 'Jewish future' he is courting this myth.

The authors' description of the process by which this might be achieved is even less convincing. They see the position of black people being improved by 'decisive action.....taken with the support of all the major political parties to stop racial incitement, to attack racial discrimination and to give West Indian and Asian descended men and women a sense of citizenship'.[35] This, when the current government is contemplating the legal exclusion of many blacks from citizenship. The above line of thought has led one recent critic to complain, with understandable irritation, that this is merely 'yesterday's liberal's program'. Indeed, after twenty years of state collusion in racism, the suggestion that current governments will now begin, in a period of deep economic recession, to attack racism with any kind of vigour, seems somewhat naive. It is only possible for the authors to conceive of his because they wrongly view governmental racism as purely a matter of electoral pragmatism. The desire to gain the racist vote may be one factor in government policy on race relations but it would be dangerous

to suppose it to be the only one. Racism is also inextricably linked with capital's search for profit and, as the following analysis will show, racism is still profitable. Without entering into the debate about the relation of the state to capital, suffice it to say that the government is bound to reflect this and is currently doing so with incredible singlemindedness. The refusal of these authors to take stock of the primacy of this relation between racism and capital and seriously undermines their understanding of government policy of the state in general.

So much for the 'optimistic' scenario. The 'pessimistic' version which, it must be said, the authors prefer, predicts the continuing exclusion of blacks from the class structure and the consequent growth of black separatism. Whilst a discussion of such a possibility is a welcome change from old liberal predictions, the theoretical coherence of the analysis put forward here is again marred by the class analysis which informs it. The problem here is the assertion that there is an 'underclass-for-itself'. The expression is used to describe the 'situation of immigrant minorities, who do not share in the welfare deal, but who, instead of forming an inert or socially dispairing social residue, organise and act in their own 'underclass' interests, after relating themselves to colonial class positions.'[35a] Elsewhere the authors go further and predict the formation of an 'underclass-for-itself' with Black Nationalist politics and forming alliances with the third world against the entire white metropolitan class structure. The authors' somewhat anecdotal analysis of the political organisation of blacks in Handsworth and elsewhere, however, completely fails to convince that this kind of organisation constitutes the formation of a 'class-for-itself'. This is not to say that the recent political initiatives that we have seen inside the West Indian and Asian communitees are not significant, nor that autonomous black organisation is not an essential part of a successful strategy. Such organisation, however, seems unlikely to succeed in isolation. The possibilities for black struggle in Britain cannot be understood in isolation from their articulation with generalised class struggle. Working with a theory of a black 'underclass-for-itself' encourages this kind of isolated analysis and can thus only be of limited predictive and strategic value.

Rex and Tomlinson's political analysis is ambigous to the point of being contradictory. Their dizzy oscillation between 'optimism' and 'pessimism', integrationalism and separatism

provides a sad commentary on their belief that: 'the institutionalisation of sociology as a discipline makes possible a certain degree of movement between perspectives and hence a move along the road to objectivity'. (356) These contradictions do not add up to a liberal integrationalist politics, as some have argued, but there is a danger that, when all is said and done, they resolve themselves into nothing more than a kind of minimalist separatism mixed in with with a dose of radical liberal reformism. Both these political tendencies derive, I would argue, from an erroneous class analysis and in particular from a misconception that the authors share with 'integrationalists'. This is the notion that the problem at the root of racism is that of the exclusion of blacks from the class structure. The argument of this paper is that the 'problem' is that of the specific mode of inclusion of blacks in the class structure and the specific racial form of class exploitation to which they are subject. To see it otherwise is to be open to dangerous misconceptions about political strategy. It is not only the false hope of liberal reformism which is dangerous but equally the advocacy of a clack separatism that is in any case strictly minimalist in its aims. When in 'Colonial Immigrants....' the authors write: 'our emphasis is probably toward saying that the immigrant minorities should maintain their independence of the organisation and structures of the working class until they can have full and equal participation with other workers' (BSL) they are close to saying that blacks should abstain from the traditional struggles of the labour movement and rely instead on ethnic associations and pressure groups. This would be a minimalist and potentially divisive programme. Divisive in that black abstention from trade union struggles would only exacerbate existing splits (and be thoroughly retrogressive, especially in the light of the exemplary role played by the Asian workers in particular, in recent diputes). Minimalist, because it envisages no more than the 'entry of blacks into the class structure' and therefore an equality of exploitation with the white working class. Not only is this unlikely to be achieved by such a political strategy, but even if it were, it would signal the end of neither exploitation nor of racism.

RECENT MARXIST THEORY

1. The Political Economic of Race

In the first part of this paper I examined some of the problems with the early marxist theories of race, as exampled in the work of Cox, and noted the pertinence of criticisms made of them by Rex and others. I examined the latter's own alternative formulations. These

in turn, whilst addressing the most crucial problems, and in some cases shedding new light on them, were found to be theoretically inadequate, particularly on the question of the articulation of race and class. It was suggested earlier that some recent marxist studies have approached a more adequate theorization of this and other issues. The following sections will consider some of this work. There will be three sections: the first will consider the role of black labour in the British economy; the second will reconsider the position of black workers in the class structure; the last section will briefly draw some conclusions from this regarding the role and origins of racist ideology.

Marios Nikolinakos has said: 'The study of racism is a study of its political economy.' (37) Well, such a study will not, in itself, be adequate, but it is probably the best point of departure. The following analysis will draw principally on the theoretical work of Castles and Kosack, in their study of European migrant labour, Sivanandan, who has applied a similar analysis to Britain, and Ceri Peach, whose seminal text: 'West Indian Migration to Britain: a Social Geography' provides an invaluable starting point for a study of the political economy of black labour in Britain.

Peach comes to four main conclusions, which are crucical, not only for an understanding of the dynamics of West Indian emigration, but also for an appreciation of how capital benefits from black immigration. These conclusions are that:

a) Emigration from the West Indies after the war was determined primarily by the 'pull factor' of labour shortage in Britain, and that other factors such as growth of population in the West Indies, high unemployment, the closure of the American emigration route after the 1952 McCarren-Walter Act, were minor: merely 'permissive', not dynamic factors.

b) The rate of migration from the West Indies up until the '62 Commonwealth Immigration Act correlates exactly, even by the quarter, with the labour requirements of the British economy. This suggests what is probably a tendency in all emigration that is primarily not political but economic in origin. Namely, that it is extremely sensitive to the availability of employment in the country of immigration, a tendency arguably more effective in regulating immigration than legislative controls of the sort we have seen in the last twenty years.

c) Black immigrant labour not only solved the problem of labour shortage but ensured the most advantageous distribution of labour for capital whereby blacks became employed in those jobs which white workers were

unwilling to fill.

d) The distribution of black settlement in Britain shows a tendency for blacks to settle in areas of labour demand, but also a counter tendency by which they settled predominantly in areas of decreasing white population. Thus, both economically and residentially, black immigrants acted a s 'replacement population', going into non-growth industries and settling in towns with declining white population and almost invariably, of course, in declining inner city areas.

Capital requires not only that the labour supply should match total demand, but also that it should be distributed according to where it is needed. Black immigrant labour thus not only provided the crude labour power for which the economy had such a thirst, it also provided it where it was most needed. The occupational distribution of these early black immigrants is well summed up by Sivanandan: 'The jobs which "coloured immigrants" found themselves in were the largely unskilled and low-status ones for which labour was unavailable or which white workers were unwilling to fill-in the textile and clothing industries, or as waiters, porters and kitchen hands.' (39) That picture of the occupational distribution of the early immigrant workers largely pertains today and is manifested with even greater clarity in all European countries operating a migrant labour system. In France, Germany and Switzerland the occupational concentration of migrant workers is even more pronounced than in Britain. In France 30% of all migrant workers are employed in the construction industry, and 28.4% of migrant women in domestic service. In Switzerland 1 in 5 migrant women are employed in hotels or catering and an astonishing 40% of all factory workers are migrants. For Germany, Castles and Kosack conclude: 'Foreign workers tend to be particularly overrepresented in industries like plastics, rubber and asbestos and earth, stone, ceramics and glass where working conditions are unpleasant, or in industries like textiles and clothing where pay is low.' (40) The overall conclusion of both Sivanandan and Castles and Kosack, that immigrant workers are vastly overrepresented in unpopular jobs with bad conditions and low pay, is backed up by the findings in the two P.E.P. reports based on research done in the early '60s and early '70s respectively, however it would seem that occupational concentration is less pronounced in Britain probably due to greater penetration gained through longer average length of settlement. As far as job status is concerned, the P.E.P. reports conclude that blacks are vastly overrepresented proportionally to whites in unskilled and semi-skilled manual work, vastly underrepresented in white collar work and at supervisory and managerial levels, but increasingly well represented in skilled manual work.

As far as earnings are concerned, not only are blacks concentrated in low paid jobs, but their earnings comparative to whites in similar jobs are also unequal. Smith concludes in the second P.E.P. report: 'The overall earnings of minority men are lower than those of whites.....white men at higher levels earn substantially more than minority men at the same level; at the middle levels the difference is smaller but still marked; at the lowest levels minority men and white men earn the same. However, in order to achieve this equality of earnings, minority men at the lowest levels have to do far more shift work than white men, because their jobs are intrinsically much worse paid.' For women he concludes: 'In spite of the substantial inequalities of earnings among men, between minorities and whites, there are no such inequalities among women.... it may be that for those who already suffer the disadvantage of being a woman, there is little scope for racial discrimination to have further, additive effect.' (41)

There are numerous other spheres in which blacks are disadvantaged and the quantative measurment of this is not really in dispute. The two P.E.P. reports represent the most comprehensive statistical analyses to date. To summarize then, Deakin, from what is by and large an 'integrationalist' and not a left perspective, and who by his own admission always seeks to err on the side of caution in his estimates, concludes that discrimination varies between substantial and massive. His own summary of disadvantage relating to various aspects of employment alone will stand in for further statistics, the implications of which are by now fairly familiar: 'The minority groups are more vulnerable to unemployment than whites, they are concentrated within lower job levels in a way that cannot be explained by lower academic or job qualifications; within broad categories of jobs they have lower earnings than whites, particularly at the higher end of the job scale, they tend to do shift work.... but shift work premiums do not raise their earnings above those of whites, because their jobs are intrinsically badly paid; they are concentrated within certain plants, probably those which have started to employ them because of a labour shortage at some time in the past, and they have to make about twice as many applications as whites before finding a job.' (42).

Such, at an empirical level, is the position of black workers in the British labour market. This description, however, barely begins to deliver a complete explanation of the role of immigrant workers in the economy and the means by which capital profits from their labour. It is not just that black labour solves the problem of labour shortage and

facilities the most beneficial distribution of labour power. Nor is it just a matter of black workers providing cheap labour and therefore higher profits, although this is also often the case, particularly in workplaces that are not properly unionized. The advantages for capital go further than this. Firstly, black labour is not only cheap but the cost of its social reproduction is also low. Jones and Smith in their book 'The Economic Impact of Commonwealth Immigration' have estimated that: 'The average immigrant received about 80% as much (in terms of state welfare) as the average member of the indigenous population in 1961, and the figure seems likely to be 85 to 90% by 1981.' (43) This is due primarily to the fact that, for first generation immigrants, the cost of education and training has been paid for by the home country. In addition to this, blacks resident in British receive less from state welfare because they tend to live in decaying inner city areas, use underfinanced school and hospital services, and generally benefit less from council housing. Another important factor, although this is, of course, subject to gradual change, is the particular age structure of the black community, which insures a high proportion of working people in relation to dependents, either not working or doing unpaid work. In Britain, 90% of black men are economically active compared with 77% of white men. 74% of West Indian women do paid work compared with 43% of white women. (44) The situation is, of course, even more extreme in Europe where the ratio between working migrants and 'non-working' dependents is even greater. In 1970, 90% of immigrant workers in Germany were not accompanied by their families. (45) This situation is very beneficial for the balance sheet of state revenue, although more so in Europe than Britain. For the immigrant population, not only is state welfare per capita low, but, proportionally, the no. paying tax is high compared with that of the white working class.

Given both these factors - the low average cost of black labour and the low cost of the social reproduction of its labour power - Nikolinakos has argued that the immigrant worker produces a higher rate of surplus value than the indigenous worker and is thus highly beneficial to capital, the latter always seeking new ways to counter the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. (46) Technically speaking, this proposition is dubious since surplus value is only produced at the point of production and is neither produced in the service sector, where many blacks work, nor augmented by any spin off effects from a reduced load on state expenditure.

However, we can make two propositions: firstly, that blacks on average do more 'unpaid surplus labour' than whites, and therefore, in Carchedi's terms, suffer greater 'economic oppression'. (47) Secondly, that the national economy derives extra benefits from the use of black labour because of the lower costs to state revenue. In addition to this, it has been cogently argued by Castles and Kosack that other benefits accrue to capital by virtue of the fact that black labour both allows the survival of labour intensive industries, which would otherwise go bankrupt were it not for the availability of cheap immigrant labour, and secondly, where it is advantageous to capital, aids the latter in increasing the capital intensity of production, and thus increasing the rate of exploitation. Asian workers have been particularly instrumental in this process by virtue of their willingness to do shift work, often the unpopular permanent night shift, which allows continuous operation of machinery and thus justifies the capital outlay involved in mechanisation. According to Smith: '19% of black workers do night shift as against 9% of whites.' (48) The wool industry provides a classic example of both these phenomena. Ailing from the strength of foreign competition and shortage of labour in the late fifties, it survived bankruptcy only through the availability of cheap immigrant labour at a time when it could not afford to capitalise, only later, when capital was available, to buy labour saving machinery which could be kept in constant production by, once again, immigrant workers who were willing to work on the permanent night shift. (49)

The net effect of these various tendencies is, without doubt, highly beneficial to capital and the national economy as a whole. Castles and Kosack conclude that migrant labour was a decisive factor in the boom experienced by Swiss and German capital in the '50s and '60s. Deakin, referring to Britain, concludes with characteristic caution that: 'Immigration has on balance proved beneficial to the economy. While the effects are closely matched, it would seem that the greater mobility and flexibility of the immigrant population, coupled with the lower burden of demand placed on the social services, are decisive.... it has led to a rise in the general standard of living of the domestic population and upgrading of the domestic population in the occupational hierarchy.'

Such are the quantifiable benefits accruing to capital through the use of immigrant labour. They seem to justify the assertion that the majority of black workers form a super exploited strata of the working class, if we understand this term in a broadly descriptive, not technical, sense. They also demonstrate conclusively that capital derives particular

benefits from the specific role that black workers perform in production, and, therefore, from those mechanisms, whatever they may be, that put blacks in that role. This account would not be complete without some discussion of those mechanisms.

The mechanisms by which social agents are distributed into their particular places in the production process are complex. They include the role of the educational system and all those apparatuses and ideologies that reproduce the social division of labour in its specific contemporary form. This is not the place to consider these complex questions. What cannot be overlooked here, however, is that legislation which directly affects the position of immigrant workers, as enshrined in numerous immigration acts since the first restrictions were imposed on Commonwealth immigration in 1962. It is appropriate to consider this here, because it is by means of this legislation that some of the beneficial economic effects, considered above, have been maximised. It is Sivanandan's thesis that all the major immigrantion acts since 1962 have served the specific needs of capital. (51) In brief the theory is this: the system of migrant labour, such as that which operates in Germany is the most effective form of exploiting immigrant labour in Western European capitalist countries. This is so because:

1. it ensures the perfect match of labour supply to demand through the regulating mechanism of immigration control. It ensures the availability of a reserve army of labour that can be drawn in and expelled from production (and often the country) as required. This reserve army thus acts as a buffer mechnaism to allay the harmful effects of a slump-boom economy.
2. It minimizes state expenditure on the social production of labour power by admitting an already educated adult labour force when it is required, but at the same time restricting to a minimum the entry of unprofitable dependants.
3. Through its draconian nationality laws, it makes migrant workers highly prone to exploitation. Lack of civil rights and the threat of deportation often force migrant workers to take a low profile in union struggles. Castles and Kosack have clearly demonstrated the profitability inherent in this system as it operates in Germany and Switzerland.(51a)

Sivanandan's argument is that consecutive British legislation on immigration represents a linear progression towards this kind of 'contract labour' system. In this he is quite correct. The '71 Act which limits the entry of non-patrial i.e. black, Commonwealth immigrants to entry to do a specific job, in a specific place, for a specific length of time,

has indeed reduced the status of the black immigrant to that of a migrant. As Sivanandan puts it: 'There is no such thing as a "Commonwealth immigrant" anymore. There are those who came from the Commonwealth before the '71 Act came into force (Jan '73) but these are not immigrants they are settlers, black settlers. There are others who have come after the Act; they are neither settlers nor immigrants, they are simply migrant workers.' (52) In fact, the finishing touches are yet to be made. The likelihood is that they will be in the near future when the new Tory laws on nationality and immigration will probably abolish British subject status for black Commonwealth immigrants, deprive many of their franchise, and totally put an end to permanent settlement for migrants. It is the case, therefore, that those factors which make migrants as opposed to settlers particularly prone to exploitation, are now secured in British legislation; whereas formerly, as Sivanandan points out, it was racial prejudice that stood in for European style nationality laws to subordinate blacks, that racial subordination is now fully enshrined in law, as well as in racialist practice. This is, at it were, the last piece of the jig saw. The pieces are all in place and the whole anatomy of superexploitation is revealed.

In fact things are not quite as simple as that. This, not because this ensemble of legal and economic mechanisms is not successful in promoting the superexploitation of blacks in Britain, and yielding greater profit for capital and general advantage to the national economy. It is. But rather because in solely analysing the way in which legislation on immigration has facilitated the superexploitation of blacks, it does not give an adequate account of the complex relations between the state and capital on the issue of immigration. This is not the place to attempt a full analysis of this relationship. Nevertheless some points must be raised, since it is on account of the above thesis that Ben-Tovim has charged Sivanandan with holding an 'instrumentalist' view of the state, whereby the latter is seen to act purely in the interests of capital. (54)

In reality, despite the inherent economic logic in the legislative drift toward a migrant labour system, this legislation has not perfectly represented the needs of capital. State legislation has, necessarily, reflected other, political, interests as well. Sivanandan is, of course, fully aware of this. He sees the '62 Commonwealth Immigration Act primarily as a result of racist political pressures which had been mounting ever since '58, and the Notting Hill riots, not least in the right wing of the Tory party. However, he also argues, and this is less

acceptable, that the anti-immigration interests of the racist political lobby coincided then with the interests of the economy, which had no further need for unskilled immigrant workers. This is highly debateable for two reasons: firstly, despite rising unemployment, continuing localised labour shortages did, most probably, make unskilled immigrant labour attractive and necessary to various sections of industry. Secondly, if less immigrant labour was required than hitherto, it did not require legislative control to achieve this reduction. As Peach points out, primary immigration would probably have dropped in any case as a result of diminishing labour demand. Hugh Gaitskell opposed the contrals in the Commons in December '61 on these grounds, and the fact that not all the vouchers available in the first two years following the Act were taken up, suggests that both he and Peach were right. Primary immigration was dropping and did drop without the aid of controls. What the threat of controls did was to cause a panic wave of secondary immigration to beat the ban. This was far from being in the interests of capital, since secondary immigration, consisting of dependants less likely to work, is not so easily put to profit.

There has always been a certain lack of fit between strictly economic interests and dominant political interests when it comes to immigration. This can be shown both historically and in the anomalies and contradictions inherent in the current situation. An interesting historical parallel to the '62 situation can be found in the behaviour of the post war labour Government in respect of immigration. At that time Britain was faced with a major labour shortage that made immigration vital. However, far from turning immediately to the obvious source of reserve labour in the Commonwealth, the Government first prevaricated over Polish settlement, and when that was conceded, only admitted West Indians with extreme reluctance. In 1945 the prime minister was sending letters to displaced poles in this country urging them to 'return home' and it was not until the Polish Resettlement Bill of February '47, that a sizeable number of so-called 'European voluntary workers' were let in. (55) When the Empire Windrush arrived with 400 jamicans aboard in '48, the reaction on the part of the Labour Government seems to have been one of mixed anxiety and embarassment. As one Labour ministry official put it: 'It may become extremely embarassing politically if at a time of shortage there should be nothing but discouragement for British subjects from the West Indies while we go to great trouble to get foreign workers.' (56) The message was loud and clear. All immigrants were undesirable, even when indispensable, and black subjects were more so than white 'aliens'. If economic necessity won through in the end and inaugurated a period of 'laisse-faire' immigration, it did not do so

automatically and the strength of racist opposition provided a political force that was only marginally outweighed by economic expediency.

The same conflict is apparent in the '60s and '70s. Immigration laws have been consistently refined to produce the most exploitable form of migrant labour, but at the same time, racist opposition to immigration has been such, that numbers have been restricted further than was consistent with fully exploiting this system. The fact is that high unemployment by no means necessarily abolishes the need for immigrant labour. This is because there is still localised shortage, despite high unemployment, due to both the geographical immobility of indigenous labour, and its reluctance to do certain low paid and unpleasant jobs. Thus the 'Unit for Manpower Studies' in a report on 'The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market', whose main concern is the likely effect on industry of the reduced availability of immigrant labour to do certain jobs, concludes that (and this is in 1976): 'Even if the average level of unemployment over the next few years is rather higher than in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, thereduction in immigration.....could still result in problems in some sectors in which an appreciable proportion of the unattractive jobs are filled by immigrants.' (57) It goes on, intersetingly,to draw a parallel with the situation in the 30s when, even with up to 3,000,000 unemployed, Irish workers were able to find work in unpopular jobs without any difficulty. Some industrialists must have read with alarm the recent report in the American magazine 'Time', which quoted a top, but alas unnamed, Tory politician as saying that the Government intended to reduce immigration to 5,000 per year in the next two years and subsequently to nil.

The current situation is, thus, quite contradictory. Now that the Government has legislated for a full migrant labour system, and when capital still stands to benefit from it, it decides, on the basis of a purely political racist interest, not to use that system. No doubt it will soon find out that the continuing localized labour shortage cannot be solved by the entry of E.E.C. workers, since, despite the right to unconditional entry, those workers will not come to Britain where wages are lower than in other European countries. If this is the case, they may be forced to concede a certain level of black Commonwealth migrant labour entry. However, for the moment, the political interests are dominant over the economic ones, and they are not entirely congruent.

In short, although state legislation on immigrant has been,

by and large, tailored to serve the interests of capital, this has been possible only within certain prescribed political limits. Economic interest would have called for full migrant labour legislation from the beginning, but the political ideology of Commonwealth paternalism forbad this. Economic needs did not call for such tight control, but political racism was overiding. Now that migrant labour legislation has been completed it is too late for capital to harvest those very special financial fruits which it allows, and on which German capital glutted itself in the 50s and 60s, because political factors now militate against allowing further entry. In fact, to indulge in very bleak speculation, it seems that the only solution which would both allow the full exploitation of migrant labour, and sufficiently placate the racist lobby, would be the repatriation of black settlers and their replacement by white migrants. It is to the thin end of this wedge that Sivanandan refers when he talks about 'induced repatriation' in his most recent pamphlet entitled 'From Immigration Control to Induced Repatriation'.

To conclude, to say that state legislation on immigration has been tailored to serve the interests of capital but only within certain political limits, is to qualify Sivanandan's analysis but not to deny its central importance. The essential determining logic behind the legislation has been an economic one. Where the legidation has been contradictory this has largely been due to political limitations, most notably in the form of the anti-immgration lobby, which itself has grown on the experience of social problems which were themselves 'thrown up' by the economic exploitation of black labour. To say as much is to agree with Ben-Towim that, as regards race, 'state policy is the site of contradiction and struggle,' but to disagree with him on the nature of those contradictions. The state is not merely the arbiter of contradictions between the interests of capital and the anti-racist demands of the liberal left, as Ben-Tovim tends to represent it. The influecne of this anti-racist lobby, although important in the debates of the 1976 Race Relations Act, has been, over the last twenty years, largely eclipsed by the power of racist reaction. Furthermore, if the dominant interests were those of capital and the racist lobby, these should not be seen as opposite or unconnected forces. Although the demands of the racist lobby are not identical with those of capital, they grow on and are partly determined by the form in which capital exploits black labour. The primary task of the state, then, has not been that of arbitrating between opposite forces, racist and anti-racist and anti-racist, but of managing the contradictions between the process of economically exploiting the black minority, and containing the social consequences of that

exploitation, manifested in social conflict where the most powerful political force is white racism. To see the primary contradictions thus, is not to deny altogether the effectivity of anti-racist politics, but to attempt to assess the exact balance of forces; a balance which has resulted in a series of laws on race whose overwhelming cumulative effect has been to legitimate racialist practices and not to eradicate them.

To see the role of the state in this way is not to hold an instrumentalist view as Ben-Tovim claims (although the account here is, of course, over simplified), but rather to see the contradictions in the role of the state as the product of the articulation of various forces, ideological, political and economic, which are relatively autonomous but which are, nevertheless, determined in the last instance by the economic. Ben Tovim's stated position in the article: 'The Struggle Against Racism etc.' was that of the 'relative autonomy' of the political and the ideological: 'We reject then, the framework of "total autonomy", 'he says. However, in that article there was a continual slide towards an idealism whereby racism is seen as an autonomous ideological force. Hence the utopian stress on the possibility of educating people out of racist attitudes. In a more recent article written in conjunction with John Gabriel (58), a drift into a 'total autonomy' position is manifest. 'Racism', they say 'is primarily a democratic and ideological issue....the concept of race and racism may only be understood as the product of theoretical/ideological practices that subsequently (my stress) intervene at the level of the economy.' If such were the case racism would not be half the problem that it is, and it the foregoing analysis of the political economy of race demonstrates anything, it surely shows that such is not the case.

2. The Articulation of Race and Class

Earlier in this paper I considered the ways in which various writers on race relations have theorised the relationship between race and class. Two writers in particular were considered. Cox, albeit via a complex theoretical route, was found, in the end, to operate an unacceptable class reductionism. Rex, on the other hand, whilst attending to many of the specific features of racial structuring that were lost in Cox's theory, was found to have an essentially weberian notion of class which posits a pluality of market class structures and class struggles. This lead to a designation of blacks in Britain as a distinct underclass. This analysis was said to be problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it failed to define the essential basis of class in the social relations of production, and in so doing denied the basic economic determinacy which establishes the concept of class as a fundamental category; a category distinct from the empiricist notion of 'status' groups

and the pluralist weberian notion of market classes. Secondly, as a result of this theoretical problematic, class became defined, in the last instance, according to the culture, way of life, and political consciousness of the group in question. This was seen as a tendency towards a culturalist definition of class in terms of class consciousness. The classic exposition of this position is that given by E.P. Thompson in the preface to 'The Making of the English Working Class': 'Class happens when some men, as a result of common, experiences,.....feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different (and usually opposed to) theirs.' (59) This does not involve a complete abandonment of economic determinacy, (Thompson goes on to talk of the class experience as 'largely determined by the productive relations', but it does involve a crucial subordination of these objective economic determinants, a dominant stress on cultural factors. The result, as we saw with Rex, was, in this case, the proposition that black people in Britain form a separate class: an underclass. The crucial question is whether or not we are really justified talking of such a separate class in relation to the dominant contradiction within Western capitalist societies which, as has been suggested, is still that between capital and labour and not that between races. What light have recent marxist debates shed on this problem?

In fact, there has been little extended and systematic analysis of the position of blacks and migrant workers in the class structures of Western capitalist countries, despite considerable recent work on, for instance, the position of white collar workers. Sivanandan's seminal discussion of the role of black workers in production only yields a category of sub-proletariat which is left somewhat vague. The journal 'Black Liberator' settles for the term 'sub-proletarian stratum of the working class' which seems to have it both ways; and Castles and Kosack, on the grounds of traditional marxist definitions, refuse these options and talk, instead, in terms of a 'lower stratum in the working class.' However, there is, in the writings of recent marxists, such as those mentioned above, an emerging theoretical framework which promises a more adequate analysis of this question. I shall try to outline the main points here and indicate the general trajectory of this new work.

The first point to make is that people of West Indian and Asian descent in Britain are overwhelmingly concentrated in manual jobs. According to the 1966 census, 67.4% of New Commonwealth men were in manual jobs against 54.5% for the population as a whole. Only 15.4%. of New Commonwealth men were in jobs that were either managerial, professional or supervisory,

compared with 23% for the whole working population. 42.3% of New Commonwalth women were inmanual work, as against 29% of the population as a whole. (60) Therefore, when we talk about the class position of black workers in Britain, we are talking about that of the overwhelming majority who are either in manual work or in non-manual work that is neither managerial nor supervisory in any real sense. Of this majority of black workers, a disproportionate number (in relation to whites) are placed in unpopular jobs, with eitherbad conditions, low pay, a high proportion of shift work, or all three. So much is clear from my earlier analysis of the role of black workers in the economy. Coupled with other factgors, such as bad housing and living in deprived areas with poor welfare facilities this undoubtably suggests the existence of a situation whereby a large proportion of black people occupy the position of a lowest stratum in society.

An anaysis which deduces class position, or more accurately, 'status' position, in terms of the addition of various indices of social desadvantage would, no doubt, see this as evidence of the existence of a distinct black 'underclass' or 'subproletariat'. However, as Castles and Kosack correctly point out, this postulates that 'immigrant workders have a different relationship to the means of production from that tradictionally characteristic of the proletariat,' whereas in marxist terms: 'All workers, whether immigrant or indigenous, manual or non-manual, possess the same basic characteristics of a proletariat: they do not own or control the means of production, they work under the direction of others and in the interests of others, and they have no control over the product of their work.' (61) From this basic premise Castles and Kosack go on to describe the division of the working class into two strata: 'The indigenous workers, with generally better conditions and the feeling of no longer being at the bottom of society, form a higher stratum. The immigrants, who are the most underprivileged and exploited group of society, form a lower stratum.' (They argue that the position of black settlers in Britain is substantially the same as that of migrant workers in Europe, since both are equally subject to discrimination, 'superexploitation' and a barrier against social mobility. Although there are important differences in the forms of discrimination against blacks and against white migrants, and different degrees of generational social mobility, in different contexts, as far as the present class structure is concerned, this comparison is valid.) They go on to elaborate on these two strata by analysing the political and ideological divisions within the working class to which, they argue, immigration has contributed. The analysis is probably too cutand dried. It ignores the position of white women workers, and wrongly suggests all white workers are part of this upper stratum. However, their insistence that it is a question of strata within the working

class, and not one of separate classes, is correct.

If the working class is defined as the class of wage labourers, who do not own their means of production, who neither control the labour process nor exercise supervisory functions in the social division of labour, thus falling on the manual side of the mental/manual division within the ideology of the social division of labour, then the majority of black workers must be part of this class. Their position within it is one of degree; that is to say they occupy the lowest positions, suffering the highest degree of economic exploitation (in as much as they do on average more unpaid surplus labour) and having the least degree of control over the labour process.

However, this does not go far enough. It might be said that it deals only with the quantitative aspects of the position of black workers, ignoring the ways in which they are exploited in qualitatively distinct ways.

In terms of the social relations of production there are two particular areas in which the exploitation of black workers is qualitatively distinct. Firstly, (this only applies to some black workers in Britain), migrant labour is in some senses not completely 'free' labour. Migrant workers do not have free mobility in the job market in the sense that white workers and immigrants with unconditional residence do. This is not simply a matter of discrimination by employers or unions, although the latter is related to it. It is by virtue of restrictions imposed by immigration laws. Migrant workers cannot change jobs without permission, they rely on their employers' recommendation for renewed work permits which increases their dependence on them. They do not have full civil rights. They can be deported without trail for offences contrary to the public good, or for overstaying, and in some countries lack the right to vote, do jury service, take public office, or even (in France) stand as union officials. All but the last of these civil deprivations will probably apply to some blacks in this country if the Tories ablish British subjecthood as they have promised. These factors, according to Andre Gorz, achieve: 'the "denationalisation" of decisive sectors of the working class, by replacing the indigenous proletariat with an imported proletariat which leads a marginal, cultural existence, deprived of political, trade union and civil rights.' (62) This tendency is most marked in Europe, where it clearly undermines trade union strength, but is increasingly relevant to Britain also. This can be understood as part and parcel of the way capital seeks to lower the price of labour power.

The second major qualitative distinction in the mode of exploitation of blacks lies in their function as part of the reserve army of labour, and an analysis of this also helps us to locate their class position. To Marx capital 'forms a disposable reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase in the population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation.' (63) Marx saw this reserve army as ever more important to capital as its labour requirements were altered through one technological revolution after another. It also functions to depress the value of labour power, creating greater competition for jobs and undermining union bargaining power. The manner in which the reserve army of migrant labour acts as a shock absorber to a slump - boom economy was analysed above. Women and black youth are both increasingly important to this reserve army. As a recent MSC report has shown, the unemployment rate for West Indian youth is four times as high as the national average. (64) And as Veronica Beechey has shown in an article entitled: 'Some Notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production' (65), married women are also particularly 'suitable' to perform the functions of the reserve army. Since they are not generally paid a 'family wage', they can be used to lower the value of labour power; they can help capital in the 'dilution' of skilled labour, in the general process of technological deskilling, and when capital no longer needs them, they can be easily expelled from production because they 'have a world of their own, the family, into which they can disappear when discarded from production, without being eligible for state benefits, and without appearing in unemployment statistics.' Much of this applies equally to migrant workers, who can not only be expelled from production, but also from the country, when their labour is no longer needed.

The precise nature of the reserve army and the function it performs has been the subject of many debates which are too complex to rehearse here. Three points, however, should be noted in passing. Firstly, the absolute size of the reserve army is increasing and its role becoming more important. Recent estimates put the likely level of unemployment for 1980 at 5,000,000 (66) Secondly, the class position of both women and black people in general is becoming increasingly modified by their role in this reserve army. Thirdly, the growing size, changing role and new composition of this reserve army, will have decisive effects on the political role of this class fraction. There have recently been various important debates around the political role of the young black wageless or 'work-refusers' which have been well summarised by Hall et al in the last chapter of 'Policing the Crisis' (67). Without entering into these here, it should be noted that Hall et al clearly

demonstrate both the importance of this fraction in the theoretical analysis of the class position of black workers, and the fact that the marxist concepts of 'reserve army' and lumpenproletariat' are both important and yet in need of refinement to account for the present situation.

The above arguments only begin to deliver a rigorous class analysis of the position of black workers. They do, however, demonstrate three things. Firstly, that black workers cannot be thought of as in anyway marginal to the working class. (black workers represent 14% of manual workers in Britain. Immigrants represent 14% of manual workers in Germany, 25% in France and 35% in Switzerland.) (68) They perform crucial roles for capital within the process of production which put them in a central position in terms of the exploitation of labour by capital. Secondly, their labour plays a crucial role in the current changes that are affecting the labour process and the consequent restructuring of the working class.

1. They facilitate the further mechnaisation of industry and the rising organic composition of capital.
2. They are agents in the consequent process of deskilling whereby as Marx said: 'The special skills of each individual factory operator vanishes as an infinitessimal quantity before the science, the gigantic forces and the mass of labour that are embodied in the factory mechnaism.' That this orocess is unrolling with gathering momentum as a result of new micro-technology, is dramatically illustrated by both Braverman and Clive Jenkins in recent works on changes in the labour process. (69)
3. They play a critical role in the reserve army of labour, one of whose functions is to depress the value of labour power and thus counteract the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Castles and Kosack argue that the use of immigrant labour has checked the rise of wages for unskilled work and therefore tended to maintain differentials between skilled and unskilled workers.
4. The entry of immigrant workers has allowed the upward mobility of a sizeable proportion of the white working class.

The precise form taken by these changes in the labour process and the consequent restructuring of the working class obviously requires a great deal of further investigation. So too does the precise role played by black labour in these complex processes. The above arguments are thus somewhat tendential. However, what is clear, is that those aspects of the class position of black workers which I have considered to be qualitatively distinct are tied up with these general tendencies. Therefore, although it is specifically 'racial' mechanisms which distribute blacks as class agents into these roles, mechanisms which require analysis in their own right

the analysis of these economic roles should be keyed into those theories about changes in the labour process and the restructuring of class relations which are central to recent marxist analysis.

Lastly, the political and ideological splits within the working class which have attended the presence of black workers, are not the product of a racism as an autonomous ideological force, either in the form of the bourgeois press, National Front propaganda, or as an inherent ethnocentrism or colonial mentality in the British working class. These racist ideologies take root because they are grafted onto sectional class interests which are the product of objective conditions attendent on the restructuring of the working class, in which black workers have been a crucial element. These divisions are many. Gorz has talked of the deepening ideological gulf between mantal and manual labour which the use of immigrant labour has enhanced by allowing the promotion of many of the indigenous working class into tertiary and technical activities. This, he says, has served to: 'deprecate the social and economic value of manual work and manual workers as a whole, to deepen the separation between manual work and technical, intellectual and tertiary work.' (70) Castles and Kosack agrue that there are two sides to the political divisions to which these objective economic divisions give rise. Firstly, they argue that the upward mobility afforded to sections of the indigenous working class by virtue of the use of immigrant labour, has encouraged an individualism amongst them which eschews collectivist poltics and gives some sections 'the consciousness of a "labour aristocracy" which supports or acquiesces in the exploitation of another section of the working class.' The growing strength of white collar unionism and the progressive politicised role currently played by unions such as NUPE, suggest that the situation is somewhat more complicated than this. As Poulantzas has shown, whilst some sections of the middle strata or 'new petit-bourgeoisie', for instance higher technicians and engineers, are gravitating politically towards the bourgeoisie, other groups, such as 'lower professional', clerical and service workers, are becoming increasingly proletarianised and turn politically toward the working class. (71) Further work needs to be done on this question of the articulation of racist ideologies with the consiousness of different groups of workers. Castles and Kosack's second point, however, carries much more weight; this is that amongst semi-skilled and unskilled workers there is a high level of racial division. This is no doubt partly because the pressure of the reserve army has created greater competition for these jobs, undermined union bargaining power, and held back the rise in wage levels. Thus Castles and Kosack conclude: 'The main roots of working class prejudice towards immigrants are to be found in these relationships of competition.' (72) Working class racism, then grows on a material basis: on the experience of sectional class interest. The major division, and one which is rapidly

growing, is that between the reserve army of the part-time employed, the irregularly employed, most notably composed of women and blacks, and the employed, fighting to protech their jobs, wage levels and skills. It is here that racism finds some of its most fertile soil.

The above arguments, although they require considerable elaboration, do seem to warrant the original assertion that an analysis of the class position of black workers should start from an analysis of their specific place in the social relations of production, seeing those specific relations as ones that constitute black workers as a fraction or stratum within the working class, and not as a group either marginal to it or forming a class apart. The political and ideological divisions which seem to set blacks as a class apart should be seen as a product of the articulation of racist ideology to the objective divisions within the working class which capitalism reproduces in the same moment as it reproduces the unity of that class in relation to capital.

To be quite clear, the foregoing analysis of the economic class positio n of black workers does <u>not</u> constitute a full analysis of their class position as a whole. Such a claim would rightly be called economistic since class must be established according to its representation at all levels of the social formation, not merely at the economic level as here. As economic analysis is the necessary but decidedly <u>not</u> sufficient condition of a full class analysis. It is a necessary condition because without it we cannot explain the social formation as a whole, as a complex unity of the various instances, economic, political and ideological, each with its own relative autonomy, but which, nevertheless, exist in relations of determinancy which are, as Althusser would say, 'structured in dominance'. In the same way, without this 'necessary' condition, we cannot explain class 'as a theoretical whole' - as a complex but determinate unity, not a weberian plurality. I have concentrated on the economic not only because for these reasons it is the correct point of departure, but because it is here that we can see where marxism and weberian culturalism part company. To achieve any kind of theoretical clarity it is necessary to define the boundaries of different methodologies, and particularly so here where marxist and left weberian theories continually circle and prey over the same intermediate and grey terrain of the 'relatively autonomous', yet when they swoop pick up what are essentially different theoretical animals. There is a limit point where culturalism and weberianism break with marxism and that point is reached when black workers are said to constitute a separate class outside the working class. The limit point theoretically for marxism, beyond which it becomes something else, is the insistence on the determinany of the economic in the last instance.

The above argument has been conducted with this theoretical demarcation in view, not in the interests of methodological dogmatism, but in order to achieve some kind of theoretical clarity: a base on which to build the necessarily complex full analysis. It is an attempt to begin with correct abstractions so at to approach the concrete which is, as Marx says, 'concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse.' To approach this concrete it was thought necessary to begin with identification of economic class, which is to begin with those abstractions which Marx thought to be the necessary points of departure. However, to define the class position of blacks, even at the economic level, requires the recognition of the specific racial structuring of the social relations of production. Bearing in mind Rex's justified criticism of economistic marxist analysis, whose notion of the social relations of production is too narrow, and which ignores the specificity of racial structuring, I have tried to outline, albeit schematically, an expanded notion of the social relations of production which accounts for the qualitatively distinct mode of exploitation to which black people are subject. This allows us to see black people as occupying a class position with a distinctive set of economic functions in relation to capital. These functions are part of the mechanism by which capital exploits labour as a whole, and their particular forms are shaped by the general tendencies by which the labour process is changed and the working class restructured in the course of the continued processed of capital accumulation and the class struggles which attend it. According to these economic determinations, then, black workers were said to form a distinct stratum or fraction within the working class.

The reasons why this is nevertheless not a sufficient condition of class analysis are several. Firstly, although the existence of class depends on the necessary existence of class places (necessary, that is, for capital), it also depends on the distribution of class agents into these positions. The analysis of the political economy of black labour clearly demonstrates the necessity for capital of the existence of those class places and the functions they perform. The superexploitation of this class fraction is clearly in the interests of capital. However, that does not mean that this is automatically achieved. The achievement of that economic process depends on the distribution of class agents into those places. Although economic forces exercise some determinacy on this process, it would be the purist functionalism to say that because capital has certain needs, the conditions for the fulfillment of these needs are automatically reproduced. There are a number of mechanisms, institutional and ideological, that tend to reproduce the social division of labour that is necessary for capital, but these institutional and ideological mechanisms all posess their own relative autonomy, and are subject to class struggle.

As regards the distribution of blacks, there are a large number of essential mechanisms, which apart from the immigration laws themselves, I have not been able to analyse in detail and can only list here:

1. The educational system and its ancillary services - careers advisory, educational welfare etc.

2. Other state organisations that are involved in the socialisation of black youth - social services, the probation service, employment agencies and the police.

3. The black family and the cultural life of the ethnic community, which should include the material conditions of life in the black community as effected by housing allocation etc.

4. The media and the ideological role it plays in the particular socialisation of black youth.

5. Discrimination by employers, and the frequent collusion of trade unions in this. It is only by virtue of all these mechanisms that the class distribution of blacks is secured, and that only within the limits set by class struggle. In each of these sites, racialism operates in particular ways and is informed by various types and degrees of racist discourse. An analysis of the class position of black workers would clearly not be compete without an investigation of those racialist mechnaisms by which the position of blacks in the social division of labour is reproduced. Although this is traditionally weberian terrain, where Rex inparticular has done his most important work, it has not been ignored by marxists. Castles and Kosack have done extensive work on housing and education, and Hall et al have conducted a excellent analysis of the role of the media in the orchestration of racist ideology within a whole repertoire of authoritarian ideologies. However, there remains a great deal of work to be done here. It is necessary to demonstrate concretely the determinacy exercised by the economic and social relations of production over the state apparatuses which serve to reproduce these relations, and the specific position of black workers within them. The spheres of housing and education are crucial in this respect and the study of them is essential for an understanding of the specific racial mechanisms of class distribution.

Secondly, the analysis of the class position of black workers is not complete without further consideration of the ideologies which promote the racial division of the working class. It was said that these racial ideologies grow on, and are to an extent the product of, objective divisions, and the experience of sectional class interests within the working class. This is true but not entirely sufficient. For one thing it is not merely a question of white working class racism, but also a question of the consciousness of black workers whose experience is perceived through the prism of race. Secondly, to understand the depth of racial divisions within

the working class, we need to understand not only the specifics of sectional class differences, but also the general political influences that shape these into particular ideologies, not only the politics of race, but also the current themes of national political debate, and what has been called the emerging 'authoritarian popular concensus'.

3. Implications for a Theory of the Role and Origins of Racist Ideology

This section will concentrate on racism within the white working class in Britain, drawing out the implications that the analysis of the political economy of race and racial structuring has for an understanding of racism. The main contention here is that racism amongst the white working class grows on the experience of sectional class interests; that racist ideology provides the syntax through which different interests and social problems in general are understood and articulated. Racism is part of what might be guardedly called the popular 'common sense' on the problems of bad housing, unemployment, and crime. To call it 'common sense', is not to give it any more credibility, but to underline a point that has often been missed by commentators of all sorts, that racism is a popular ideology, by now deeply embedded in the consciousness of large sections of the working class. Analyses of racism that concentrate solely on fully fledged philosophies of 'scientific racism' are dangerously missing the point, since, whilst such philsophies have generally been confined in Britain to the fascist fringe since the war, (although there have been periodic academic revivals in, for instance, the work of Eyesenck et al and more recently in sociobiology), a popular racism that has no need of such pseudo-scientific supports, has been growing with increased momentum.

The notion of 'common sense' is also important because it can help demonstrate, as it did in Gramsci's usage, the fact that ideologies grow on differential class and gender experience; that there is no uniform ideology in general, neither in the form of some homogenous social cement, mysteriously 'secreted' (as Althusser would have it) out of the pores of the social formation in its monolithic entirety, nor in the form of a complete world view imposed on us from above by the organs of the ruling class. This is important in considering racism, because the ideologies that it entails are clearly appropriated in ways that are both class and gender specific. The incidence of racism clearly varies within different classes (73) and racist ideologies are transparently constructed to appeal to the interests of different class and gender combinations. The most notorious historical example of this is, of course, nazism, which in its rise to power employed a demagogic repertiore that attempted to appeal to all classes and both sexes in different ways, and must rank, apart from anything else, as the most utterly contradictory

ideology of all time. The issue here, however, is complex because, although racist ideologies are shaped differently to appeal to different groups, racism as a whole functions, in many cases, as the weld that binds contradictory ideologies, as a focus that simplifies complex issues and provides explanations of social problems that seek to transcent class issues in the grand themes of nation and race. This was the case with German National Socialism and is also true, to some extent, of contemporary fascism and popular racism.

Lastly, to concentrate on the 'common sense' aspect of racism is to avoid a conspiratorial view of the origins of racism. The working class is not duped by the cunning of ruling class propaganda into holding racist ideas. Although the media has often played a considerable role in fostering racism, we have no need of recourse to conspiracy theories to explain this. The media can only fan the flames of racial tension so effectively because that tension exists so concretely in the everyday experience and conditions.

If the general theoretical orientation outlined above is correct, then the crucial question is how, precisely, are racist ideologies articulated with sectional class interests; how do they become common sense? This is crucial politically since to disentangle this knot we must first know how it has been tied. It is also a crucial site of the theoretical argument about the nature of determincay existing between the racially structured economic and social relations and racist ideology. This paper has argued for the central importance of the structural basis of racism, and a focus on sectional class interests issues from this belief. However, the relation between racist ideologies and the racial structuring of economic relations is clearly dialectical. In stressing the grounding of racism in the experience of sectional class interests I am suggesting that racism is both the product of economic relatinns - those relations that allow class to be structured in a racially segmented form and give rise to the sectional class interests that are read through race - and also that it is an agent or mechanism through which the racial structuring is achieved. That is to say, racism is an ideology which ensures the distribution of blacks into those specific class positions, both facilitating and in dome cases 'justifying' their superexploitation. In the more conventional language of race relations literature, Castles and Kosack put it this way: 'The relationship between discrimination and prejudice is a dialectical one discrimination is based on economic and social interests and prejudice originates as an instrument to defend such discrimination. In turn, prejudice becomes entrenched and helps to cause further discrimination. 74

It is not, then, a question of prejudice existing as a pregiven essence, in the nature of human psychology, which, as Ben-Tovim puts it subsequently intervenes at the level of the economy. 75 Racism cannot be abstracted from its social and historical context in this way. It can only be understood as the product of, and instrucment by which, the racial structuring of social relations are achieved, and that in its particular form at the present time. Racist ideology does have its own relatively autonomous internal logic, its own mode of intellectual production, but this is not dreamed up in the heads of isolated racist ideologues. The conditions of the development of these ideologies exist in the experience of social conditions which result from the racial structuring of society and they only become a real material force in that they perform certain fucntions in the social struggles around these conditions.

Looking at racism in terms of competing interests is nothing particularly new or controversial in one sense. Both Rex and Castles and Kosack, for instance, talk of racism as arising out of relations of competition over scarce resourses. This, however, can mean various things and have implications that I would wish to avoid. For instance, it could be used to imply that racism is inevitable since there has always been competition between workers over jobs, housing and other resources. I would wish to argue that the existence of this market competition does not make racism inevitable, just as, historically, the existence of competition between the employed and the unemployed, the skilled and the unskilled etc. did not invariably give rise to divided working class consciousness. On the other hand, it used to be common amongst those on the left to talk of racism as a mere irrational reflex to poor material conditions, an arbitrary scape-goating reflex given a racist inflection by the imposition of racist interpretations from above. This view dangerously underestimates the tenacity of racist beliefs, it ignores the internal logic of the racist interpretation and the compelling obviousness of its diagnosis.

It is within these parameters, and with these reservations in mind, that think the problem of the articulation of racist ideologies and sectional class interests should be explained. I cannot explore these arguments concretely here, in any depth, but it may be worth sketching out some of the areas which seem important. Housing is clearly a key issue, but having said nothing about that so far, I will concentrate instead on questions around employment which I have said something about. If we are to look for sectional class interests here, there are three main questions to be answered :-

1. How has immigration affected unemployment?
2. How has immigration affected wage levels and trade union bargaining power?
3. How has immigration affected differentials and the dilution of skilled labour?

The familiar racist tropes: 'blacks take our jobs', 'blacks are cheap labour', 'we can't have blacks here, they'd lower the tone', represent interpretations of these problems.
There is not enough evidence to say much about the last two of these except to repeat that the use of immigrant labour may have reduced the potential hypothetical wage levels for manual work and therefore served to reinforce differentials. Whether this is the case or not, these problems have clearly been taken up by racists. The question of immigration and unemployment is probably the most revealing.

One of the most common arguments against immigration is that it increases unemployment and a frequent complaint against black people by white workers is that they take our jobs . Now, although black immigrants have in the main acted as a replacement work force, taking jobs that white workers would not do, it is clear that in some areas of employment, black workders are competing with white workers for the same jobs. This competition is perceived by white workers as threatening, despite the fact that the game is fixed in that black applicants, subject as they are to discrimination, offer somewhat unequal competition. What competition there is, is greatest for unskilled jobs and the fact that racism is most common amongst unskilled workers (see note (76)) gives weight to the argument that racial hostility is tied up with this feeling of compeition. However, none of this explains why competition between workers for jobs, competition that exists between workers of all races, ages and sexes, should give rise to racism in particular. In the same way, with unemployment, the Government might be blamed for failing to provide jobs, or any section of the population might be blamed for providing the 'excess population'. In fact, it is most commonly black people that are blamed. On the level, the reason why this interpretation is made is because it is simple and appeals to immediate experience. At a common sense level, it appears that any reduction in population size would reduce unemployment, and that, therefore, to stop immigration is the obvious answer, since the British, that is the white British, 'must come first'.

To prove that immigration is not responsible for unemployment requires a more abstract analysis, one in fact that, to be convincing, must draw on marxist concepts. Merely to point out that every year emigration exceeds

immigration does not answer the question to people schooled in the imperialist philosophy that says if population size is a problem, we should export it to the colonies. The real answer lies in the fact that capitalism requires a reserve army, and, whilst we live under capitalism, we will suffer unemployment to a greater or lesser degree, during economic recessions at least. It is unthinkable, that under capitalism, a reserve army would not frequently be created, whether it be drawn from immigrants, or indigenous white men or women. And so it was, that during the post war period, when neither indigenous white women or men could create a sufficient pool of reserve labour, capital inevitably allowed immigration in one form or another. Far from it being the case that immigration has been the cause of an increase in white unemployment in fact the reverse is true. As Deakin has argued, since black workers are more likely to be the first to be laid off, and therefore suffer higher levels of unemployment than whites, their presence in fact protects white workers against redundancy. The black reserve army acts as a cushion, a shock-absorber, for the blows of the slump - boom economy. What is more, the high mobility of black labour offsets regional unemployment to some extent. All of which disproves the racist view, but has taken a page to explain and would not be likely to convince many white workers, whose painful experiences of redundancy and unemployment have been neatly rationalised by the daily repition of tidy racist slogans. The problem is well illustrated by Miles and Phizacklea, who, in their study of recist beliefs among the white working class of Willesden, conclude that they (these racist beliefs)' are an attempt to understand and explain daily experience, while the real reasons for both the socio-economic decline and New Commonwealth immigration are to be found in much more abstract and longstanding social and economic processes which cannot be grasped in terms of daily experience.' (77)

The racist interpretation gains in plausibility because of its direct reference to daily experience. However, this is not all, because, for racism to appeal to this experience, it must do so by homing into that idology by which experience is understood, not only where it relates specifically to race, but into its general framework. It is here that it becomes necessary to look more generally at the whole repertoire of explanations in the dominant ideology and to see how racism meshes with them. Certainly, the ground for racist interpretations of unemployment is prepared by specifically racist myths propagated by the media. Newspaper headlines like 'Migrants Here Just for the Welfare Handouts,' 'Asians Flood Warning', 'One in every Five Babies Born in Black' (in fact 1 in 20), carry a large responsibility for the widespread belief in total myths about the size of the immigrant population and the consequent antipathy towards immigration. (A recent survey found that 47% of people thought that there were more than two million blacks in Britain, and 24% that

there were more than five million. (The correct figure is more like $1\frac{3}{4}$ million.)) (78) But the ground is also prepared by more general themes in the dominant ideology. To say that the general ideological climate, created by the current political rightward shift, is conducive to racist ideology is perhaps to state the obvious. It is nevertheless worth pointing out how the current themes within dominant ideology make specifically racist interpretations of particular issues more likely. For instance, on the question of black people and unemployment, it might be shown how anti-welfare, anti-public spending sentiments encourage the equation of blacks and 'welfare scroungers' and how anti-statist beliefs encourage hostility to race relations legislation and promote the belief that the state 'puts blacks before us whites'.

Racism, then, does grow specifically on the perception of sectional class interest. But the deep penetration of racist ideology does not just result from the simple plausibility of the explanations it offers for specific social problems, but also from the credibility it gains from the way it insinuates itself into a more elevated 'general view of things'. In 'Policing the Crisis' Hall et al demonstrate how blacks have been identified with all the major themes of what they call the growing 'popular authoritarian concensus'. Themes like 'Law and Order', 'the declining inner city', 'subversion', the 'crisis of national identity'. Race has served as a focus for many of these issues. In order to understand the strength of popular racism we must both analyse the way it addresses specific issues, growing on perceptions of specific conflicts of interests and explore the way it is amplified through this symbiosis with those more general ideological themes currently peddled by the right with such notorious success.

NOTES

1. See Banton: 'The Idea of Race'
2. Banton, M.: 'The Stranger Hypothesis', Race vol 15 no.1
   Patterson, S.: Dark Strangers: A Study of West Indians in London
3. Deakin, N.: Colour, Citizenship and British Society.
   Smith, D.: Racial Disadvantage in Britain
4. See below for references
5. Cox, O.C.: Castle, Class and Race, a Study in Social Dynamics.
6. Rex, J.: Race, Colonialism and the City.
   : Race Relations in Sociological Theory
   Ben-Tovim, G.: 'The Struggle Against Racism.....'in Marxism Today.
7. Rex, J.: Race, Colonialism and the City.
8. 'The rationalizations of the exploitative purpose which we know as race prejudice are always couched in the ideology of the age' in Caste, Class and Race.

9a Cox demonstrates clearly the sytematic way in which the American ruling class fostered racism through the media.

9b. Cox, O.C.: Castle, Class and Race.
10. ibid
11. ibid
12. ibid
13. ibid
14. ibid
15. Blauner, R.: 'Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt' Social Problems 16
16. Carmichael, S, and Hamilton, C.: Black Power.
17. Blauner, R.: 'Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt'.
18. ibid
19. ibid

20 Tabb, W.: The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto

21. Wolpe, H.: 'The theory of Internal Colonialism' in Beyond the Sociology of Development.
22. Rex, J. and Tomlinson, S.: Colonial Immigration in a British City. A Class Analysis.
23. I am thinking of the work of Louis Althusswr and his followers. The pioneering work in this area is that of Althusser's most important essay: 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' in For Marx.
24. Rex, J.: Race Relations in Sociological Theory.
25. Hall, S.: 'Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance'
26. Rex, J.: 'South African Society in Comparative Perspective' in Race, Colonialism and the City.

27. Wolpe, H.: 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour in South Africa: from Segregation to Apartheid' in Economy and Society vol 1 no. 4.

28. Sivanandan, A.: 'Race, Class and Power: An Outline for Study' in Race vol 14 no. 4.

29. as above.

30. Rex, J.: Colonial Immigrants in a British City.

31. ibid

32. Poulantzas, N.: Classes in Contemporary Capitalism.

33. Marx, K.: Capital. Vol 111

34. Rex, J.: Colonial Immigrants in a British City

35. ibid

35a. ibid

35b. ibid

35c. ibid

36. ibid

37. Nikol inakos, M.: 'Notes on an Economic Theory of Racism' in Race vol. 14 no. 4

38. Castles, S. and Kosack, G.: Immigration Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe.

Sivanandan, A.: 'Race, Class and the State: the Black Experience in Britain' Race and Class Pamphlet no. 5

Peach, C.: West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography.

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40. Castles, S. and Kosack, G.: Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe.

41. Smith, D.: Racial Disadvantage in Britain.

42. Deakin, N. : Colour, Citizenship and British Society.

43. Jones, K. and Smith, A.D.: The Economic Impact of Commonealth Immigration.

44.

45. Gorz , A.: 'The Role of Immigrant Labour'.

46. Nokolinakos, M.: 'Notes on an Economic Theory of Racism'.

47. Carche di, G.: On the Economic Identification of Social Classes.

48. Smith, D.: Racial Disadvantage in Britain.

49. See Cohen and Jenner: 'The Employment of Immigrants: A Cast Study Within the Wool Indistry'. Race vol 10

50 Deakin, N.: Colour, Citizenship and British Society.

51. Sivanandan, A.: Race, Class and the State.

51a. See chapter entitled: 'Union Polocies and Industrial Disputes' in Castles and Kosack: Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe.

52. Sivanandan, A.: 'Race, Class and the State

53. ibid

54. Ben Tovim, G.: 'The Struggle Against Racism....'
55. See account in Foot, P.: Immigration and Race in British Politics...
56. Quoted in: 'The Post War Conjuncture' Clive Harris
57. The Unit for Manpower Services: 'The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market'.
58. Thompson, E.P.: The Making of the English Working Class.
59. Unit for Manpower Studies: 'The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market'.
60. Castles and Kosack: Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe.
61. Gorz, A.: 'The Role of Immigrant Labour'
62. Marx,K.: Capital. Vol 1
63. Manpower Services Commission: 'Youth and Work'.
64. Beechey, V.: 'Some notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production' in Capital and Class no. 3
65. See Institute of Manpower Studies research and Cambridge Economic Planning Group research both summarized in Jenkins, C. and Sherman, B.: The Collapse of Work.
66. Hall et al: Policing the Crisis.
67. Gorz, A.: 'The Role of Immigrant Labour'
68. Jenkins and Sherman ibid
Braverman, H.: 'Labour and Monopoly Capital'.
69. Gorz, A.: 'The Role of Immigrant Labour'
70. Poulantzas, N.: Classes in Contemporary Capitalism
71. Castles and Kisack: ibid
72. See Rose, E.J. et al: Colour and Citizenship. For an account of the research of Dr. Mark Abrams which analyses levels of discrimination for different social groups.
73. Castles and Kosack ibid
74. Gabriel, J. and Bent-Tovim, G. in:
75. According to Dr. Abrams in Rose, E.J. ibid
76. In Miles and Phizacklea ed.: Racism and Political Action in Britain
77. Abrams, M. ibid.

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