



Theodore W. Allen

Summary of the Argument of *The Invention of the White Race*¹

Including

An Interview with Theodore W. Allen

by Jonathan Scott and Gregory Meyerson

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1. The two-volume work presents a historical treatment of a few precisely defined concepts: of the essential nature of the social control structure of class societies; of racial oppression without reference to “phenotype” factors; of racial slavery in continental Anglo-America as a particular form of racial oppression; of the “white race”—an all-class association of European-Americans held together by “racial” privileges conferred on laboring-class European-Americans relative to African-Americans— as the principal historic guarantor of ruling-class domination of national life.

I

On the misleading concept of “race”

2. The concept of “race,” in the scientific sense of particular group-identifying characteristics resulting from aeons of inbreeding in isolation, has nothing to do with “race relations,” whatever that term may be taken to mean, in the four thousand years of recorded human history; certainly not in the nano-second of evolutionary time represented by the four hundred years since the founding of Jamestown in 1607. We have the assurance of eminent authorities in the fields of physical anthro-

pology, genetics and biology, such as Stanley M. Garn and Theodosius Dobzhansky, that the study of evolution has nothing but disclaimers to contribute to the understanding of “racism” as a historical phenomenon; as Dobzhansky puts it: “The mighty vision of human equality belongs to the realm of ethics and politics, not to that of biology.”² With greater particularity, Garn writes that Race “has nothing to do with racism, which is simply the attempt to deny some people deserved opportunities simply because of their origin, or to accord other people certain undeserved opportunities only because of their origin.”³

3. The assertion that opens Chapter I of Volume One of *The Invention of the White Race* is altogether consistent with those disclaimers: “However one may choose to define the term ‘racial’— it concerns the historian only as it relates to a pattern of oppression (subordination, subjugation, exploitation) of one group of human beings by another.”⁴

4. When, therefore, a group of human beings from “multiracial” (the anthropologists’ term) Europe goes to North American or South Africa, and there, by constitutional fiat, incorporates itself as the “white race,” that is

no part of genetic evolution. It is, rather, a political act: the invention of "the white race." Thus it lies within the proper sphere of social scientists, and is an appropriate objective for alteration by social activists.

II

On "race as a social construct"

5. Taking note of the earlier insights into "race" in America provided by African-American social critics such as W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, and Langston Hughes," the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in September 1995 reported that "Scholars from a variety of disciplines, "sociology, history, and legal, cultural, and literary studies," are attempting to lift the veil from whiteness."⁵ Just two years later, Stanford University professor George M. Fredrickson, well-known teacher and writer on the history of relations between persons of African descent and those of European descent, asserted that "the proposition that race is 'a social and cultural construction,' has become an academic cliché."⁶

6. This trend, although it will surely experience a critical sorting-out of various interpretations it has produced, represents a great leap forward toward reducing the subject to rational dimensions as it concerns social scientists, by objectifying "whiteness," as a historical, rather than a biological category.

7. Nevertheless, the thesis of "race as a social construct," as it now stands, despite its value in objectifying "whiteness," is an insufficient basis for refutation of white-supremacist apologetics. For, what is to be the reply to the socio-biologist and historian Carl N. Degler who simply says that, "...blacks will be discriminated against whenever nonblacks have the power and incentive to do so... [because] it is human to have prejudice against those who are different."⁷ Or, what if the socio-biologists say, "Fine, we can agree that racial ideology is a social construct, but what is your 'social construct' but an expression of genetic determinants—another version of Winthrop Jordan's 'unthinking decision'?"⁸

8. The logic of "race as a social construct" must be tightened and the focus sharpened. Just as it is unhelpful, to say the least, to euphemize racial slavery in continental Anglo-America as "the Peculiar Institution," instead of identifying the "white race," itself, as the truly peculiar institution governing the life of the country after emancipation as it did in slavery times; just as it is not "race" in general, that must be understood, but the "white race," in particular; so the "white race" must be understood, not simply as a social construct, but as a *ruling class social control formation*.

III

Racial oppression defined, without reference to "phenotype"

9. The essential social structure in class societies is this: First, there is the ruling class, that part of society which, having established its control of the organs of state power, and having maintained domination of the national economy through successive generations and social crises, is able to limit the options of social policy in such a way as to perpetuate its hegemony over the society as a whole. Being itself economically non-productive, it is at the optimum a small numerical proportion of the society.

10. Secondly, there is the intermediate buffer social control stratum, classically composed of self-employed small land-owners or leaseholders, self-employed artisans, and members of the professions, who live in relative economic security, in social subordination to the ruling class and normally in day-to-day contact with their social inferiors.

11. Finally, there are those devoid of productive wealth (except their ability to work), who constitute the majority of the population, and whose condition is generally one of extreme dependency and insecurity.

12. Edmund Burke envisioned the ideal of such a social structure in these terms: "Indubitably, the security... of every nation," he said, "consists principally in the number of low and middle men of a free condition, and that beautiful gradation from the highest to the lowest, where the transitions all the way are almost imperceptible"⁹

13. Racial oppression, gender oppression, and national oppression, all present basic lines of social distinction other than economic ones. Though thus inherently contradictory to class distinctions, these forms of social oppression, nevertheless, under normal conditions, serve to reinforce the ascendancy of the ruling class. Students of political science, and "world changers," need to understand both the unique nature of each of these forms as well as the ways in which they differ, and the ways in which they interrelate with each other and with class oppression. Of these categories, my present remarks will be directed to racial oppression.

14. *The hallmark, the informing principle, of racial oppression in its colonial origins and as it has persisted in subsequent historical contexts, is the reduction of all members of the oppressed group to one undifferentiated social status, beneath that of any member of the oppressor group.*

15. A comparative study of Anglo-Norman rule and "Protestant Ascendancy" in Ireland, and "white su-

premacry" in continental Anglo-America (in both its colonial and regenerate United States forms) demonstrates that racial oppression is not dependent upon differences of "phenotype," i. e., of physical appearance of the oppressor and the oppressed.

The African-Americans

16. Of the bond-laborers who escaped to become leaders of maroon settlements before 1700, four had been kings in Africa. Toussaint L'Ouverture was the son of an African chieftain, as was his general, Henri Christophe, subsequent ruler of Haiti.¹⁰ It is notable that the names of these representatives of African chieftaincy have endured only because they successfully revolted and threw off the social death of racial oppression that the European colonizers intended for them. One "Moorish chief," Abdul Rahamah, was sold into bondage in Mississippi early in the nineteenth century. Abou Bekir Sadliki endured thirty years of bondage in Jamaica before being freed from the post-Emancipation "apprenticeship" in Jamaica.¹¹ The daughter of an Ebo king and her daughter Christiana Gibbons were living in Philadelphia in 1833, having been freed from chattel bondage some time earlier by their Georgia mistress.¹² We can never know how many more were stripped of all vestiges of the social distinction they had known in their African homelands by a social order predicated upon "the subordination of the servile class to every free white person," however base.¹³

17. In taking note of the plight of Africans shipped as bond-laborers to Anglo-American plantations and deprived of their very names, Adam Smith in 1759 touched the essence of the matter of racial oppression. "Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind," he wrote, "than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of Europe."¹⁴ A century later the United States Supreme Court affirmed the constitutional principle that any "white" man, however degraded, was the social superior of any African-American, however cultured and independent in means.¹⁵

18. This hallmark of racial oppression in the United States was no less tragically apparent even after the abolition of chattel bond-servitude. In 1867, the newly freed African-Americans bespoke the tragic indignation of generations yet to come: "The virtuous aspirations of our children must be continually checked by the knowledge that no matter how upright their conduct, they will be looked upon as less worthy of respect than the lowest wretch on earth who wears a white skin."¹⁶

The American Indians

19. A delegation of the Cherokee Nation went to Washington in 1831, to appeal, first to the Supreme Court,

and then to President Andrew Jackson, to halt the treaty-breaking "Indian Removal" policy, designed to drive them from their ancestral homes. The delegation included men who were not only chosen chiefs of their tribe, but who had succeeded in farming and commerce to become "Cherokee planter-merchants."¹⁷ Their appeals were rebuffed; President Jackson was well pleased with the decision of the Supreme Court denying the Cherokees legitimacy as an independent tribal entity in relation to the United States.¹⁸

20. This was a culmination, as well as a beginning. Proposals made at times over a period of two decades by church groups and by the Secretary of War for the assimilation of the Indians by intermarriage had been rejected.¹⁹ At the same time, the independent tribal rights of the Indians were challenged by United States "frontier" aggression. As a consequence of this rejection, on the one hand, and the disallowance of tribal self-existence, on the other, the individual American Indian, of whatever degree of social distinction, was increasingly exposed to personal degradation by any "white" person. In 1823, the Cherokee leader John Ridge, a man of considerable wealth, supplied out of his own experience this scornful definition of racial oppression of the Indian:

An Indian... is frowned upon by the meanest peasant, and the scum of the earth are considered sacred in comparison to the son of nature. If an Indian is educated in the sciences, has a good knowledge of the classics, astronomy, mathematics moral and natural philosophy, and his conduct equally modest and polite, yet he is an Indian, and the most stupid and illiterate white man will disdain and triumph over this worthy individual. It is disgusting to enter the house of a white man and be stared at full face in inquisitive ignorance....²⁰

The Irish

21. From early in the thirteenth century, until their power entered a two-and-a-half-century eclipse in 1315,²¹ the Anglo-Norman English dealt with the contradictions between English law and Irish tribal Brehon law by refusing to recognize Celtic law, and at the same time denying the Irish admittance to the writs and rights of English law.²²

22. In 1277, high Irish churchmen, having secured support among powerful tribal chieftains, submitted a petition to English King Edward I, offering to pay him 8,000 marks in gold over a five-year period for the general enfranchisement of free Irishmen under English law. The king was not himself unwilling to make this grant of English law. But he thought he ought to get more money for

it, and so the Irish three years later raised the offer to 10,000 marks.²³

23. What was being asked was not the revolutionary reconstitution of society, but merely the abandonment of "racial" distinction among freemen ruled by English law in Ireland. In the end the king left the decision to the Anglo-Norman magnates of Ireland, and they declined to give their assent. Referring to a replay of this issue which occurred some fifty years later, Sir John Davies concluded that, "The great [English] lordes of Ireland had informed the king that the Irishry might not be naturalized, without damage and prejudice either to themselves, or to the Crowne."²⁴

24. Irish resentment and anger found full voice in the wake of the Scots invasion made in 1315 at the invitation of some Irish tribes. In 1317, Irish chieftains, led by Donal O'Neill, king of Tyrone, joined in a Remonstrance to John XXII, Pope to both English and Irish. In that manifesto the Irish charged that the kings of England and the Anglo-Norman "middle nation" had practiced genocide against the Irish, "enacting for the extermination of our race most pernicious laws."²⁵ It presented a four-count indictment: 1) Any Englishman could bring an Irishman into court on complaint or charge, but "every Irishman, except prelates, is refused all recourse to the law by the very fact [of being Irish]"; 2) "When... some Englishman kills an Irishman... no punishment or correction is inflicted;" 3) Irish widows of English men were denied their proper portion of inheritance; and, 4) Irish men were denied the right to bequeath property.

25. Whatever exactly the remonstrants meant by their word "race," their grievances, like those of the African-Americans and the American Indians we have cited, bore the hallmark of racial oppression. From the Petition of 1277 to the Remonstrance of 1317, it was specifically the legal status of the free Irish men, rather than the unfree, which was at issue.

The really peculiar feature about the situation in Ireland is that the free Irishman who had not been admitted to English law was, as far as the royal courts were concerned, in much the same position as the betagh [the Irish laborer bound to the land].²⁶

IV

Compelling parallels

26. Given the common constitutional principles of the three cases— the Irish, the American Indian, and the African-American— the abundant parallels they present are more than suggestive; they constitute a compelling argument for the sociogenic theory of racial oppression.²⁷

27. If, from the beginning of the eighteenth century in Anglo-America, the term "negro" meant slave, except when explicitly modified by the word "free,"²⁸ so, under English (Anglo-Norman) thirteenth-century law, the term "hibernicus," Latin for "Irishman," was the legal term for "unfree."²⁹ If under Anglo-American slavery, "the rape of a female slave was not a crime, but a mere trespass on the master's property,"³⁰ so, in 1278, two Anglo-Normans, brought into court and charged with raping Margaret O'Rorke were found not guilty because "the said Margaret is an Irishwoman."³¹ If a law enacted in Virginia in 1723, provided that, "manslaughter of a slave is not punishable,"³² so under Anglo-Norman law it sufficed for acquittal to show that the victim in a slaying was Irish.³³ Anglo-Norman priests granted absolution on the grounds that it was "no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog or any other brute."³⁴ If African-Americans were obliged to guard closely any document they might have attesting their freedom, so, in Ireland at the beginning of the fourteenth century, letters patent, attesting to a person's Englishness, were cherished by those who might fall under suspicion of trying to "pass."³⁵ If the Georgia Supreme Court, ruled in 1851 that "the killing of a negro" was not a felony, but upheld an award of damages to the owner of an African-American bond-laborer murdered by another "white" man,³⁶ so, in 1310 an English court in Ireland freed Robert Walsh, an Anglo-Norman charged with killing John Mac Gilmore, because the victim was "a mere Irishman and not of free blood," it being stipulated that "when the master of the said John shall ask damages for the slaying, he [Walsh] will be ready to answer him as the law may require."³⁷ If in 1884 the United States Supreme Court, citing much precedent authority, including the Dred Scott decision, declared that Indians were legally like immigrants, and therefore not citizens except by process of individual naturalization³⁸; so, for four centuries, until 1613, the Irish were regarded by English law as foreigners in their own land.³⁹ If the testimony of even free African-Americans was disallowed as uncreditable;⁴⁰ so, in Anglo-Norman Ireland, native Irish of the free classes were deprived of legal defense against English abuse because they were not "admitted to English law," and hence had no rights which an Englishman was bound to respect.

V

Protestant Ascendancy and white supremacy

28. In 1792, Edmund Burke pointed out the peculiar nature of the system of Protestant Ascendancy in terms that are equally applicable to white supremacy. Burke compared various forms of the normal principles of so-

cial hierarchy characteristic of class societies, as exemplified by the Venetian oligarchy, on the one hand, and the British constitutional combination of aristocracy and democracy on the other. In the former, the members of the subject population are excluded from all participation in "the State." But they are "indemnified" by the untrammelled freedom to find places in the "subordinate employments," according to their individual competitiveness and their mutual accommodation. "The nobles" in such a society, said Burke, "have the monopoly of honor, the plebeians a monopoly of all the means of acquiring wealth." The British state, on the other hand, has a plebeian component; yet the aristocrats and plebeians do not compete with each another, and social rank among the non-aristocrats is arranged, again, by the normal process of free competition. But, he declared, "A plebeian aristocracy is a monster," and such was the system of Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. There, he said, "Roman Catholics were obliged to submit to [Protestant] plebeians like themselves, and many of them tradesmen, servants, and otherwise inferior to some of them... exercising upon them, daily and hourly, an insulting and vexatious 'superiority.'"⁴¹

29. What distinguishes racial oppression from class oppression is precisely this "vexatious superiority" exercised by people of the laboring classes of the oppressor group over members of the oppressed group. In Ireland, Protestants, however poor and propertyless, had their privileges vis-a-vis Catholics of any social class: the right to become trades apprentices, and to that end to be taught to read and write; the right to marry without the landlord's permission, and exemption from systematized degradation at the hands of the Protestant landlords, "middlemen," etc. "A Protestant boy," said Irish historian J. C. Beckett, "however humble his station, might hope to rise, by some combination of ability, good luck and patronage, to a position of influence from which a Roman Catholic, however, well-born or wealthy would be utterly excluded."⁴² A meeting of white men in Northampton County, Virginia, in December 1831 (a few months after Nat Turner's Rebellion), took pride in asserting that the Negro was "excluded from many civil privileges which the humblest white man enjoys..."⁴³

30. Daniel O'Connell, who was both a champion of the abolition of chattel bond-servitude and leader of the campaign for Repeal of the Act of Union of Britain and Ireland, appealed to Irish-Americans to repudiate by action the reputation of "being the worst enemies of the men of colour."⁴⁴ The Irish-American Repeal Association in Cincinnati, retorted that the aristocrats of England would more readily accept laborers as "sheet fellows," than would "whites" of any social class in the United

States consent to accept Negroes "on terms of equality."⁴⁵

31. The essential elements that gave to Protestant Ascendancy after 1689 in Ireland and white supremacy in continental Anglo-America the character of racial oppression were those that first destroyed the original forms of social identity among the subject population, and then excluded the members of that population from admittance into the forms of social identity normal to the colonizing power. The codifications of this basic organizing principle in the Penal Laws of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland and the slave codes of white supremacy in continental Anglo-America present four common defining characteristics of those two regimes: 1) declassing legislation, directed at property-holding members of the oppressed group; 2) the deprivation of civil rights; 3) the illegalization of literacy; and 4) displacement of family rights and authorities.⁴⁶

VI

"There were no white people there."

32. Some scholars concerned with the problem of the origin of racial slavery have emphasized that the status of the African-Americans vis-a-vis European-Americans in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake can not be fully determined because of a deficiency in the records for the early decades.⁴⁷ Others, by reference to Virginia statutes, assert that the differentiation of the status of African-Americans and European-Americans can be determined as beginning only about 1660.⁴⁸ I would like to suggest that the matter can and ought to be resolved by recognizing that the record taken as a whole makes apparent that the relative social status of African-Americans and European-Americans at that time can be determined to have been *indeterminate*, because it was being *fought out*⁴⁹ in our society's first living cell, in the context of the great social stresses of high mortality, the monocultural economy, impoverishment, an extremely high sex ratio, all of which ills were based on or derived from the abnormal system of chattel bond-servitude.

33. The issue of slavery versus freedom was being fought out as a component of the class struggle of the bond-laborers (who constituted the majority of the tithable population) and the impoverished third of the free population against the large land-engrossing elite.

34. "When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no white people there." If philology is granted its dominion, certain incidental items in the record appear significant in regard to this brash assertion on the jacket blurb of Volume One of *The Invention of the White Race*.⁵⁰

35. English ship captain Richard Jobson made a trading voyage to Africa in 1620-21, but he refused to engage in trafficking in human beings, because, he said, the English "were a people who did not deal in any such commodities, neither did we buy or sell one another or any that had our own shapes." When the local dealer insisted that it was the custom there to sell Africans "to white men," Jobson answered "they [that is "white men"] were another kinde of people from us...."⁵¹ George Fox, founder of the Quaker religion, in 1671 addressed some members of a Barbados congregation as "you that are called white."⁵² Another seventeenth-century commentator, Morgan Godwyn, found it necessary to explain to the English at home that, in Barbados, "white" was "the general name for Europeans."⁵³ Even a century later, a historian writing in Jamaica for readers in England, felt impelled to supply a like parenthetical clarification: "...white people (as they are called here)."⁵⁴ Winthrop D. Jordan, author of *White Over Black* found that, "After about 1680, taking the colonies as a whole, a new term appeared— *white*." During my own study of page after page of Virginia county records, reel after reel of microfilm prepared by the Virginia Colonial Records Project, and other seventeenth-century sources, I have found no instance of the official use of the word "white" as a token of social status before its appearance in a Virginia law passed in 1691, referring to "English or other white women."⁵⁵ When considered in the context of events, these linguistic details are seen to reflect the reality of social relations as they existed in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake.

36. Given the informing principle of racial oppression—to deny, disregard, delegitimize previous or potential social distinctions that may have existed among the oppressed group, or that might tend to emerge in the normal course of development of a class society— "*the white race, an all-class compact of European-Americans to keep African-Americans out and down, did not exist, and could not then have existed.*"

37. That conclusion is supported by evidence of *class solidarity* of laboring-class European-Americans with African-Americans, and the consequent absence of an all-class coalition of European-Americans directed against African-Americans. Considering the fact that no more than one out of every four bond-laborers was an African-American, even as late as the 1670s and 1680s, there were a significant number of court-recorded collaborations of African-Americans and European-Americans in a common endeavor to escape their bondage, of which only a selected few can be mentioned in the space allowed in this summary.

38. Early in June 1640 three Virginia bond-laborers, "Victor, a Dutchman... a Scotch Man called James Gregory... [and] a Negro named John Punch," escaped together to Maryland. Unfortunately they were pursued and, at the insistence of the Virginia Colony Council, they were brought back to face the Virginia General Court.⁵⁶ The owner would have preferred to dispose of them in Maryland.

39. That same month, the Virginia Colony Council and General Court commissioned a Charles City County posse to pursue "certain runaway Negroes." The provision that the cost was to be shared by all the counties from which they had run away, suggests that the phenomenon was extensive.⁵⁷ Since no further record seems to exist regarding this particular undertaking, perhaps these workers avoided recapture. As if encouraged by such a possibility, seven bond-laborers— Andrew Noxe, Richard Hill, Richard Cooks, Christopher Miller, Peter Wilcocke (presumably English); an African-American, Emanuel; and John Williams ("a Dutchman")— set off one Saturday night a month later in a stolen boat, with arms, powder and shot. They, however, were taken up before they could reach open water.⁵⁸

40. In the fall of 1645, the African-American bond-laborer Philip, owned by Captain Philip Hawley, helped runaway European-American bond-laborer Sibble Ford hide from her pursuers for twenty days in a cave on Hawley's plantation. His collaborator was European-American Thomas Parks who addressed the court defiantly when he was arraigned for going about "to entice and inveigle the mens Servants to runn away... out of their masters service."⁵⁹ In one plot, unfortunately frustrated, a conspiracy of a score of Eastern Shore bond-laborers plotted to escape in a schooner to be steered by "black James," reputed "the best pylot in the land."⁶⁰

41. A fundamental barrier to any possibility of instituting a system of racial oppression in seventeenth-century Virginia was *the lack of a substantial intermediate buffer social control stratum*. This general defect was made dramatically evident during the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch wars (1665-67 and 1672-74), when Dutch naval incursions appeared to threaten the very existence of Virginia as an English colony. In June 1667, Colony Secretary Thomas Ludwell confided to a correspondent in England that Virginia's small landholders were restrained from rebellion only by "faith in the mercy of God, loyalty to the King, and affection for the Governor." Seven years later, the Governor and Colony Council, in letter to the King, described in graphic terms the woeful state of social control that colony:

intersected by so many vast Rivers as makes more miles to Defend, then we have men of trust to defend them, for by our nearest computacon wee leave at our backs as many Servants (besides Negroes) as there are freemen to defend the Shoare and on all our Frontiers the Indians. Both which gives men fearfull apprehensions of the dainger they Leave their Estates and Families in, Whilst they are drawne from their houses to defend the Borders. Of which number also at least one third are single freemen (whose labor Will hardly maintain them) or men much in debt, both which Wee may reasonable expect upon any small advantage the Enemy main gained upon us, would revolt to them in hopes of bettering their Condicon.⁶¹

VI

Social status: a matter in contention

42. Aside from the two circumstantial factors— class solidarity and insubstantiality of the intermediate stratum— seventeenth-century records show that the juridical status of African-Americans vis-a-vis European-Americans was not a settled question; it was, rather, a matter in direct and indirect contention to a degree inconsistent with an established system of racial oppression.

43. In 1640, the Virginia General Court, in a singular instance (see p. 26, above), sentenced John Punch, an African-American, to lifetime bond-servitude when he was arraigned with two European-American fellow bond-laborers for having run away from their owner.⁶² But why did the appetite for profit not lead the Court to sentence John Punch's European-American comrades to lifetime servitude also?⁶³

44. Professor Jordan directs particular attention to this decree, and cites it as evidence for his belief that the enslavement of Negroes was the result of an "unthinking decision," arising out of a prejudice against Negroes.⁶⁴ It may be true that the Court in this case was motivated by such feelings. Other inferences are possible, however. Under English common law Christians could not be enslaved by Christians; presumably, Scots and Dutchmen were Christians; but Africans were not. As a practical matter, England's relations with Scotland and Holland were critical to English interests, so that there might well have been a reluctance to offend those countries to whom English concerns were in hostage, whereas no such complication was likely to arise from imposing lifetime bondage on an African, or African-American. The Court members in all probability were aware of the project under way to establish an English plantation colony on Providence Island, using African lifetime bond-laborers,⁶⁵ and they surely knew that some Africans were

already being exploited elsewhere in the Americas on the same terms. They might have been influenced by such examples to pursue the same purpose in Virginia. They were also aware that the African-American bond-laborers arriving in Virginia from the West Indies (or Brazil via Dutch colonies to the north of Maryland⁶⁶ did not come with English-style, term-limiting indentures. The members of General Court may thus have felt encouraged to impose on John Punch the ultimate term, lifetime, in such cases. Whether the decision in this instance was a "thinking" or an "unthinking" one, the Court by citing John Punch's "being a negro" in justification of his life sentence, was resorting to mere bench law, devoid of reference to English or Virginia precedent.⁶⁷ What the record of this case does show, as far as the ideas in people's heads are concerned, is a disposition on the part of some, at least, of the plantation bourgeoisie to reduce African-Americans to lifetime servitude.

45. As the proportion of bond-laborers who were surviving their terms increased, some employers began to see an appeal in extending the bond-laborers' terms generally. The "custom of the country" for English bond-laborers in Virginia, which had been set at four years in 1658, was increased to five in 1662.⁶⁸ With the flourishing of the Irish slave trade in the wake of the Cromwellian conquest,⁶⁹ laws were enacted to make Irish bond-laborers, and, after 1658, "all aliens" in that status, serve six years.⁷⁰ That provision was eliminated, however, by the post-Cromwell law of 1660, in the interest of "peopling the country."⁷¹

46. The 1660 law equalized at five years the length of "the custom of the country," without distinction of "aliens," but that same law *for the first time* restricted term-limiting to those "of what christian nation soever." (The Anglican Church having been established in Ireland, Ireland now qualified as a "christian country.") Since the only "christian nations" were in Europe, this clause was most particularly, though not exclusively, aimed at persons of African origin or descent. This exclusion of African-Americans from the limitation on the length of servitude imposed on bond-laborers, reflected and was intended to further the efforts made by some elements of the plantation bourgeoisie to reduce African-American bond-laborers to lifetime servitude. But even that, in and of itself, would have been no more than a form of class oppression of bond-laborers by owners, somewhat like the slavery of Scots miners and salt-pan workers from the end of sixteenth century to the eve of the nineteenth century, a form distinguished by its categorical denial of social mobility of those in bondage.⁷²

47. The records show that some planter-employers were in general agreement with the repressive spirit of the

General Court order regarding John Punch. A 1661 law specifying punishment for runaway bond-laborers referred to "any negroes who are incapable of making satisfaction by addition of time."⁷³ In 1668, free African-American women were declared tithable on the explicit grounds that "though permitted to enjoy their freedom... [they] ought not in all respects be admitted to a full fruition of the exemptions and immunities of the English."⁷⁴ It was this law, being directed explicitly at free African-Americans, that most explicitly anticipated racial oppression. Another law passed in October 1669, granted immunity to employers who, in the course of "correcting" killed their Negro or Indian lifetime bond-laborers, on the grounds that it would not be reasonable that an owner would destroy his own property with malice aforethought.⁷⁵ Three years later similar immunity was granted to any person who killed "any negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life," who was sought by hue and cry as a runaway.⁷⁶ Private sale contracts and last wills and testaments tended to increase the number of African-Americans bound for life. Others incorporated the ominous phrase "and her increase," implying that the bondage was not only lifelong, but hereditary.

The countervailing tendency

48. But there were two sides to the coin. The General Court's order sentencing John Punch to lifetime servitude is itself proof that he was not a lifetime bond-laborer when he ran away. Indeed, by taking that action, he was demonstrating his unwillingness to submit to even limited-term bond-servitude. The John Punch case thus epitomized the status of African-Americans in seventeenth-century Virginia. On the one hand, it showed a readiness of at least some of the plantation elite to equate "being a negro" with being a lifetime bond-laborer. On the other hand, development of social policy along this line was obstructed by several factors.

49. There was, first of all, the opposition of African-Americans, themselves, both bond-laborers and non-bond-laborers, with the general support - certainly without the concerted opposition - of European-American bond-laborers, and other free but poor laboring people, acting in a sense of common class interest. African-American bond-laborers as noted, joined in direct action with other bond-laborers in resisting their bondage by running away. They were at the same time alert to challenge aspects of the bond-servitude system that were or might be directly aimed against them in particular. In one instance in 1649, two African-American workers refused to begin their service until they were assured in writing that at the end of four years, they would be "free from their servitude & bee free men and labor for themselves."⁷⁷

50. One of most common ways by which African-Americans resisted attempts to extend their terms of servitude to life, was petitioning in the courts. They based their claims on two grounds: 1) that their terms were set at a definite number of years by prior agreement with the employer, or by the wills of the deceased employer; or 2) that they had arrived in America from England or some other "Christian country," or were captives of wars that had since ended in treaties of peace between England and some other European country. Given the limits of space, a few selected examples must serve to illustrate these respective approaches.

51. In March 1656, bond-laborer Deigo took his owner, Minor Doodes, to Lancaster County court. Apparently, Doodes was intending to leave the area and wanted to sell Deigo as a lifetime bond-laborer. A paper was presented signed by Doodes providing that if he sold Deigo, it was to be for no more than ten years.⁷⁸

52. African-American John (or Jack) Kecotan arrived in Virginia as a bond-laborer about 1635. Eighteen years later his owner, Rice Hoe, Senior, promised Kecotan that if he lived a morally unrepachable life, he would be given his freedom— at the end of another eleven years! Sadly, Hoe, Senior, passed away before the time had elapsed, and the Court ordered Kecotan to continue in servitude with Hoe's widow until her death. That mournful event occurred sometime before 10 November 1665, leaving Rice Hoe, Junior, in possession of the estate, including, he assumed, John Kecotan. But, it being then thirty years since Kecotan had started his servitude under the elder Hoe, Kecotan petitioned the Court for his freedom. Junior Hoe opposed the petition on the grounds that sometime during the elder Hoe's lifetime Kecotan had had child-producing liaisons with two of more English women, thus violating the good-conduct condition of the original promise of freedom. The Virginia General Court ordered that Kecotan be freed, unless Hoe could prove his charges at the next County Court. There, five men, presumably all European-Americans, supported Jack Kecotan's petition with a signed testimonial to his character. Hoe produced two other witness for his side. Apparently Jack Kecotan at some point secured his freedom, at least enough that he and his co-defendant, Robert Short, won a jury verdict in their favor in a suit brought against them by Richard Smith.⁷⁹

53. Andrew Moore came to Virginia to serve as a limited-term bond-laborer. In October 1673, he petitioned the General Court for his freedom, contending that his owner, Mr. George Light, was keeping him in bondage well past his proper time of service. He won a decision ordering Light to free him with the customary allowance of

"Corn and Clothes, and to pay Moore 700 pounds of tobacco for his overtime."⁸⁰

54. Thomas Hagleton, like Moore, came from England. He arrived in Maryland in 1671, with signed indenture papers to serve for four years. In 1676, Hagleton petitioned the Maryland Provincial Court complaining that his owner, Major Thomas Truman, detained him from his freedom. The court, citing the presence of witnesses prepared to testify on Hagleton's behalf, granted Hagleton's request for a trial of the issue.⁸¹

55. In 1688, on the cusp of King Billy's War, John Servele (the name is variously spelled), a "molatto" born in St. Kitts of a French father and a free Negro mother, and duly baptized there, through a series of misadventures was sold into Virginia where he was claimed as a lifetime bond-laborer by a succession of owners. In consideration of testimonials from the Governor of St. Kitts and a Jesuit priest there, and the fact that Servele had already served more than seven years, the Governor and Council ordered that Servele be released and given his "corn and cloathes" freedom dues.⁸² Another man, Michael Roderigo, a native of St. Domingue, likewise a victim of misadventures that ended with his being sold as a lifetime bond-laborer in Virginia, took advantage of a lull in the Anglo-French warring, to petition the Virginia Colony Council for his freedom. In support of his claim as "a Christian and a free subject of France," he proposed to call as a witness a Virginia plantation owner, "who hath bought slaves" from him in Petit Guaves, St. Domingue.⁸³

Superstructural factors

56. Concurrently, the historically evolved legal, institutional, and ideological superstructure of English society itself presented a countervailing logic to the General Court's equation regarding John Punch. Throughout the seventeenth century conscientious Christian preachers were denouncing the slave trade and the idea of lifetime hereditary bondage. First Quaker George Fox admonished the Barbados planters—as he said, "you who are called white"—that "servitude of Negroes should end in freedom just as it did for" other bond laborers.⁸⁴ Morgan Godwyn, "The Negro's and the Indians Advocate," argued that Africans were as capable as English of "Manly employments, as also of reading and writing." Morgan, the most famous of the seventeenth-century clerical opponents of the slave trade, laid it down as a principle: "[We] cannot serve Christ and Trade."⁸⁵

57. Principles of English common law were also an obstacle to the imposition of lifetime hereditary bond-servitude. Those principles were rooted in the English Parliament's historic retreat from slavery in England, following Ket's Rebellion in 1549 that prayed "that all

bondmen be may be made free, for God hath made all free with his precious bloodshedding" It was wrong, said those rebels, "to have any Christen man bound to another."⁸⁶

58. The fascinating case of Elizabeth Key, daughter of an African-American bond-laborer and the Anglo-American owner, presents an instance in which African-American resistance and institutional principles happily reinforced each other. A Northumberland County jury upheld Elizabeth's suit for freedom, a verdict that was later endorsed by a special Committee of the General Assembly, specifically on grounds of the English principle that a Christian could not hold a Christian as a slave; and secondly, that she was free because under the English common law descent was through the father.⁸⁷

59. Even though the Elizabeth Key case showed a growing disposition among owners to make Africans and African-Americans lifetime, and even hereditary bondmen and bondwomen, it is significant that there were other owners who expressed a contrary view through agreements in advance of service, or by their final wills setting African-Americans free after limited servitude.⁸⁸ Frequently the emancipations included allotments of land and/or cattle to enable the free persons get started on their own.

VIII

African-Americans in the normal class status

60. Most significant are the seventeenth-century Virginia court records of legal recognition of normal social standing and mobility for African-Americans *that was and is absolutely inconsistent with a system of racial oppression*. Illustrative cases are found most frequently, though not exclusively, in the Northampton and Accomack county records.⁸⁹ In 1624, the Virginia Colony Court had occasion to adjudicate an admiralty-type case, in the routine course of which the Court considered the testimony of John Phillip, a mariner, identified as "a negro Christened in England 12 yeares since...."⁹⁰ In a separate instance, a Negro named Brase and two companions, a Frenchman and a "Portugall," were brought of their own volition to Jamestown on 11 July 1625. Two months later, Brase was assigned to work for "Lady Yardley," wife of the Governor, for forty pounds of good merchantable tobacco "monthly for his wages for his service so long as he remayneth with her." In October Brase was assigned to Governor Francis Wyatt, as a "servant"; no particulars are recorded as to his terms of employment with his new employer. Although there is no record of the terms of

this assignment, there is no suggestion that, "being a Negro," he was to be a lifetime bond-laborer.⁹¹

61. African-Americans who were not bond-laborers made contracts for work or for credit, engaged in commercial as well as land transactions, with European-Americans, and in the related court proceedings they stood on the same footing as European-Americans. At the December 1663 sitting of the Accomack County Court, Richard Johnson and Mihill Bucklands disputed over the amount to be paid to Johnson for building a house for Bucklands. With the consent of both parties the issue was referred to two arbitrators.⁹² The Northampton County Court gave conditional assent to the suit of John Gusall, but allowed debtor Gales Judd until the next Court to make contrary proof, or pay Gusall "the summe & grant of fore hundred powndes of tobacco due per specialty with court charges."⁹³ Emmanuel Rodriggus⁹⁴ arrived in Virginia before 1647, presumably without significant material assets, and was enlisted as a plantation bond-laborer.⁹⁵ Rodriggus became a dealer in livestock on the Eastern Shore (as the trans-Chesapeake eastern peninsula of Virginia came to be known). As early as January 1652/3 there was recorded a bill of sale signed with his mark, assigning to merchant John Cornelys "one Cowe collered Blacke, aged about fowre yeares... being my owne breed."⁹⁶ Thereafter, Rodriggus and other African-Americans frequently appear as buyers and sellers, and sometimes as donors, of livestock in court records that reflect the assumption of the right of African-Americans to accumulate and dispose of property, an assumption of legal parity of buyer and seller.⁹⁷

62. The Indian king Debeada of the Mussaughs gave to Jone, daughter of Anthony Johnson, 100 acres of land on the South side of Pungoteague Creek on 27 September 1657.⁹⁸ In 1657 Emannuell Cambow, "Negro," was granted ownership of fifty acres of land in James City County, part of a tract that had been escheated from the former grantee.⁹⁹ In 1669, Robert Jones (or Johns), a York County tailor, acting with agreement of his wife Marah, "for divers good causes and considerations him thereunto moveing... bargained & sold unto John Harris Negro all the estate rite [right] title & Inheritance... in fiftie Acres of Land... in New Kent County."¹⁰⁰ A series of land transactions— lease, sub-lease, and re-lease— were conducted by Emanuell Rodriggus with three separate individuals over a ten-year period, 1662-1672.¹⁰¹

63. In the colonial Chesapeake in the seventeenth century, marriage might be a significant factor for social mobility. The prevailing high death rate and the high sex ratio resulted in a relative frequency of remarriages of widows the records.¹⁰² Whatever a widow might own became generally the property of the new husband. Phil-

lip Mongum, though only recently free, had begun an ascent in the social scale, eventually to becoming a relatively prosperous tenant farmer and livestock dealer. In 1672, he was a partner of two European-Americans in a joint lease of a plantation of three hundred acres.¹⁰³ When Mary Morris, a widow with children, and Phillip Mongum were contemplating marriage early in 1651, they entered into a prenuptial agreement regarding the property she then owned. Mongum agreed in writing that her property was not to be sold by him, but to remain the joint heritage of her and the children from her previous marriage(s): "one Cowe with a calfe by her side & all her increase that shall issue ever after of the said Cowe or calfe[,] moreover Towe featherbeds & what belongs unto them, one Iron Pott, one Kettle, one fryeing pan & towe gunnes & three breeding sowes with their increase." Mongum signed the agreement and bound himself to see to its faithful performance.¹⁰⁴

64. Francis Payne's second wife Amy was a European-American. When Payne died late in the summer of 1673, his will made Amy his executrix and the sole heir of his "whole Estate real & personal moveables and immoveables." Within two years Amy married William Gray, a European-American, whose interest was to stop his own downward social mobility by looting Amy's inheritance from Francis Payne. In August of 1675, Amy charged in court that Gray had not only beaten and otherwise abused her, but had "made away almost all her estate" and intended to complete the process and reduce her to being a public charge. The Court did not attempt to challenge Gray's disposal of her inherited estate to satisfy his debts; but it did keep him in jail for a month, until he satisfied the court that he would return a mare belonging to Amy and promised to support her enough to prevent her being thrown on the charity of the parish.¹⁰⁵

65. Some time in 1672, an African-American woman named Cocore married Francis Skipper (or Cooper), owner of a 200-acre plantation in Norfolk County. She had been lashed with thirty strokes the year before on the order of the court for having borne a child "out of wedlock." Perhaps there was a social mobility factor in her in marrying Skipper. But they apparently lived together amiably for some five years until his death, an event which she survived by less than a year.¹⁰⁶

66. Landholding by African-Americans in the seventeenth century was significant, both for the extent of it, and because much of it, possibly the greater portion, was secured by headright. This particular fact establishes perhaps more forcefully than any other circumstance the normal social status accorded to African-Americans, a status that was practically as well as theoretically incompatible with a system of racial oppression. For the reader

coming for the first time to the raw evidence in the Virginia Land Patent Books, or to the abstracts of them done by Nell Nugent, or to the digested accounts presented by historians of our own post-Montgomery boycott era—for such first readers, the stories carry a stunning impact. Thanks particularly to the brief, but penetrating, emphasis on the subject by Lerone Bennett and to the special studies made by Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Innes,¹⁰⁷ the story of the Anthony Johnson family is readily available. Another African-American in this category, Benjamin Dole of Surry County, may yet find biographers. It is especially noteworthy that the persons for whose importation these particular patents were granted were mainly, if not all, bond-laborers brought from Europe.

67. Since considerable attention has been devoted to these African-Americans in the works referred to above, I will simply list them:

Land patent granted to Anthony Johnson, on 250 acres for transport of 5 persons: Tho Benrose, Peter Bughby, Antho: Cripps, John Gessorol[?], Richard Johnson. (Virginia Land Patent Book No. 2, p. 326. 24 July 1651.)¹⁰⁸

Patent granted to John Johnson, son of Anthony Johnson, on 550 acres, on Great Nassawattocks Creek, adjacent to land granted to Anthony Johnson, for the transportation of eleven persons: John Edwards, Wm Routh, Thos. Yowell, Fran. Maland, Wm Price, John Owe, Dorothy Reely, Rich Hamstead, Law[rence] Barnes. (Virginia Land Patent Book, No. 3, p. 101. 10 May 1652.)

Patent on 100 acres bounded by lands owned by Anthony, Richard's father, and by brother John Johnson, granted by Governor Richard Bennett to Richard Johnson, "Negro," for the transportation of two bond-laborers: William Ames and William Vincent. (Virginia Land Patent Book, No. 3, p. 294. 21 November 1654.)

Land patent granted to Benjamin Dole, "Negro," 300 acres in Surry County for the importation of six persons. (Virginia Land Patent Book, No. 4. 17 December 1656.)

68. It has been pointed out that headrights could be sold by the original importers to other persons, and that such a patent might therefore be granted to persons other than the original owners of the bond-laborers. There is no way of knowing whether the Johnsons and Benjamin Dole ever were in possession of the bond-laborers whose headrights they exercised, or whether they bought the headright from other persons. In any case, the point being made here is not affected. There was no suggestion that African-Americans were barred from the privilege of

importing bond-laborers prior to 1670. Indeed, the enactment of such a ban in 1670, clearly implied that it was an accepted practice prior to that time.¹⁰⁹

69. The English in 1667, under the Treaty of Breda at the end of the Second Dutch War gained permanent direct access to African labor. Five years later, the Royal African Company was formed to systematize the supply of African bond-laborers to Anglo-American colonies. But, given the English superstructural obstacles and the already marked resistance of the African-Americans to lifetime hereditary bondage; given the general discontent of the laboring classes, African-American and European-American, bond and free; given the absence of a reliable intermediate stratum - what hope could there be for imposing social control on this "Volatile Society," if masses of kidnapped Africans were now added to the ranks of the bond-laborers already at the bottom of the heap? Might it not, indeed, lead to the appearance of *quilombos* in the Blue Ridge or the Allegheny mountains rivaling in scope the Palmares settlement that through most of the seventeenth century withstood the assaults of Portuguese and Dutch colonialists?¹¹⁰

IX

Rebellion

70. Bacon's Rebellion demonstrated beyond question the lack of a sufficient intermediate stratum to stand between the ruling plantation elite and the mass of the European-American and African-American laboring people, free and bond. It began in April 1676 as a difference between the elite and the sub-elite planters over "Indian policy," but by September it had become a civil war against the social order established by the land-engrossing plantation bourgeoisie. When Bacon's forces besieged, captured, and burned the colonial capital city of Jamestown and sent Governor Berkeley, scurrying into exile across Chesapeake Bay, the rebel army was composed mainly of European-American and African-American bond-laborers and freedmen recently "out of their time."¹¹¹

71. The rebels lost the initiative, however, when their attempt to capture a naval force for themselves miscarried. The death in October of Nathaniel Bacon, the magnetic chief leader of the rebellion was a serious blow, but not necessarily a fatal one. The eleven hundred English troops that were sent to aid the Governor's cause did not arrive in Virginia until the shooting was over, but armed English merchantmen were employed with effect on the rivers to harry the rebels. The captain of one of these ships was Thomas Grantham, whose policy of unabashed deception, and exploitation of an old connection with Bacon's successor, a general, played a decisive role in

bringing about the final defeat of the rebels in January 1677.

72. Grantham procured the treachery of the new rebel general to help him in securing the surrender of the West Point garrison of three hundred men in arms, even though as a contemporary account said:

... the name of Authority had but little power to ring the sword out of these Mad fellows' hands... [and therefore Grantham] resolved to accost them with never to be performed promises.¹¹²

73. Then Grantham tackled the main stronghold of the rebel forces three miles further up in the country, and in Grantham's own words:

I there met about four hundred English and Negroes in Arms who were much dissatisfied at the Surrender of the Point, saying I had betrayed them, and there-upon some were for shooting me and others were for cutting me in peeces: I told them I would willingly surrender myselfe to them, till they were satisfied from His Majestie, and did engage to the Negroes and Servants, that they were all pardoned and freed from their Slavery: And with faire promises and Rundletts of Brandy, I pacified them, giving them severall Noates under my hand that what I did was by the order of his Majestie and the Governor.... Most of them I persuaded to goe to their Homes, which accordingly they did, except about eighty Negroes and twenty English which would not deliver their Armes....¹¹³

74. Grantham tricked these one hundred men on board a sloop with the promise of taking them to a rebel fort a few miles down York River. Instead, towing them behind his own sloop, he brought them under the guns of another ship and forced their surrender, although, as he wrote, "they yeilded with a great deal of discontent, saying had they known my purpose they would have destroyed me."

75. The transcendent importance of this record is that there, in colonial Virginia, a century and a half before Nat Turner led his rebellion, and William Lloyd Garrison began the *Liberator*, the armed laboring class, black and white side by side, fought for the abolition of slavery.

X

"...an alteration in the government...?"

76. In January 1677, as Bacon's Rebellion was ending in Virginia, Maryland Governor Notley, who had been anxiously watching events in the neighboring province, sounded a warning. "There must be an alteration though not of the Government yet in the Government" in Virginia, to a manner of rule that would "agree with the com-

mon people." Otherwise, in a short while, he said, under another audacious leader, "the Commons of Virginia would Emmire themselves as deep in Rebellion as ever they did in Bacon's time."¹¹⁴ He repeated the warning four months later:

if the ould Course be taken, and if Coll. Jeffreys [Herbert Jeffreys, Berkeley's successor as Royal Governor of Virginia] build his proceedings upon the ould foundation its neither him nor all his Majesties Souldiers in Virginia will either satisfy or rule those people.¹¹⁵

77. *But what sort of "alteration in the Government" could be fashioned that would "agree with the common people" enough that it could rule them?*

78. Virginia's mystic transition from the era of "the volatile society" of the seventeenth century to "the Golden Age of the Chesapeake" in the middle quarters of the eighteenth century is a much studied phenomenon. It was during that period that the ruling plantocracy replaced "the ould foundation" that Governor Notley had warned them of, in order to "build their proceedings" on a new one, a process that historian John C. Rainbolt, titled "The Alteration in the Relationship between Leadership and Constituents in Virginia."¹¹⁶

79. One of the most venerated commentators on the Virginia colonial records, historian, Philip Alexander Bruce, concluded that, "toward the end of the seventeenth century," there occurred "a marked tendency to promote a pride of race among the members of every class of white people; to be white gave the distinction of color even to the agricultural [European-American limited-term bond-] servants, whose condition, in some respects was not much removed from that of actual slavery..." A contemporary of Bruce, Lyon G. Tyler, long-time editor of *The William and Mary Quarterly*,¹¹⁷ remarked: "race, and not class, [was] the distinction in social life in eighteenth-century Virginia." Neither of these historians ventured to speculate, however, on why this dominance of "white race" consciousness appeared at that particular time, and not before.

80. Whatever may have been their reasons for neglecting the matter, these were questions that were actually posed by contemporaneous observers of the trend. In September 1723 an African-American wrote from Virginia a letter of protest and appeal to Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, whose see included Virginia. On behalf of observant Christians of mixed Anglo-African descent, who were nevertheless bound by "a Law or act which keeps and makes them and there seed SLaves forever," the letter asked for the Bishop's help and that of the King "and the rest of the Rullers," in ending their cruel bondage.¹¹⁸

81. Aspects of discrimination against free African-Americans also bothered British Attorney-General Richard West, who had the responsibility of advising the Lords of Trade and Plantations whether laws passed in colonial legislatures merited approval, or should be rejected in whole or in part as being prejudicial or contradictory to the laws of England.¹¹⁹ In due course, West had occasion to examine a measure that had been passed by the Virginia Assembly in May 1723, entitled: "An Act directing the trial of Slaves, committing capital crimes; and for the more effectual punishing conspiracies and insurrections of them; and for the better government of Negros, Mulattos, and Indians, bond or free." Article 23 of that 24-article law provided that:

no free negro, mulatto, or indian whatsoever, shall have any vote at the election of burgesses, or any other election whatsoever.¹²⁰

82. The Attorney-General made the following categorical objection:

I cannot see why one freeman should be used worse than another, merely upon account of his complexion... ; to vote at elections of officers, either for a county, or parish, &c. is incident to every freeman, who is possessed of a certain proportion of property, and, therefore, when several negroes have merited their freedom, and obtained it, and by their industry, have acquired that proportion of property, so that the above-mentioned incidental rights of liberty are actually vested in them, for my own part, I am persuaded, that it cannot be just, by a general law, without any allegation of crime, or other demerit whatsoever, to strip all free persons, of a black complexion (some of whom may, perhaps be of considerable substance,) from those rights, which are so justly valuable to every freeman.¹²¹

83. The Lords of Trade and Plantations "had Occasion to look into the said Act, and as it carrie[d] an Appearance of Hardship towards certain Freemen meerly upon Account of their Complection, who would otherwise enjoy every Priviledge belonging to Freemen [they wanted to know] what were the Reasons which induced the Assembly to pass this Act."¹²²

84. Governor William Gooch to whom the question was ultimately referred declared that the Virginia Assembly had decided upon this curtailment of the franchise in order "to fix a perpetual Brand upon Free Negros & Mulattos...."¹²³ Surely that was no "unthinking decision"! Rather, it was a deliberate act by the plantation bourgeoisie; it proceeded from a conscious decision in the process of establishing a system of racial oppression,

even though it meant repealing an electoral principle that had existed in Virginia for more than century.

XI

One Mother Country; two systems of social control

85. Whatever the members of the Board of Trade in England may have thought about the unresponsive, illogical, and seemingly disingenuous¹²⁴ reply eventually sent to them by Virginia Governor Gooch, they decided, as they said, to let the matter "lye by." We do not know whether any member of the Board commented on the difference between Gooch's policy of "fixing a perpetual brand" on African-Americans, and his especially bitter rejection of those born of an English father or mother, on one hand, and the policy of the West Indian planters of formally recognizing the middle-class status of "colored" descendant (and Afro-Caribbeans who earned special merit by their service to the regime). Nor did Governor William Gooch allude to that matter in his reply. But it is question that goes to the heart of the matter of the invention of the white race.

86. In the British West Indies generally the free colored included "shopkeepers, and... owners of land and slaves." In the trade in non-sugar commodities with the North American colonies, many free colored merchants traded directly with captains of cargo vessels. In Barbados, the energy and initiative of freedmen hucksters in meeting bond-laborers on the way to market and ships just arriving in the harbor, were able to control the supply of produce and livestock to the general public. They were likewise involved in supplying the sugar estates with essentials that could not be got from England. Indeed, this proved a route to sugar estate ownership by occasional foreclosure on a bankrupt creditors.¹²⁵ Within three years after the repeal of the prohibition of freedmen acting as pilots, they had nearly monopolized Jamaica's coastal shipping.¹²⁶

87. In 1721 the Jamaica Assembly took a positive view of such trends, as it turned its attention to the problem of unsettled lands becoming "a receptacle for runaway and rebellious negroes." It occurred to them to establish a buffer zone between coastal sugar plantation regions and the mountainous (and Maroon-infested) interior, by offering free homesteads to laboring-class settlers and their families. Among the beneficiaries were to be "every free mulatto, Indian or negro" who would take up the offer, and remain on the land for seven years. Each was to have twenty acres of land for himself, and five acres more for each slave he brought with him.¹²⁷ Perhaps some of those homesteaders served in the "companies

of free Negroes and mulattoes" who were employed effectively in the First Maroon War, ended with the 1739 Treaty of Trelawney Town binding the Maroons to capture and return runaway bond-laborers.¹²⁸ By the early 1830s, "free blacks and coloreds" owned 70,000 of the total of around 310,000 bond-laborers in Jamaica.¹²⁹

88. When the militia system based on the European ex-bond-laborers proved a failure, the sugar bourgeoisie relied on the British Army and Navy to guarantee their control, while at the same time recruiting free persons, black and white, into the militias as an auxiliary. In Barbados, as in Jamaica, by the 1720s, freedmen were required to serve in the militia, even though they were denied important civil rights.¹³⁰ The British Army and Navy, however, were subject to many demands because of the almost constant world-wide round of wars with France that would last for 127 years, from 1688 to 1815. In the decisive moment—the coming of the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution—when all hung in the balance, more extreme measures were required, for then the British in the West Indies were confronted with "blacks inspired by the revolutionary doctrine of French republicanism," and were "forced to conduct operations against large numbers of rebellious slaves in the rugged and largely unknown interiors of their own islands" of Grenada, St. Vincent and Jamaica.¹³¹

89. The internal and external dangers were so critical that the British supreme commander on the Caribbean was forced to conclude that, "the army of Great Britain is inadequate to... defend these colonies," without an army of Black soldiers. Eight West India Regiments were formed, composed in small part by freedmen, and partly of slaves purchased by the army from plantation owners; but more were acquired directly from Africa.¹³² However, "[i]t was clear that the continued existence of the West India Regiments depended upon establishing the black soldier as a freedman," and, indeed, in 1807 it was so declared by Act of the British Parliament: the bond-laborers who entered the British Army by that act became freedmen.¹³³ But the logic of the policy represented a major violation of the principle of denial of social mobility of the oppressed group.¹³⁴ Many of these soldiers when discharged settled on plantations as free persons.¹³⁵

90. In the meantime, thoughtful observers had begun to advocate the advantages to be had from a positive attitude toward freedmen in general. Consider the advice put forward by four authoritative English writers: Edmund Burke, in 1758; Edward Long, in 1774; the Reverend James Ramsay, in 1784, and George Pinckard in 1803.

What if in our colonies we should go so far as to find some medium between liberty and absolute slavery, in which we might place all mulattoes... and such blacks, who... their masters... should think proper in some degree to enfranchise. These might have land allotted to them, or where that could not be spared, some sort of fixed employment.... [T]he colony will be strengthened by the addition of so many men, who will have an interest of their own to fight for.¹³⁶

Edward Long argued similarly:

Mulattoes ought to be held in some distinction [over the blacks]. They would then form the centre of connexion between the two extremes, producing a regular establishment of three ranks of men. [He stressed training of mulatto apprentices:] [T]o serve a regular apprenticeship to artificers and tradesmen would make them orderly subjects and defenders of the country.... [and he perceived a possible added benefit to the employer class:] But even if they were to set up for themselves, no disadvantage would probably accrue to the publick, but the contrary: they would oblige the white artificers to work at more moderate rates....¹³⁷

91. Reverend Ramsay, too, also limited his proposal to mulattoes. The girls should be declared free from their birth, or from the time the mother became free. Male mulattoes should be placed out as apprentices "to such trade or business as may best agree with their inclination and the demands of the colony," and should be freed at the age of thirty. He was persuaded that, "By these means... a new rank of citizens, placed between the Black and White races, would be established." They would be an intermediate buffer social control stratum since, "they would naturally attach themselves to the White race... , and so become a barrier against the designs of the Black."¹³⁸

92. George Pinckard, had served several years as a surgeon in the British expeditionary forces in the Caribbean, and he looked favorably on the prospect of gradual reform leading to abolition of slavery in the West Indies. What Pinckard suggested anticipated Charles James Fox's prescription for social control adaptation in Ireland from racial oppression to national oppression, namely, "Make the besiegers part of the garrison."¹³⁹ Pinckard argued for the social promotion of a "considerable proportion of the *people of colour*, between the whites and negroes." The installation of such a middle class, would save Britain a great expenditure of life and treasure. This middle class would soon become possessed of stores and estates; and the garrison might be safely entrusted to them as the best defenders of their own property."¹⁴⁰

93. In 1803, John Alleyne Beckles, Anglo-Barbadian member of the Barbados Council, denounced the limitations on property rights of freedmen and warned of the danger to social control in the continuation of such restrictions. Bestowing full property rights on the free "colored," he argued,

will keep them at a greater distance from the slaves, and will keep up that jealousy which seems naturally to exist between them and the slaves; it will tend to our security, for should the slaves at any time attempt a revolt, the free-coloured persons for their own safety and the security of their property, must join the whites and resist them. But if we reduce the free coloured people to a level with the slaves, they must unite with them, and will take every occasion of promoting and encouraging a revolt.¹⁴¹

94. Such ruling-class insights recognized the link between concessions to the freedmen and the maintenance of control over the bond-laborers who, in the late 1770s outnumbered the total free population of Barbados by nearly three-and-a-half times, and by nine times that of Jamaica.¹⁴² As members of the militia that quelled the 1816 bond-laborer revolt in Barbados, "the free coloureds were reckoned to have conducted themselves 'slightly better' than the whites."¹⁴³ In Jamaica in the First and the Second Maroon Wars, the mulatto militia justified the expectation that they would be a "powerful counterpoise... of men dissimilar from [the Maroons] in complexion and manners, but equal in hardiness and vigour," capable of "scour[ing] the woods on all occasions; a service in which the [British Army] regulars are by no means equal to them."¹⁴⁴ As the struggle to end slavery entered its critical stage, there were freedmen who supported the cause of the bond-laborers, but they were the exceptional few.¹⁴⁵

95. By the late 1770s, in Jamaica 36 percent of the free population was composed of persons of some degree of African ancestry; on the eve of Emancipation, in 1833, they were a 72 per cent majority. In Barbados in 1786, only 5 per cent of free persons were persons of African ancestry; in 1833 they were 34 per cent.¹⁴⁶ Although this increase in the freedmen population brought added forces to the intermediate social control stratum against the bond-laborers, it conversely became a major factor in the final crisis of the system of chattel bond-servitude, coming as it did in the larger context of the Haitian Revolution, in which the role of the free colored had been decisive, and the rise of the abolitionist movement in England. The "increasing wealth and numbers of the coloreds as well as their importance in the militia made it more difficult for the Assembly to deny them their rights."¹⁴⁷

XII

In the Chesapeake: The Maroon threat, plus

96. The contrast between the denial of the legitimacy of class distinctions among African-Americans in continental Anglo-America and their deliberate inclusion in the intermediate social control stratum in the Anglo-Caribbean, did not arise from differences in the characteristics of the respective ruling plantation bourgeois elites. Both were tiny minorities of the population of monocultural colonies, the largest owners of lifetime bond-laborers and of the best land, as well as controllers of the export trade, and credit, and they held a corresponding dominance in political and legislative affairs.

97. In the eighteenth-century Chesapeake colonies the social power structure was dominated by the gentry, a leisure class comprising 5 per cent of the Anglo-American men,¹⁴⁸ persons whose wealth, however gained, was such as to relieve them of any economic need to engage in productive work. These "great planters," writes Aubrey C. Land, "...never formed more than a fraction of the total community of planters, something like 2.5 per cent in the decade 1690-1699 and about 6.5 per cent half a century later."¹⁴⁹ From their ranks came those who actually occupied the posts of political authority.¹⁵⁰ Over the period 1720 to 1776, 630 men held seats in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Of this number, 110 dominated the proceedings of the House by virtue of their committee positions in that body. Of that 110, three out of four each owned more than 10,000 acres of land. With regard to the extent of their holdings of lifetime bond-laborers, it has been found that eleven held more than 300 each; 25 held from 50 to 300; 25 held from 50 to 300 each; and 22 others held more than ten.¹⁵¹

98. In such circumstances, it is not surprising to find Colony authorities expressing apprehension over the problem of social control. In 1719, Governor Spotswood, in the wake of a recently frustrated rebellion of African-American bond-laborers, warned against relying on language differences among bond-laborers to insure rebellion by such workers; "freedom," he said, "wears a cap which can, without a tongue call together all those who long to shake off [f] the fetters of slavery"¹⁵² Although the attempt of African bond-laborers to establish a free settlement at the head of James River in 1729 was defeated, Governor William Gooch feared that "a very small number of negroes once settled in those parts, would very soon be increased by the accession of other runaways," as had happened with "the negroes in the mountains of Jamaica...."¹⁵³ In 1736, William Byrd II, member of the

Colony Council, and former Deputy-Governor, expressed fear for the future of the existing Virginia social order, in view of the rapidly increasing proportion of African-American bond-laborers. He, too, had Jamaica on his mind, worrying "lest they [the lifetime bond-laborers in Virginia] prove as troublesome and dangerous... as they have been lately in Jamaica.... We have mountains, in Virginia too, to which they may retire safely, and do as much mischief as they do in Jamaica." Open revolt might occur; there were already 10,000 African-American men capable of bearing arms in Virginia, he noted, and warned that "in case there should arise a Man amongst us, exasperated by a desperate fortune he might with more advantage than Cataline kindle a Servile War."¹⁵⁴ In 1749, Virginia Council members Thomas Lee and William Fairfax, favored discouraging the importation of English convicts as bond-laborers. They cited former Governor Spotswood's allusion to freedom's cap, and warned that increasing the number of convict bond-laborers in Virginia, "who are wicked enough to join our Slaves in any Mischief... [which] in all Probability will bring sure and sudden Destruction on all His Majesty's good subjects of this colony."¹⁵⁵

99. Obviously, the small cohort of the ruling elite must have a substantial intermediate buffer social control stratum to stand between it and "great disturbances," or even another rebellion. Like the capitalist enclosers of the peasant's land in sixteenth-century England, the men for whom the plantation world was made needed an effective intermediate yeoman-type social control stratum.

100. In the eighteenth century, nearly half of the European-American adult male population were landowners. Forty percent of these were employers of bond-labor.¹⁵⁶ This nearly twenty per cent of European-American adult male population was equal in number to around thirty percent of the number of African-Americans in Virginia. Such a proportion of bond-labor holders to lifetime bond-laborers would supply a middle class of small property owners sufficient to constitute an adequate social control stratum under normal condition.

101. At the same time, however, half of European-American men were not landowners, and sixty per cent of the those who were landowners did not own bond-laborers; rather they were, willy-nilly, put into competition with bond-labor. It was socially and economically almost impossible for persons in these categories to become owners of bond-labor. Aside from the prevailing poverty among such planters, there was the operation of the general tendency of centralization of capital to reduce the number of competitors, not to increase it. Aubrey C. Land's analysis of Maryland estate inventories

found that three-fourths of the planters (tenants as well as owners) fell into the £0-to-£100 category in the 1690-1699 period.¹⁵⁷ Although the proportion of planters in the £0-£100 group had declined by 1740, it still made up more than half the total.¹⁵⁸ The poverty of most of the non-owners of bond-laborers was such that, "Between investment and consumption [they] had no choice.... they could not invest from savings because [they] had none." Far from becoming owners of even limited-term bond-laborers, they were likely to leave their heirs penniless.¹⁵⁹ Land concludes with a historically significant finding: the majority of the planters were "not the beneficiar[ies] of the planting society."¹⁶⁰

102. Here, then, is the key to the understanding the difference between Virginia ruling-class policy of "fixing a perpetual brand" on African-Americans, and the especially bitter rejection of those born of an English father or mother, on one hand, and, on the other, the policy of the West Indian planters of formally recognizing the middle-class status "colored" descendant (and other Afro-Caribbeans who earned special merit by their service to the regime). The difference was rooted in the objective fact that in the West Indies there were *too few* laboring-class Europeans to embody an adequate petit bourgeoisie, while in the continental colonies there were *too many* to be accommodated in the ranks of that class.

103. And, therein lay the heart of the social control problem of the ruling plantation bourgeoisie in continental Anglo-America. The overwhelming majority of its population, bond and free, were barred, some by law and some by economic circumstances from participation in the formation of a middle class normal to a capitalist society. What could be done to prevent the poor dispossessed majority of European-Americans from joining with African-Americans to "Emmire themselves as deep in Rebellion as ever they did in Bacon's time"?¹⁶¹

XIII

The codification of white supremacy

104. Sir Francis Bacon in 1625 distilled truisms of statecraft in his essay "Of Seditions and Troubles," two of which would prove to be particularly adaptable to the social control purposes of the Anglo-American continental plantation bourgeoisie, a century later and an ocean away. First, there was the importance of "hopes": "[I]t is a certain sign of a wise government and proceeding, when it can hold men's hearts with hopes when it cannot by satisfaction." Secondly, with acknowledgment to Machiavelli, Bacon advocated "dividing and breaking of all factions and combinations that are adverse to the state, and setting them at distance, or at least distrust among themselves."¹⁶²

105. It had not been surprising when, in 1676, rich land-owners deserted Bacon's Rebellion, "setting them[selves] at a distance" from the laboring classes, bond and free, who had become the self-assertive main element in the rebellion. It was the "speedy separation of the sound parts from the rabble" for which Virginia's representatives in England were hoping.¹⁶³ But maintaining social control thereafter was a different sort of problem. Half the population was still made up of bond-laborers, the great majority of whom were denied even the hope of freedom, and half of the other half was made up of poor freemen, without practical hope of upward social mobility, and who were "not the beneficiar[ies] of the planting society."¹⁶⁴ How to "hold [poor freemen's] hearts with hope" when they have no hope, precisely because the bond-laborers have no hope? How to "set at a distance" these laboring-class "factions" whose interests were "adverse to the state?"¹⁶⁵

106. Since it was impossible to maintain the hopes of the freemen for upward social mobility in plantation society,¹⁶⁶ the very resentment felt by the poor freemen on this account was to be manipulated in such a way as to "set them at distance" from the bond-laborers who had no hope of freedom.

107. A new social status was to be contrived that would be a birthright of not only Anglos, but of every Euro-American, a "white" identity designed not only to set them "at a distance" from the African-American bond-laborers, but at the same time to enlist European-Americans of every class as active, or at least passive, supporters of capitalist agriculture based on chattel bond-labor.¹⁶⁷ The introduction of this counterfeit of social mobility was an act of "social engineering," the essence of which was to reissue long-established common law rights, "incident to every free man," but in the form of "white" privileges: the presumption of liberty, the right to get married, the right to carry a gun, the right to read and write, the right to testify in legal proceedings, the right of self-directed physical mobility, and the enjoyment of male prerogatives over women. The successful societal function of this status required that not only African-American bond-laborers, but most emphatically, free African-Americans be excluded from it. It is that status and realigning of the laboring-class European-Americans that transformed class oppression into racial oppression.

108. The distinction was emphasized even for European-American chattel bond-laborers, whose presumption of liberty was temporarily in suspension. Any owner of an African-American, practically without hindrance, could legally use or abuse his African-American bond-laborers, or dispose of them by gift, bequest, sale, or rental as a

matter of course, but by a law enacted in 1691, he was forbidden to set them free.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, "to be white gave the distinction of color even to the agricultural [European-American bond-] servants, whose condition, in some respects, was not much removed from that of actual slavery."¹⁶⁹ The revised Virginia code of 1705 took pains to specify unprecedented guarantees for the European "christian white" limited-term bond-laborers. Before, masters had merely been required not to "exceed the bounds of moderation" in beating or whipping or otherwise "correcting," the bond-laborer, it being provided that the victim if one could get to the Justice of the Peace and then to the next County Court, "shall have remedy for his grievances."¹⁷⁰ The new code provided that, upon a second offense by a master in treatment of "servants (not being slaves)," the courts could order that the servant be taken from that master and sold at outcry.¹⁷¹

109. Freedom dues for limited-term bond-laborers had never been specified in Virginia law, but were merely referred to in court orders by the loose term "corn and clothes." The 1705 code, however, noting that "nothing in that nature ever [had been] made certain," enumerated them with specificity: "to every male servant, ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings in money (or the equivalent in goods), a gun worth at least twenty shillings; and to every woman servant, fifteen bushels of corn, forty shillings in money (or the equivalent in goods)."¹⁷² The new code forbade the master to "whip a christian white servant naked, without an order from the justice of the peace," the offending master to be fined forty shillings payable to the servant.¹⁷³ Lifetime bond-laborers were not to have freedom dues, of course, but they had been allowed to raise livestock on their own account, and to have them marked as their own. But in 1692, and again in 1705 with greater emphasis, livestock raised by African-American bond-laborers on their own account were ordered to be confiscated.¹⁷⁴

110. The act of 1723 that was the subject of the correspondence between Governor Gooch and the Board of Trade was by no means the first evidence in the law of ruling-class desire not only to impose lifetime hereditary bond-servitude on African-Americans, but to implement it by a system of *racial oppression*, expressed in laws against free African-Americans. Such were the laws, several of which have been previously noted, making free Negro women tithable;¹⁷⁵ forbidding non-Europeans, though baptized christians, to be owners of "christian," that is, European, bond-laborers;¹⁷⁶ denying free African-Americans the right to hold any office of public trust;¹⁷⁷ barring any Negro from being a witness in any case against a "white" person;¹⁷⁸ making any free Negro sub-

ject to thirty lashes at the public whipping post for "lift[ing] his or her hand" against any European-American (thus to a major extent denying Negroes the elementary right of self defense);¹⁷⁹ excluding free African-Americans from the armed militia;¹⁸⁰ and, forbidding free African-Americans from possessing "any gun, powder, shot, or any club, or any other weapon whatsoever, offensive or defensive."¹⁸¹

111. The denial of the right of self-defense would become a factor in the development of the peculiar American form of male supremacy, white-male supremacy, informed by the principle that any European-American male could assume familiarity with any African-American woman. That principle came to have the sanction of law. I have earlier cited the Maryland Provincial Court decision of 1767 that "a slave had no recourse against the violator of his bed."¹⁸² "The law simply did not criminalize the rape of slave women," writes Philip Schwarz, "No Virginia judge heard [such] a case..."¹⁸³ Free African-American women had practically no legal protection in this respect, in view of the general exclusion of African-Americans, free or bond, from giving testimony in court against "whites."¹⁸⁴

112. The Virginia Assembly gave due attention to reinforcement of the "screen of racial contempt"¹⁸⁵ that was intended in these laws. Explicit measures were put in place to guarantee that the people were systematically propagandized in the moral and legal ethos of white supremacy. Provisions were included for that purpose in the 1705 "Act concerning Servants and Slaves" and in the Act of 1723, "directing the trial of Slaves... and for the better government of Negroes, Mulattos, and Indians, bond or free."¹⁸⁶ To prevent any "pretense of ignorance," the laws mandated that parish clerks or churchwardens, once each Spring and Fall at the close of Sunday service read ("publish") these laws in full to the congregants. Sheriffs were ordered to have the same done at the courthouse door at the June or July term of court. If we presume, in absence of any contrary record, that this mandate was followed, the general public was regularly and systematically subjected to official white supremacist agitation. It was to be drummed into the minds of the people that, for the first time, no free African-American was to dare to lift his or her hand against a "Christian, not being a negro, mulatto or Indian"; that African-American freeholders were no longer to be allowed to vote; that the provision of a previous enactment was being reinforced against the mating of English and Negroes as producing "abominable mixture" and "spurious issue."; that, as provided in the 1723 law for preventing freedom plots by African-American bond-laborers, "any white person... found in company with any [illegally con-

gregated] slaves," was to be fined (along with free African-Americans or Indians so offending) with a fine of fifteen shillings, or to "receive, on his, her, or their bare backs, for every such offense, twenty lashes well laid on."¹⁸⁷

113. Thus was the "white race" invented as the social control formation whose distinguishing characteristic was not the participation of the owners of bond-laborers; that alone would have yielded merely a normal form of class differentiation. What distinguished this system of social control, what made it "the white race," was the participation of the European-American laboring classes, non-slaveholders, self-employed smallholders, tenants, and laborers. Indeed, Governor Notley's 1677 prophecy— with a reversal of subject and object— became reality: The "men in power" had found a way to have the "common [European-American] people" agree with them in keeping down African-Americans, free and bond. In time this white race social control system begun in Virginia and Maryland, would serve as the model of social order to each succeeding plantation region of settlement.¹⁸⁸

XIV

White-skin privileges— the bait and the hook

114. This system of white-skin privileges had not been initiated by the European-American laboring classes, but by the plantation bourgeoisie, the owners of bond-laborers. At the same time, European-Americans found themselves increasingly superseded in their trades by lower-cost lifetime bond-laborers. After a brief period of "seasoning" in ruling-class white supremacist regulation and indoctrination, these tradesmen reacted to their plight— not by demanding an end to bond-servitude— but by pleading for preference in employment.¹⁸⁹ Having settled for this ruinous bargain, the tradesmen invariably couched their complaints in terms that could not be considered a threat to the "rights" of the owners to train and directly employ bond-laborers in skilled trades. In 1742, white tradesmen in South Carolina pleaded for the exclusion of Negroes from the skilled trades.¹⁹⁰ The following year the colony's Commons House of Assembly responded by agreeing "that no slaves that shall hereafter be brought up to any mechanic trades shall be suffered to work for any other than their own masters." In 1750, the same legislature excepted owners of bond-laborers from the provisions of a law, "That no Handicrafts Man shall hereafter teach a Negro his Trade."¹⁹¹

115. Georgia colony, founded by its Trustees in 1732 on the no-slavery principle, was territory irresistible to the

South Carolina plantation bourgeoisie anxious to “grow the economy,” as it might be put today. They soon began to campaign for an end of this government interference with free enterprise. In the course of the controversy, a Savannah man objected that abandonment of the founding principle “would take work from white men’s hands and impoverish them, as in the case of Charleston [South Carolina], where the tradesmen are all beggars by that means.” The promoters of the slavery cause countered by saying that “the negroes should not be allowed to work at anything but producing rice... and in felling timber.”¹⁹² By way of response, the 1750 Act repealing the ban on slavery in Georgia barred the employment of Negroes except in cultivation and coopering. These provisions were, in terms of “white” labor privileges, considered superior to South Carolina’s regulation, which related only to free or “hired-out” African-American craftsmen.¹⁹³

116. Deficiency laws, in a mode often akin to latter-day “featherbedding,” provided jobs for European-American workers simply for being “white.” In 1712, the South Carolina Assembly, for example, passed a law stipulating that at any plantation six miles or more remote from the owner’s usual abode, for every “Six Negroes or other Slaves” employed, a quota of “One or more White Person” must be kept there. Ten years later, the quota was one to ten, but that applied to the home plantation as well as those far removed.¹⁹⁴ The repeal of the no-slavery principle in Georgia in 1750 included a similar privileged opportunity for propertyless European-Americans, by requiring the employment of “one white man Servant” on each plantation for every four African-American lifetime bond-laborers employed.¹⁹⁵

117. In 1831, the year of Nat Turner’s Rebellion, “white” mechanics in Culpeper and Petersburg, Virginia, demanded that Negroes be barred from apprenticeship, and from any trade without a “white” overseer. In 1851, a similar petition from Norfolk betrayed a high degree of political sophistication. Barring Negroes from competing for employment, they said, would guarantee against “jealousy between slave holders and non-slaveholders.”¹⁹⁶ Slaveholding would end, but the “white race” solidarity would remain the country’s most general form of class collaborationism, by virtue of the persistence of the system of racial privileges for “white” workers.

118. The effort bore fruit as far as danger from the European-American bond-laborers was concerned. As Winthrop D. Jordan notes, “[T]he fear of white servants and Negroes uniting in servile rebellion, a prospect which made some sense in the 1660s and 70s... vanished completely during the following half-century.” He continues with a corollary: “Significantly, the only rebellions of

white servants in the continental colonies came before the entrenchment of slavery.¹⁹⁷ Worse, still, the poor and propertyless European-Americans became the principal element in the day-to-day enforcement of racial oppression...“The immediate control of the Negroes,” writes Thomas J. Wertenbaker, “fell almost entirely into the hands of white men of humble means.”¹⁹⁸ It was they who mainly made up the “slave patrols” and, as historian Philip Schwartz says, “Patrollers were the ultimate means of preventing insurrection.”¹⁹⁹

119. Yet, the position of the poor laboring-class European-Americans, vis-a-vis the rich and powerful owners of bond-laborers, was not improved, by the white-skin privilege system. That system, after all, was conceived and instituted as an alternative method to the of Grantham and Berkeley, but with precisely the same aims and effect. On that there is unimpeachable testimony.

120. In 1831, less than a hundred miles from the spot where, in 1676, the “four hundred English and Negroes in Armes” had wanted to shoot Berkeley’s mendacious Captain, or cut him in pieces, there occurred that brief uprising of lifetime bondlaborers known as Nat Turner’s Rebellion. That event sent a premonitory shudder through the frame of the United States ruling plantation bourgeoisie. It brought to the surface thoughts and dreads not ordinarily spoken. All that winter and spring of 1831-32 the Virginia Legislature and the press debated the meaning and possible consequences of this battle-cry of labor enslaved. They were looking to their defenses and they talked much of the poor whites.

121. T. J. Randolph, nephew and namesake of the author of the Declaration of Independence, put the rhetorical question to his fellow legislators, “...upon whom is to fall the burden of this defense [against revolt by African-American bond-laborers]: not upon the lordly masters of their hundred slaves, who will never turn out except to retire with their families when danger threatens. No sir, it is to fall... chiefly upon the non-slaveholders... patrolling under a compulsory process, for a pittance of seventy-five cents per twelve hours....”²⁰⁰

122. George W. Summers of Kanawha County (now a West Virginia county) surely made many in the House of Delegates wince. “In the character of Patroles,” he said, the poor white “is thus made to fold to his bosom, the adder that stings him.”²⁰¹ “Civis,” an Eastern Virginia owner of lifetime hereditary bond-laborers, pointed out that in his part of the state more than half the white minority had “little but their complexion to console them for being born into a higher caste.”²⁰² In a reply to a letter written by Thomas Roderick Dew (under the pseudonym, “Appomattox”), the editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*

er, though defending the notion of forced removal of African-Americans to Africa, spoke a truth that bore profounder implications than he intended regarding the plight of the European-American workers in Virginia: "...forced to wander vagabonds around the confines of society, finding no class which they can enter, because for the one they should have entered, there is substituted an ARTIFICIAL SYSTEM of labor to which they cannot attach themselves."²⁰³ Indeed! The artificial, system of labor that prevented them from "attaching themselves" to the struggle against the master class.

123. These Virginia debates thus gave testimony to the degradation that a century and a half of white supremacy had brought to the poor whites who had forgotten those blood-vows sworn by the triumphant light of the Jamestown fire, and in the gloaming waiting for Grantham.

XV

The white race and theories of American History

124. Among the several theories that historians have produced as guides to the general course of— the contours of— American history,²⁰⁴ there are two— "the paradox theory" and "the frontier theory— to which the argument of this essay is particularly relevant."²⁰⁵

The "Paradox" and Edmund S. Morgan

125. The paradox theory projects an assessment of white supremacy in relation to the foundation of the United States as a republic in a positive light. The essence of the thesis is that democracy and equality as represented in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of 1789, were, by the logic of history, made possible by racial oppression. The lineage of this idea goes back to at least 1758, when Edmund Burke argued that "whites" in the southern colonies were more "attached to liberty" than were the colonists in the North because in the South freedom was a racial privilege.²⁰⁶ Early nineteenth-century Virginia scholar Thomas Roderick Dew contended that slavery made possible and actual "one common level" of equality "in regard to whites." "The menial and low offices being all performed by the blacks," he continued, "there is at once taken away the greatest cause for distinction and separation of the ranks of society."²⁰⁷

126. It especially disappointing to find Edmund S. Morgan espousing this doctrine. Professor Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, appeared in the afterglow of the civil rights struggles, sacrifices, and victories of the 1960s. It was a trenchant contribution to the socio-economic and "deliberate choice" explanation of the origin of racial slavery

in Anglo-America, and it supplied the most substantial refutation that had yet appeared of the "natural racism" interpretation of the origin of racial oppression in Anglo-America, most notably represented in works by Carl N. Degler and Winthrop D. Jordan.²⁰⁸ Yet, in answer to the truly critical, though euphemistically put, question, "How could patricians win in popular politics?"²⁰⁹ Morgan offers an elaborate affirmation of the paradox theory.

127. The essence of Morgan's paradox, to the extent it is a true paradox, is a renewal of the same euphemism of the system of white supremacist and lifetime hereditary bond-servitude that characterized the opinions of Burke and Dew. Unconsciously paraphrasing Edmund Burke, Morgan says, "Virginians may have had a special appreciation of the freedom dear to republicans, because they saw every day what life without it could be."²¹⁰ T.R. Dew and others are recognized in Morgan's approvingly quoted observation of Sir Augustus John Foster, an English diplomat who traveled in Virginia at the beginning of the nineteenth century: "Owners of slaves among themselves are all for keeping down every kind of superiority." It is pure Dew again when Morgan shares Foster's view that "whites" in Virginia, "can profess an unbounded love of liberty and democracy... [because] the mass of the people who in other countries might become mobs [in Virginia are] nearly altogether composed of their" African-American lifetime bond-laborers.²¹¹

128. Morgan rests his argument on the assumption that early in the eighteenth century, "the mass of white Virginians were becoming landowners," and the small planters began to prosper, thus giving the large and small planters "a sense of common identity based on common interests."²¹² This feeling, says Morgan, was sufficient basis for the small planters to put their trust in the ruling plantation bourgeoisie and thus cease to be a danger to social order.²¹³

129. Sources cited here such as Jackson Turner Main, Gloria Main, T. J. Wertenbaker, Aubrey C. Land, Willard F. Bliss, Russell R. Menard, and Allan Kulikoff show that the economic assumption made by Morgan is open to serious question.²¹⁴ In a passing reference to the growth of tenancy, Morgan supplies a bibliographical mention to Bliss and Jackson Main, but that is the limit of his concern with such studies, although they cast great doubt on his facile conclusion that of European-Americans "[t]here were too few free poor to matter,"²¹⁵ a conclusion without which his "paradox" unravels.

130. Morgan, in passages that I have previously cited with approval, declared that the answer to the problem of social control was a series of deliberate measures taken by the ruling class to "separate dangerous free whites

from dangerous slave blacks.²¹⁶ But if, as the country moved "Toward the Republic," and after it got there, among "whites" there were "too few free poor to matter," why did the social order not revert to the normal class differentiation, Burke's "beautiful gradation" of "free men" from rich to the less rich, and so on through the scale, in which the free African-Americans could take their individual places according to their social class? Could they not have been expected, as James Madison once argued, to function properly in that social station?²¹⁷ Given that, the "white race" as a social control formation, would have been a vicious redundancy. Instead, there was a general proscription of the free Negro, laws against emancipation, even by last will and testament, and banishment of those so freed. That, I submit, is unchallengeable evidence of the continued presence of poor whites who had "little but their complexion to console them for being born into a higher caste," yet served as the indispensable element of the "white race," the Peculiar Institution.²¹⁸

131. In seeking to understand his adoption of the "paradox" thesis, it seems helpful to consider the following passage from Morgan's 1972 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians:

The temptation is already apparent to argue that slavery and oppression were the dominant features of American history and that efforts to advance liberty and equality were the exception, indeed no more than a device to divert the masses while their chains were being fastened. To dismiss the rise of liberty and equality in American history as a mere sham is not only to ignore hard facts, it is also to evade the problem presented by those facts. The rise of liberty and equality in this country was accompanied by the rise of slavery. That two such contradictory developments were taking place simultaneously over a long period of our history, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, is the central paradox of American history.²¹⁹

132. Morgan set out to meet the "challenge" of those who, in his opinion, overemphasize slavery and oppression in American history. Yet, the effect of his "paradox" thesis seems no less an apology for white supremacy than the "natural racism" argument. At the end of it all, he writes, "Racism made it possible for white Virginians to develop a devotion to... equality.... Racism became an essential... ingredient of the republican ideology that enabled Virginians to lead the nation." Then, as if shying at his own conclusion, Morgan suggests the speculation that perhaps "the vision of a nation of equals [was] flawed at the source by contempt for both the poor and the black."²²⁰ But, what flaw? If racism was a flaw, then "the rise of liberty" would have been better off without

it— a line of reasoning that negates the paradox. On the other hand, if racism made "the rise of liberty possible," as the paradox would have it, then racism was not a flaw of American bourgeois democracy, but its very special essence. Morgan's "paradox" therefore contains in itself the very challenge that he wanted to refute. In sad fact, the "Ordeal of Colonial Virginia" was extended as the Ordeal of America, wherein the racial oppression and white supremacy have indeed been the dominant feature, the parametric constant, of United States history.

133. There is a true paradox at the core of American history, the paradox embodied in the "white" identity of the European-American laborer, wherein the social class identity is immured. Perhaps so many of our historians have failed to see the paradox because they conceive of the "white race" as a phenomenon of nature, a realm that knows no paradoxes.

The "white" frontier

134. The tendency toward concentration of capital ownership is a prevailing attribute of capitalism. The social impact of that tendency is illustrated in Wertenbaker's comment on the Virginia colonial economy of the eighteenth century. But this was not the typical case of increased concentration of capital based on the introduction of new instruments of labor requiring increasing relative investments in fixed capital. It was caused by land engrossment in general, and by the diminished supply of good lands in the Tidewater, but even more by the lower labor costs per unit of output of those planters who had means to invest in the high-priced lifetime bond-laborers.

135. Being made to compete with unpaid bond-labor, "practically destroyed the Virginia yeomanry," writes Wertenbaker, "...Some it drove into exile, either to the remote frontiers or to other colonies; some it reduced to extreme poverty;... some it caused to purchase slaves and so at one step to enter the exclusive class of those who had others to work for them.... The small freeholder was not destroyed, as was his prototype of ancient Rome, but he was subjected to a change which was by no means fortunate or wholesome."²²¹

136. Those who were "reduced to extreme poverty" included those whom the touring Marquis de Chastellux encountered in 1792, when for the first time in his three year sojourn in America, he saw "in the midst of those rich plantations miserable huts... inhabited by whites, whose wan looks and ragged garments bespeak poverty,"²²² poverty which he ascribed to the engrossment of the land by the plantation bourgeoisie. Forty years later, a well-off Virginia planter spoke in similarly stark terms of his landless European-Americans neighbors

who stayed in Eastern Virginia with but "little to console them but their complexion...."²²³

137. The number of such very poor was never large, according to Wertenbaker, because anyone with a little drive and ambition "could move to the frontier and start life on more equal terms."²²⁴ However, other historians, who have traced the course of that ambition, find that among those who moved and moved frequently, were those who opted for being tenants,²²⁵ some on leases, but, more typically as tenants-at-will, working on shares with tools, buildings and marketing facilities furnished by the landlord. Share tenants moved on after a short tenure. Squatters left land where they could not afford the surveying and patent fees; two-thirds of the original settlers of Amelia County, formed in 1735,— mostly squatters— left the county between 1736 and 1749. In Lunenburg County, formed in 1746, only one-fifth of the laborers were able to establish households, while two out of five of the householders left the county between 1750 and 1764.²²⁶ Others moved directly to "new" territories taking out patents as fee-simple owners. It is the measure of the cost of becoming "white" that this best hope of the ambition of the eighteenth-century laboring-class Virginians, was precisely what their predecessors had complained against, "being Tenants to the first Ingressors which no man cares to be, but thinks it hard to be a Tennant on a Continent."²²⁷

138. The result was an increasing number of would-be planters moving to "the frontier," wherever that meant at a given time— the Piedmont, the south side of the James, North Carolina, the Shenandoah Valley, or beyond the Cumberland Gap— as tenants, as patentees of "new" land, or as unpatented squatters. Though the squeezing out of such a poor planter to the "frontier" negated the logic of a common interest with the gentry, he was still "made to fold to his bosom the adder that stings him," the bondage of African-Americans.²²⁸ Denied social mobility, they were to have the white-skin privilege of lateral mobility— to the "frontier." By the same token they went typically as "whites"; resenting Negroes, not their slavery, indeed hating the free Negro most of all; ready now to take the land from the Indians in the name of "a white man's country."²²⁹

Turner's "frontier" theory, and the "safety-valve corollary

139. In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932), one of the giants of American historiography, presented a theory, "a hypothesis," of American historical development. Rooted exclusively in American experience, without dependence upon English tradition, Turner's "frontier thesis" won wide acceptance. Drawing a parallel with the

career of the ancient Greeks in the Mediterranean world,²³⁰ Turner said:

Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain Americans development.²³¹

140. Turner ended that essay with a portentous epitaph: "[T]he frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."²³² In 1910, he continued his theme: "The solitary backwoodsman wielding his ax at the edge of a measureless forest is replaced by companies capitalized at millions, operating railroads, sawmills, and all the enginery of modern machinery to harvest the remaining trees." He then formulated what came to be called the "safety-valve corollary" of the frontier thesis. "A new national development is before us," he said, "without the former safety valve of abundant resources open to him who would take." He delineated the consequent sharpening of class struggle between capital and anti-capital, between those who demand that there be no governmental interference with "the exploitation and the development of the country's wealth," on the one hand; and the reformers, from the Grangers, to the Populists, to Bryan to Debs and Theodore Roosevelt, who, Turner said, emphasized "the need of governmental regulation... in the interest of the common man; [and] the checking of the power of those business Titans...."²³³ It is not surprising," he added later that year, "that socialism shows noteworthy gains as elections continue, that parties are forming on new lines... They are efforts to find substitutes for the former safeguard of democracy, the disappearing lands. They are the sequence of the disappearing frontier."²³⁴

141. Turner's expectation of the emergence of a popular socialist movement of sufficient proportions to "substitute" for the end of the "free-land safety valve" was disappointed. Turner died in the midst of the Great Depression in 1932. Toward the end of his life, Turner felt "baffled by his contemporary world and [he] had no satisfying answer to the closed-frontier formula in which he found himself involved."²³⁵

The Real Social Safety-Valve of American history

142. Only by understanding what was peculiar about the "Peculiar Institution," can one know what is exceptional about American Exceptionalism, know how, in normal times, the ruling class has been able to operate without "Laborite" disguises; and how, in critical times, democratic new departures have been frustrated by re-inventions

of the "white race." There is a historic "safety valve" of social discontent mounted over the American body politic; Turner just couldn't see it for the White Blindspot in his eye. If Turner had taken note of the Southern Homestead Act and its repeal, and of the heroic Negro Exodus of 1879, might he not have given his "safety valve" theory an added dimension, one wherein the real safety valve is found? The prospect held out to European-Americans, of "free land for him who would take" it from the Indians, however unrealizable it was in actuality, did doubtless, tend to retard the development of anti-capitalist class-consciousness.²³⁶ "Free land" was merely one aspect of the Real Safety Valve; two other broad general forms of lateral mobility—immigration into the United States and farm-to-factory migration, like "free land," were also cast in the mold of "racial" preference for Europeans and European-Americans, as "whites."²³⁷ From such main strands an all-pervasive system of racial privileges was conferred on laboring-class European-Americans, rural and urban, *exploited and insecure though they themselves were*. Its threads, woven into the fabric of every aspect of daily life, of family, church, and state, have constituted the main historical guarantee of the rule of the "Titans," damping down anti-capitalist pressures, by making "race, and not class, the distinction in social life." That, more than any other factor, has shaped the contours of American history— from the Constitutional Convention of 1787 to the Civil War, to the overthrow of Reconstruction, to the Populist Revolt of the 1890s, to the Great Depression, to the civil rights struggle and "white backlash" of our own day.

XVI

The Civil Rights Legacy and the Impending Crisis

143. Properly interpreted, Turner's reference to the "safety valve" potential in anti-capitalist "reform" movements of his day had its innings in the Keynesian New Deal, which at least some of its supporters hoped might be a road to "socialism," and some of its reactionary enemies regarded as the real thing. The limitations of that line of reform, which had become evident by 1938, were masked by the prosperity of the United States role as the "arsenal of democracy" in World War II, that ended with the United States as the only industrial power left standing and the possessor of three-fourths of the world's gold reserves. But, by 1953, other major powers had recovered to pre-war levels; by 1957 began a chronic unfavorable United States balance of trade. In 1971 the United States formally abandoned the gold-standard for settlement of international balances of payments and the "gold cover" for the domestic money supply,²³⁸ adopt-

ing, finally, a policy of calculated monetary inflation, safeguarded by the deliberate maintenance of chronic unemployment at levels adequate to prevent increases in real wages.²³⁹ Finally, even the party of the New Deal has cast all Keynesian pretence to the winds, proclaiming that "the era of big government is over," and boasting of "ending welfare" in any previously recognizable form.

144. Now at the end of the twentieth century, the social gap between the Titans and the common people is at perhaps its historic maximum,²⁴⁰ real wages have trended downward for nearly two decades. "Entitlements" and "welfare," as they relate to students, the poor, and the elderly, have become obscenities in the lexicon of official society. There is less of a "socialist" movement today in the United States than there was in Turner's day, and anti-capitalist class consciousness is hesitant even to call its name. The bourgeoisie in one of its parts mockingly dons "revolution" like a Halloween mask. "Class struggle" is an epithet cast accusingly at the mildest defenders of social welfare, and the country is loud with the sound of one class struggling.

145. Yet, the pre-conditions of social conflict such as those noted by Turner a century ago, are simmering today if we are to credit the following grim assessment of one well-known political economist:

[O]ur slower economic growth is no longer simply cyclical or temporary but structural and permanent.... [so that] We can no longer count on rapid material gain. Throughout our history we believed that were were a chosen people, a belief essentially sustained by our growing affluence. Now we shall see who we are without it.²⁴¹

146. But, unlike the country as it was in Turner's time, present-day America bears the indelible stamp of the African-American civil rights struggle of the 1960's and after, a seal that the "white backlash" has by no means been able to erode from the nation's consciousness. Also, although it is not possible to predict how it may eventuate politically, the increasing non-European proportion of the nation's population enhances the possibility of the development of a "not-white" popular movement,²⁴² which laboring-class European-Americans may join unreservedly, finally casting off the incubus of white-skin privilege that for three centuries has paralyzed their will. Then, and only then, the ghosts of those "four hundred English and Negroes in Armes," who fought together in Bacon's Rebellion to be "freed from their Slavery," may finally rest in peace.

Notes

¹ Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 2 vols.: I— *Racial Oppression and Social Control* (320 pp.)

and II— *The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America* (400 pp.) (New York, 1994-97).

² Thodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human Species* (New Haven and London, 1962), p. 13.

³ Stanley M. Garn, *Human Races*, rev. 2nd printing (Springfield, Illinois, 1962), pp. v-vi.

⁴ Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 2 vols., (New York, 1994-1997), 1:27.

⁵ An article by Liz Macmillen, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 8 September 1995.

⁶ *The New York Review of Books*, 23 October 1997.

⁷ Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York, 1971), 287, 290-92.

⁸ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968), Chapter 2, "Unthinking Decision: Enslavement of Negroes in America to 1700." See the explication of the idea at p. 80.

⁹ Edmund Burke, *An Account of European Settlements in America*, 2 vols., (London, 1758), 2:118.

¹⁰ Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Garden City, New York, 1973), p. 20. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (rev. ed., New York, 1963), pp. 17, 19.

¹¹ Alfred H. Stone, "The Mulatto Factor in the Race Problem," *Atlantic Monthly*, 91:658-62 (1903), p. 660. Stone pegged his thesis on a distinction between "mulattoes" and "negroes." However, his awareness of social distinctions among Africans who were to be declassified in plantation America is worth noting. Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves: The True Story of an African Prince Sold into Slavery* (New York, 1977), the history of Ibrahim, who is identified (at p. 61) as "Rahahma," in a context which makes it apparent that he is the same person to whom Alfred H. Stone referred as "Rahamah." Stone also mentions "Otman dan Fodio, the poet chief of the Fulahs," as among distinguished Africans brought slaves to plantation America.

¹² E. S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America, from April, 1833, to October, 1834*, 3 vols., (London, 1835); 3:346-48.

¹³ H. M. Henry, *Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina* (Emory, 1914) p. 11, citing findings of the South Carolina Constitutional Court in 1818.

¹⁴ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 6th edition, 2 vols. (London, 1790); loc. cit., 2:37.

¹⁵ U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, March 1857.

¹⁶ *Address of the Colored Convention to the People of Alabama*, published in *The Daily State Sentinel*, 21 May 1867; cited in James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876* (New York, 1937), pp. 236-242; loc. cit., pp. 237-38.

¹⁷ Major Ridge, who was not the richest man in the Cherokee nation, and who was not on the delegation, had an estate at this time of \$22,000, not counting his thirty Afro-American bond-laborers and his interest in a trading-post business. (Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy, The Story of the Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* [New York, 1970], pp. 183-84.) An official census in 1835 found that of the population of the Cherokee nation (in contiguous areas of Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee) numbering 17,000, 1,600 were Afro-American bond-laborers. (Samuel Carter, III, *Cherokee Sunset, a Nation Betrayed: A Narrative of Travail and Triumph, Persecution and Exile* [Garden City, 1976], p. 22.) The phrase, "Cherokee planter-merchant," is Carter's (p. 23).

¹⁸ Opinion of Chief Justice John Marshall in *The Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia*, 30 U. S. (1831), in Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History*, 4 vols (New York, 1973), p. 2558. On Jackson's attitude, see *ibid.*, pp. 2352-53, 2461-62, 2554, 2603; and Carter, *Cherokee Sunset*, pp. 216-17.

¹⁹ The Methodists having first taken the lead, the Moravians, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, in concert, denounced the "white" incursions against Cherokee tribal lands and individual rights, attacks which became especially aggressive after the discovery of gold in Cherokee land in 1828. These Christian missionary workers "attached value to intermarriage as a force for improvement" (Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, pp. 35, n. 58, 202-03, 219, 341, n. 2).

²⁰ Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*, p.145, citing *Christian Herald*, vol. 10, p. 468 (20 December 1823). John Ridge, a kinsman of Major Ridge, was the foremost leader of the struggle for the rights of the Cherokees and against the wholesale uprooting of tribe being planned by the United States.

²¹ "The [Scots] invasion [of Ireland] by Edward Bruce in 1315 has been recognized as the turning point of English influence in medieval Ireland" (G. H. Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans*, 4 vols. [Oxford, 1911-20]; 4:160).

²² In a Gaelic language article, a modern Franciscan historian, Canice Mooney (Cainneach O Maonaigh), finds in this Anglo-Norman policy a "racist" precedent of what occurred "yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, or earlier in Sharpeville, South Africa...." ("Racialism and nationalism in the Irish church, 1169-1534," *Galvia*, 10:4-17 (1954). I am indebted to Brother Quinn of Iona College for translating this article for me. F. X. Martin characterizes Mooney's article as an "Irish nationalist interpretation" ("John Lord of Ireland, 1185-1216," in *A New History*, 5:147, n. 3). *A New History of Ireland, under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy*, planned and established by the late T. W. Moody, 10 volumes (Oxford, 1976-), of which all but vols. 1, 6, and 7 were published as of 1992. The volumes, composed by a select group of Irish scholars, are variously edited thus far by Art Cosgrove, T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, F. J. Byrne, W. E. Vaughan.

²³ Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, "The request of the Irish for English law, 1277-80," *Irish Historical Studies*, 6:261-70 (1948-49); p. 264-65; idem., "The Native Irish and English Law in Medieval Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies*, 7:1-16 (1950-51); pp. 14-15.

²⁴ Sir John Davies, *A Discovery of the True Causes why Ireland was never Entirely Subdued...* (London, 1612; rptd. 1988), James P. Myers, ed., p. 134. Orpen noted that Davies' comment was even more applicable to the earlier rejection of the Irish petition for enfranchisement (Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans*, 4:23, n. 3).

²⁵ *Irish Historical Documents*, Edmund Curtis and R. B. McDowell, eds. (London, 1943), pp. 38-46, "Remonstrance of the Irish Princes to Pope John XXII, 1317;" p. 41.

²⁶ Otway-Ruthven, "The Native Irish and English law in medieval Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies*, 7:6. The complaint of the Irish "free" classes of the thirteenth century was despairingly echoed five centuries and three conquests later, during the early years of the Penal Law era, by a Gaelic poet raging against a trinity of oppressions: the poverty from which escape was forbidden; the systemic frustration of all hope of social recognition; but, above all, "the contempt that follows it, for which there is no cure" (cited and translated in "The Catholic Church," in T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett, *Ulster Since 1800, second series, a social survey* [London, 1957], p. 171).

O'Connell, looking back in about 1815, reminisced: "It was easy to tell a Catholic in the streets by his subdued demeanour and crouching walk. So deeply had the iron of oppression entered into their souls...." (A paraphrase given by Robert Dunlop, *Daniel O'Connell* [New York, 1900], p. 45).

²⁷ In insisting on the relevance of the parallel between incidents so widely separated in time, I appeal to the example of the Irish historian, James C. Beckett. Speaking of the resentment felt by the Anglo-Irish toward English "newcomers," Beckett argues: "This parallel between the fourteenth century and the eighteenth is not merely adventitious. It indicates a real continuity of tradition.... The constitutional programme of the Anglo-Irish patriots in the reign of George III was consciously derived from precedents set by the 'English in Ireland' three or four hundred years earlier" (James C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* [Ithaca, 1976], p. 25).

²⁸ The fact that the term "free Negro" does not appear in early court records in reference to African-American non-bondlaborers would tend to show that African-Americans at that time shared the presumption of liberty with European-Americans. The earliest Virginia instances of the use of the term that I have noted were in 1682 and 1684. (*Accomack County Court Records, 1678-82*, p. 321, 18 August 1682; *Middlesex County Court Records, 1680-94*, p. 163, 7 April 1684.) It is significant that it was also at this time that the term "white" was first used there as a general designation of European-Americans. (See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black*, p.95.)

²⁹ G. J. Hand, *English Law in Ireland, 1290-1324* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 194.

³⁰ Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1929, 1957, 1963), p. 162.

³¹ John P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, second, enlarged edition (Dublin, 1875), p. 21, n. 2.

³² William Waller Hening, comp. and ed., *The Statutes-at-Large; being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, 13 vols. (Richmond, 1799-1823; Charlottesville, 1969); 4:1: 132-33 (1723). In subsequent references, this title will be abbreviated: Hening, followed by volume and page numbers.

³³ Davies, *Discovery of the True Causes...*, Myers, ed., pp. 130-31. Hand, *English Law in Ireland*, pp. 201-02.

³⁴ "Remonstrance of the Irish Princes to Pope John XXII, 1317," in *Irish Historical Documents, 1172-1922*, Edmund Curtis and R. B. MacDowell, eds. (London, 1943), p. 43.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³⁶ Neale v. Farmer in *Reports of Cases in Law and Equity Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Georgia from August 1850 - May 1851*, Thomas R. Cobb, reporter. Vol. IX. (Athens, Georgia, 1851), pp. 555-84. The Court, far from considering this fact a loophole in the law, held it an indispensable principle because, "If

[the Common Law] protects the life of the slave, why not his liberty? and if it protects his liberty, then it breaks down at once the status of the slave." (p. 579) The same principle had been written into law in colonial Virginia in 1723 (Hening 4:133).

³⁷ Sir John Davies, *Discovery of the True Causes....*, Myers, ed., p. 130.

³⁸ Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States*, pp. 2669-70, 2676.

³⁹ Davies, *Discovery of the True Causes...*, Myers, ed., p. 126.

⁴⁰ Hening, 4:326-27 (1732).

⁴¹ Burke, letter to Hercules Langrishe, 03 January 1792, in *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*, 6th edition (Boston, 1880), 12 vols.; 6:241-306; pp. 249-52, 305. Emphasis added.

⁴² J. C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (Ithaca, 1976), p. 65.

⁴³ Luther Porter Jackson, *Free Negro Labor and Propert Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860* (New York, 1942), p. 13.

⁴⁴ *British and Foreign Anti-slavery Reporter*, 15 November 1843. The manuscript, dated 11 October 1843, is at University College Library, Dublin (L. A. McCaffrey, *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year* [Lexington, Kentucky, 1966], p. 74, n. 39).

⁴⁵ I am indebted to the kindness of Professor Maurice O'Connell, now living in retirement in Dublin, for my copy of the Cincinnati Repealers' letter. Professor O'Connell informs me that it exists today only in the microfilm of the 12 April 1844 issue of the *Dublin Pilot*, in the British Museum Library, Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

⁴⁶ For a detailed presentation of these common basic features of Protestant Ascendancy, see Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 1:81-90.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. 44.

⁴⁸ See, for example., Handlin, "Origins of the Southern Labor System," *WMQ*, 3d series, No. 7:199-222 (1950), pp. 211-12.

⁴⁹ "Freedom, like slavery, acquired social meaning not through statute law or intellectual treatises, but through countless human transactions that first defined and then redefined the limits of that [the African-American] condition" (Breen and Innes, "Myne Owne Ground", p. 31-32). I merely wish to stress that the essential character of those "human transactions" was the struggle between the contending social classes.

⁵⁰ Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 1: jacket blurb paper-back.

⁵¹ Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade, or a Discovery of the River Gambia, and the Golden Trade of the Aethiopians* (London, 1624; Teignmouth, 1904), p. 112.

⁵² George Fox, *Gospel of Family Order, Being a Short Discourse Concerning the Ordering of Families, Both of Whites, Blacks and Indians* (London, 1676, p. 4).

⁵³ Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's and the Indians Advocate, Suing for their Admission into the Church, or a Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in our Plantations...* (London, 1680), p. 83.

⁵⁴ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of the Island, with Reflections on its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws and Government*, 3 vols. (London, 1774), p. 289.

⁵⁵ Hening 3:86.

⁵⁶ McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, p. 466.

⁵⁷ *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, H. R. McIlwaine, ed. (Richmond, 1924), p. 468. Hereafter abbreviated *MCGC*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 467 (22 July 1640).

⁵⁹ *Northampton County Records, 1645-51*, f. 2 (11 November 1645). In this and subsequent notes, the dates are those of the court proceedings; where the dates of the events described are significantly different from the date of the court record, both will be given.

⁶⁰ *Accomack County Records, 1671-73*, pp. 93-97. Although the depositions were taken in December 1670, they are entered in the record on 23 April 1672, more than two years later. "Black James," was associated in the accounts with "Cornelius a dutchman's wife." Although James is not here further identified, it may be significant that among the tithables of Lieutenant Colonel William Kendall in 1668 in neighboring Northampton County were "Cornelius Arreale" and "James Negro" (*Northampton County Records, 1664-74*, p. 55).

⁶¹ C. O. 1/30, pp. 114-15. (16 July 1673). This document may also be read in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 20:134-40 (1912). Hereafter abbreviated, *VMHB*.

⁶² *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, H. R. McIlwaine, ed. (Richmond, 1924), p. 466.

⁶³ Each of the three was to receive a whipping of thirty lashes. The term of servitude of each of the two European-Americans was to be extended four years.

⁶⁴ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. 75. For a criticism of Jordan's views, see the Introduction to Volume One of *The Invention of the White Race*.

⁶⁵ See Great Britain Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and the West Indies*, 44 vols., (London, 1860-1969); 1:168, 202, 296.

⁶⁶ See T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, "Myne Owne Ground", *Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York, 1980), pp. 70-72.

⁶⁷ The first Negroes who arrived in Virginia, says Phillips, "were... not fully slaves in the hands of their Virginia buyers, for there was neither law or custom establishing the institution of slavery" (Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* [New York, 1918], p. 75).

⁶⁸ Hening, 1:257; 2:113.

⁶⁹ Sir William Petty's in 1672 assessed the values of human chattels: Irish men and Negro men at £15 each. *Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, 2 vols. (London, 1691; Augustus Kelley reprint, New York, 1963); 1:152.

In 1653 a license was granted to one Richard Netherway of Bristol, England, to export one hundred Irish men to be sold as slaves in Virginia (Great Britain. Public Record Office. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, vol. IV; *Interregnum Entry Book*, vol. 98, p. 405. Cited by Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, 1:609).

⁷⁰ Hening, 1:411. Although this law was enacted in 1655, its provisions were made to apply to such Irish surviving bond-laborers as had arrived since the beginning of 1653. Recaptured runaway bond-laborer Walter Hind was ordered, "according to the act for Irish servants," to "serve continue and complete the term of six yeares from the time of arriveall, and make good the time neglected" (*Charles City County Deeds, Wills, Orders, Etc., 1655-1665*, p. 223 [3 February 1659/60]).

⁷¹ Hening 1:538-39.

⁷² For Scottish slavery, see *The Invention of the White Race*, Volume One, Appendix H.

⁷³ Hening, 2:26.

⁷⁴ Hening, 2:267.

⁷⁵ Hening, 2:270.

⁷⁶ Hening, 2:298.

⁷⁷ *Northampton County Court Records, 1654-1655/6*, ff. 25-b, 54-a.

⁷⁸ *Lancaster County Records, 1655-66*, f. 370.

⁷⁹ *Charles City County Records, 1655-65*, pp. 601-5, 617-18 Beverley Fleet, *Virginia Colonial Abstracts*, 34 vols. (Baltimore, 1961; originally published in 1942); 13:54-57, 65-66.

⁸⁰ *Robinson Transcripts, Virginia (Colony) General Court Records*, Virginia Historical Society, Mss. no. 4/v 81935/a 2, p. 161. In 1658, John Bland, a rich London merchant, recruited bond-laborers for his Virginia plantation from among inmates of Chelsea College jail; "two mulattoes offered to go rather than remain eternally in prison" (Edward D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 365, n. 1). Perhaps Moore was one of these.

⁸¹ *The Archives of Maryland*, under the illustrious successive editorships of W. H. Browne, C. C. Hall, B. C. Steiner, J. H. Pleasants, and Aubrey C. Land Baltimore, 1883-); volume 66, *Proceedings of the Provincial Court, 1675-1677*. p. 294.

⁸² *Norfolk County Records, 1686-95*, (Orders), pp. 107, 115 (17 September and 15 November 1688). The name is variously spelled: Sennels, Sennle, as well as Servele.

⁸³ Virginia Colony Council proceedings, 22 February 1699/1700. Library of Congress, Virginia [Colony] Collection, 1606-1705, Document 80-75775.

⁸⁴ Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haaven, 1950), p. 6, citing Norman Penney. ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (London, 1694), p. 354.

⁸⁵ Morgan Godwyn, *Trade prefer'd before Religion, and Christ made to give place to Mammon: Represented in a Sermon Relating to the Plantations. First Preached at Westminster Abby, And afterwards in divers Churches in London* (London, 1681), p. 11.

⁸⁶ See *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:20-21.

⁸⁷ The facts presented here regarding the Key case are drawn from *Northumberland County Court Records, 1652-58*, ff 66-67, 85, 87, and 124-25; 1652-65, ff. 40, 41, 46, 49; 1658-66, f. 28; and from McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, p. 504.

⁸⁸ See *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:193-94.

⁸⁹ The Accomack and Northampton records have been treated in great detail by other historians, most recently by Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Innes, "Myne Owne Ground": *Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1980), and by Joseph Douglas Deal, *Race and Class in Colonial Virginia: Indians, Englishmen, and Africans on the Eastern Shore During the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1993). For that reason I shall select only a few individual cases recorded in those two counties for brief elaboration, and attempt to cover the rest by suitable generalizations accompa-

nied by full footnote references for the convenience of those who may desire to study the records directly.

⁹⁰ MCGC, p. 33.

⁹¹ MCGC, pp. 66-68, 71-72, 73.

⁹² *Accomack County Records, 1663-66*, p. 54. The Northampton County Court found for Francis Payne in a suit arising out of his contract to build a house for Richard Haney (*Northampton County Records, 1657-64*, p. 173, 28 August 1663).

⁹³ *Northampton County Records, 1651-54*, p. 215 (3 January 1653/4). "Specialty" meant a bond or a contract. In August 1647, Mr. Stephen Charlton was awarded a judgment for a debt against Tony Longo, to be paid out of the next crop. (*Northampton County Records, 1645-51*, p. 111). Francis Payne was supported by the County Court in a suit arising out of his contract to build a house for Richard Hanby, 28 August 1663 (*Northampton County Records, 1657-64*, p. 173).

⁹⁴ The name (variously rendered in the records as Manuel and Rodriguez, Rodriggus, Drigges, Driggs, etc.) suggests a personal history with the Iberians or with the Dutch leaving Brazil.

⁹⁵ Susie M. Ames, *Studies of the Virginia Eastern Shore in the Seventeenth Century* (Richmond, 1940), p. 97.

⁹⁶ *Northampton County Records, 1651-54*, p. 148; date of court record, 12 September 1653.

⁹⁷ Since all of the entries listed in this note are from Northampton County Records, the volume years will serve to locate the citations. *1645-51*, p. 26: sale of calf by John Pott to John Johnson, 6 May 1647. *Ibid.*, p. 38: Sale of a heifer by Francis Payne to slow-paying Marylander Joseph Edlowe, 28 July 1651. *1651-54*, p. 133: 8 February 1652/3. *1657-66*, p. 30: Sale of a cow and a heifer by John Johnson to Edward Marten, 30 May 1659. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50: Gift of a heifer by Emanuel Driggs to Sande, son of a bond-laborer, 28 May 1659. *Ibid.*, p. 47: Signing over by Anthony Johnson of five calves to his son John, 30 May 1659. *Ibid.*, p. 61: Sale of a mare colt by Francis Payne (the name is variously spelled) to Anthony Johnson, 31 January 1659/60. *Ibid.*, p. 88: Sale by Emanuel Driggs of a gray colt to Alexander Wilson, 15 May 1661. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-38: Sale of a mare by Manuel Rodrigues to William Kendall, 11 March 1661/62. *1664-1674*, p. 146: Dispute in court between John Francisco and John Alworth over the sale of a filly, 19 September 1672.

⁹⁸ The gift was recorded January 1657/8. *Northampton County Records, 1657-64*, pp. 2, 7.

⁹⁹ Nell Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers; Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1666* (Baltimore, 1963), 2:11, 18 April 1667.

¹⁰⁰ *York County Records, 1665-72*, p. 237-38, 28 August 1669; court record dated, 12 April 1670.

¹⁰¹ *Northampton County Records, 1657-66*, p. 116, 236 (26 June 1662; 28 December 1665); and *Northampton County Records, 1668— 80*, pp. 3, 34 (4 December 1662; 28 December 1665).

¹⁰² See Morgan's discussion, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, pp. 166-72.

¹⁰³ Mongum first appears in the record in July 1650 when he and two other men— Demigo Matthews[?] and a European-American plantation overseer, Robert Berry— are said to have reported a plot of the Nanticoke Indians to attack the Eastern Shore settlements (*Northampton County Records, 1645-51*, f. 217). *Northampton County Order Book, 1674-79*, p. 273; For the joint tenancy, see: Ralph T. Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern Shore*, 2 vols. (Richmond, 1951), 1:228; 2:216. The name is variously spelled; I have decided to use the "Mongum" form throughout, except when direct quotations have an alternate spelling.

¹⁰⁴ *Northampton County Records, 1651-54*, pp. 32-33. The agreement was witnessed by Thomas Gilbert and Richard Buckland on 5 March 1650/1; it was entered in the court record on 22 December 1651. Joseph Douglas Deal, reads the name as "Merris," and notes that she does not again appear in the records. She is not to be confused with the African-American named Mary, a second(?) wife of Mongum, who is listed in available Northampton tithable records beginning in 1665 and on through 1674. It seems that Breen and Innes confuse the two "Marys." (See "*Myne Owne Ground*", p. 83.)

Another such disclaimer in contemplation of marriage was subscribed by parish minister Francis Doughty of Northampton County before his marriage to Ann Eaton, whereby he did "disowne and discharge all right, to her estate and to her children" (Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 407).

¹⁰⁵ *Northampton County Records, 1664-74*, pp. 220-21. The will was dated 9 May 1673 and probated 29 September 1673. *Northampton County Records, 1674-79*, p. 59 (29 August 1675). See also, *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 70, 72.

¹⁰⁶ The couple came to the notice of the court when Skipper (Cooper) was ordered to pay "levies tythes for his wife (shee being a negro)"; and again when they are suspected of shielding the father of her child from the hue and cry (*Norfolk County Wills and Deeds "E" 1666-75, Part 2, Orders*, ff. 75, 76-77). See *Norfolk County Deed Book, No. 4, 1675-86*, pp. 14 and 30 regarding the times

of their deaths. See Nell Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers; Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1666*, 2nd ed., (Baltimore, 1963), 2:232, for Skipper (Cooper) landholding.

With regard to other intermarriages of African-Americans and European Americans, it is to be inferred that the Mary Longo who married John Goldsmith in Hungars parish on 13 October 1660 was an African-American, since the only Longos found in Northampton County records at that time were African-Americans; and that Emmanuel Driggus's first wife, Elizabeth, the mother of Thomas Driggus, was a European-American. (See Stratton Nottingham, *Accomack*, p. 452; and Deal, *Race and Class in Colonial Virginia*, pp. 271, 284.) See also Northumberland County Records, 1658-66 for mention of the marriage of Elizabeth Key and William Greenstead.

¹⁰⁷ Lerone Bennett, Jr., *The Shaping of Black America* (Chicago, 1975), pp. 14-16, 24-27. Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, and Deal, *Race and Class in Colonial Virginia*.

¹⁰⁸ Less than two years later the Johnson homestead was devastated by fire, which left the family without tobacco to cover its debts. In view of the Johnsons' thirty years of "hard labor & knowne service," the Northampton County Court granted them lifetime exemption from county taxes, in order to reduce their hardship (*Northampton County Records, 1651-54*, p. 161, [28 February 1652/3]).

¹⁰⁹ Breen and Innes make this point in relation to Anthony Johnson's patent, saying that none of the names, except Richard Johnson, appear on subsequent Northampton tithables lists. They identify this Richard Johnson as the same Richard Johnson who later appears as Anthony Johnson's son. But how could Anthony's son, presumably born in Virginia, qualify for a headright? Was Richard Johnson, Negro, Anthony's biological son, or possibly a Negro from England whom Anthony adopted?

¹¹⁰ See *The Invention of the White Race*, vol. two, appendix II-A.

Such was precisely the sort of prospect that concerned William Byrd, II, "of Westover," although he was understandably more conscious of the maroon threat in Virginia's sister English colony of Jamaica. "On the back of the British Colonys on the Continent of America about 250 miles from the ocean, runs a chain of High Mountains," he noted. He urged that steps be taken to "prevent the Negroes taking Refuge there as they do in the mountains of Jamaica," and make allies with the French against the English as did many of the Indian tribes (William Byrd, II, of Westover to Mr. Ochs, ca. 1735. *VMHB*, 9:225-28 [1902]; 226).

¹¹¹ Letter dated 19 September 1676, New York Public Library, George Chalmers Collection, I, folio 49. The Bacon forces burned Jamestown on 19 September, to keep the expected English troops from being quartered there.

¹¹² "The History of Bacon's and Ingram's Rebellion, 1676" (the "Burwell Manuscript"), printed in Charles M. Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690* (New York, 1915), Pp. 47-98; p. 93.

¹¹³ Grantham's "Accompt of my Transactions," *The Henry Coventry Papers*, at the Longleat estate of the Marquis of Bath, reproduced on micro-film by the American Council of Learned Societies British Manuscript Project deposited at the Library of Congress; loc cit., vol. LXXVIII, ff. 301-2.

¹¹⁴ *Maryland Archives*, 5:152-54. *Proceedings of the Council 1671-1681*. Governor Notley to [name not given in the record], 22 January 1676/7.

¹¹⁵ C.O. 1/40, f. 186. Notley to Charles Calvert, Lord Baltimore, Proprietary of the Province of Maryland, 22 May 1677. It appears from the copy of this document made by the Virginia Colonial Records Project that this folio once was numbered "88," by which Wertebaker refers to it (T. J. Wertebaker, *Virginia Under the Stuarts* [Princeton, 1914], p. 137, n. 58). I thank Cecily J. Peebles for last-minute checking of the records relating to this and half a dozen other facts at the Virginia State Archives.

¹¹⁶ John C. Rainbolt, "An Alteration in the Relationship between Leadership and Constituents in Virginia, 1660-1720," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 27:411-34 (1970).

¹¹⁷ For the source of the Bruce citation, see note 169, below. Lyon G. Tyler, "Virginians Voting in the Colonial Period," *WMQ*, ser. 1, 6:7-8 (1897-98). Tyler may also have been the author of a piece by "Lafayette," "No Feudalism in the South," in which it is stated that, "The great distinction in Virginia was color not class." *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 10:73-75, p. 74.

¹¹⁸ Thomas N. Ingersoll, ed., "'Releese us out of this Cruell Bondegg': An appeal from Virginia in 1723," *WMQ*, 3d ser., 51:777-82. The author of this letter did not reveal his/her name for fear of being put to death if identified. There is some reason to believe, as Ingersoll points out, that the letter was a collective effort. The date of the letter is 8 September 1723, but there are indications that it may have been composed over a period of days.

¹¹⁹ West served as counsel to the Board of Trade from 1718 to 1725. Soon thereafter he assumed the office of Chancellor of Ireland, but survived there only a year. George Chalmers, comp. and ed., *Opinions of Eminent*

Lawyers on Various Points of English Jurisprudence chiefly concerning the Colonies, Fisheries, and Commerce, 2 vols. (London, 1814; Burt Franklin Reprint, 1971, from the original edition in the Brooklyn Public Library), p. xxxiii.

¹²⁰ Hening, 4:133-34.

¹²¹ Chalmers, *Opinions of Eminent Lawyers*, 2:113-14.

¹²² Alured Popple, Secretary to the Board of Trade to Governor William Gooch of Virginia, 18 December 1735 (C.O. 5/1366, pp. 134-35). Although West made his report in January 1724, it was eleven years later that the objection came to the attention of the Board of Trade, who then instructed Popple to ask for an explanation from the Virginia Governor William Gooch. There is as yet no accounting for the Board's long delay in the taking up the matter with the Virginia government. (See Emory G. Evans, ed., "A Question of Complexion," *VMHB*, 71:411-13 [1963].) Is it possible that Bishop Edmund Gibson played some part in getting particular attention paid to the question after receiving the African-American appeal for freedom sent from Virginia in 1723?

¹²³ Colonial Office records, Great Britain Public Record Office, C.O. 5/1324, ff. 19, 22 (18 May 1736).

¹²⁴ Gooch gave a four-point rationale for the law. 1) African-Americans who were free tended to assist revolts by Negro bond-laborers; 2) a free Negro considered himself "to be as good a man as the best" [the term "uppity" was of later vintage]; 3) free Negroes were [he said] were generally children of English persons of the lower classes; and, 4) free African-Americans was so few that "'tis scarcely worth while to take any notice of them in this particular." (For a point-by-point criticism of Gooch's arguments, see *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:242-44.)

¹²⁵ Douglas Hall, "Jamaica," in David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, eds., *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World* (Baltimore, 1972), pp. 202-3. Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in Barbados Society* (Baltimore, 1974), pp. 126-27.

¹²⁶ Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport, Connecticut, 1981), p. 28.

¹²⁷ There was a discrimination in favor of "whites," who were offered thirty acres (*The Laws of Jamaica Comprehending all the Acts in Force Passed between the Thirty Second Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second and the Thirty-third Year of the Reign of King George the Third*.... Published under the Direction of Commissioners appointed for that Purpose. 2 vols., [St. Jago de la Vega, Jamaica, 1792], 8 Geo I, c. 1, 1:129-30). This combination

of concession and discrimination parallels the Bogland Act of 1772 in Ireland granting Catholics expanded rights to lease, but not to purchase land; and the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 in the United States allowing African-Americans only half the 160 acres allowed to whites under the Homestead Law of 1862. (See Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 1:93, 140-41.)

¹²⁸ R. C. Dallas, *History of the Maroons* (London, 1803), pp. 58-63. Sir Alan Burns, *History of the British West Indies* (London, 1954), p. 441.

¹²⁹ Heuman, *Between Black and White*, p. 84. For the total number of slaves, see Douglas Hall, "Jamaica," in Cohen and Greene, *Neither Slave Nor Free*, p. 194.

¹³⁰ Handler, *Unappropriated People*, pp. 68-72.

¹³¹ Roger Norman Buckley (New Haven), *Slaves in Redcoats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815*, pp. 11, 17-18.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 53-55. Between 1795 and 1808 the British Army in the West Indies purchased 13,400 Africans for military service, of whom 8,924 were purchased in Africa.

¹³³ Buckley, *Slaves in Redcoats*, pp. 13, 30-31, 41, 127.

¹³⁴ In 1673, the Barbados authorities had tried to have the best of both possibilities. While increasing the exploitation of the African bond-laborers unrelentingly, even as they reduced their rations, the authorities sought to strengthen the militia by recruiting and arming militiamen from among these same bond-laborers. But that proved a prelude to a plot for a general African rebellion in 1675 (Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, pp. 257-58; Jill Sheppard, "Redlegs" of Barbados, *their Origins and History* (Millwood, New York, 1977), p. 34).

¹³⁵ Buckley, *Slaves in Redcoats*, p. 124. Of the African-born soldiers, who generally did not want to return to Africa, some were settled in Trinidad and Honduras, the others, willingly or otherwise, were sent to Sierra Leone. Those who had been inducted from the West Indies, along with the youngest of the those brought from Africa, remained in the West Indies (*Ibid.*, p. 35, citing C.O. 318/55).

¹³⁶ Edmund Burke, *An Account of European Settlements in America*, 2 vols. (London, 1758), 2: 118, 130-31.

¹³⁷ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of the Island, with Reflections on its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government*, 3 vols. (London, 1774), 2:333-34.

¹³⁸ James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (London, 1784), pp. 288-89. Ramsay (1733-1789) served as an Episcopal priest in the West Indies on two separate occasions, but his espousal of Christian charity toward the bond-laborers earned the hostility of the planters. On his final return to England he published the Essay, and became associated with the abolitionist movement (*Dictionary of National Biography*).

¹³⁹ See Allen, *Invention of the White Race*, 1:112.

¹⁴⁰ George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2:532. (Emphasis in original.) Pinckard's design seem to have worked out very satisfactorily for the British ruling class, at least as late as the second decade of the twentieth century.

Sir Sidney Olivier, who served as Governor of Jamaica from 1907 to 1913, was convinced that

this [mulatto] class as it at present exists is a valuable and indispensable part of any West Indies community, and that a colony of black, coloured, and whites has a far more organic efficiency and far more promise in it than a colony of black and white alone.... The graded mixed class in Jamaica helps to make an organic whole of the community and saves it from this distinct cleavage. (Sir Sidney Olivier, *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, new edition, rewritten and revised [London, 1928], pp. 65-66)

¹⁴¹ Beckles, *Black Rebellion in Barbados*, p. 83, citing Minutes of the Council, 1 November 1803. Barbados Archives.

¹⁴² Jerome S. Handler and Arnold A. Sio, "Barbados," in Cohen and Greene, eds., *Neither Slave Nor Free*, pp. 218-19. Table 7-1. Heuman, *Between Black and White*, p. 7.

¹⁴³ Sheppard, "Redlegs" of Barbados, p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, 2:335. See also A. E. Furness, "The Maroon War of 1795," *Jamaican Historical Review*, 5:30-45 (1965).

¹⁴⁵ Handler, *The Unappropriated People*, p. 205. Handler was writing about Barbados.

¹⁴⁶ Heuman, *Neither Black Nor White*, p. 7. Handler and Sio, "Barbados," in *Neither Slave Nor Free*, pp. 218-19. Table 7-1.

¹⁴⁷ Heuman, *Between Black and White*, p. 30.

¹⁴⁸ Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986), pp. 262; 268.

¹⁴⁹ Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Behavior in a Planting Society: The Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," *The Journal of Southern History*, 33:469-85; pp. 472-73.

¹⁵⁰ These latter constituted the self-perpetuating ruling bourgeois elite.

"The wealthiest planters and planter-merchants," writes Kulikoff, "dominated local [County Court] benches and provincial legislatures from the 1650s to the Revolution....By 1705, three-fifths of Virginians who owned two thousand or more acres of land were justices or burgesses" (Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, p. 268).

¹⁵¹ Jack P. Greene, "Foundations of Political Power in the Virginia House of Burgesses," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, ser. 3, 16:485-506; pp. 485-88.

¹⁵² *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1777*, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., 13 vols. (Richmond, 1905-15), 1703-1712, p. 240.

¹⁵³ CSP., Col. 36:114. Gooch to the Board of Trade, 29 June 1729.

It is interesting to note that Gooch was disinclined to draw upon his knowledge of Jamaican affairs in his 1736 reply to the Lords of Trade and Plantations regarding the status of free African-Americans. He surely knew of the reliance put upon free Afro-Jamaicans, in efforts to suppress the Jamaica maroons as early as 1663, and again in the First Maroon War which began in 1725 and lasted until 1740.

¹⁵⁴ Byrd to Lord Egmont. *The American Historical Review*, "Documents", No. 1, 1:88-90 (1895). One may speculate that his man-of-"desperate fortune" phrase was in memory of Nathaniel Bacon, whose rebellion Byrd's father had first urged on and then abandoned, when the English and Negro bond-laborers enlisted in it. See also James Hugo Johnston, "The Participation of White Men in Virginia Negro Insurrections," *Journal of Negro History*, 16:158-67. Johnston cites from the original documents the names of mainly poor European-Americans who, in Gabriel's plot of 1800 and Nat Turner's Rebellion of 1831, and in individual actions maintained the tradition of those English who in 1676 stood with African-American bond-laborers for "freedom from their Slavery." He cites such instances from the records from 1789, 1800 (Gabriel's plot), 1802, 1816, and 1831 (Nat Turner's revolt).

¹⁵⁵ *Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, 3 vols., H. R. McIlwaine, ed., (Richmond, 1918), 2:1034-35 (11 April 1749). An estimated 30,000 convict bond-laborers were sent to America in 190 ship loads between 1717 and 1772. Of these cargoes, 100 went to the Chesapeake, 53 to Maryland and 47 to Virginia (Arthur Price

Middleton, *Tobacco Coast: A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era* [Newport News, 1953], p. 152).

¹⁵⁶ This point is given extensive elaboration in Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:246-47, on the basis of findings of Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986), p. 262; Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure; The Northern Chesapeake in the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History*, 25:639-654 (1965). (Although he limited this study to Maryland, Land believes that "differences between the areas [of the Chesapeake] are not very great" in respect to the thesis he presents.); Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Behavior in a Planting Society: The Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," *The Journal of Southern History*, 33:469-85; pp. 472-73; Jackson Turner Main, "The Distribution of Property in Post-Revolutionary Virginia," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 41:241-58 (1954-55) (The name of this publication was later changed to *The Journal of American History*.); Jackson Turner Main, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton, 1965), esp., Chapter II, "The Economic Class Structure of the South"; Gloria L. Main, "Inequality in Early America: The Evidence from Probate Records of Massachusetts and Maryland," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 7:559-81; 570-72, 580; Charles S. Sydnor, *Gentlemen Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1952), esp., pp. 141-43.

Compare, however, Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown, *Virginia 1705-1786, Democracy or Aristocracy?*, p. 31, n. 142; and D. Alan Williams, "The Small Farmer in Eighteenth-Century Virginia Politics," *Agricultural History*, 43:91-101 (1969).

¹⁵⁷ Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure; The Northern Chesapeake in the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History*, 25:639-654 (1965); p. 641.

¹⁵⁸ Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure," p. 653.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 642-43.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 643-44.

¹⁶¹ *Maryland Archives*, 5:152-54. *Proceedings of the Council 1671-1681*. Governor Notley to [name not given in the record], 22 January 1676/7.

¹⁶² Francis Bacon, Works, 6:406-12, Essay No. 15, "Of Seditions and Troubles." Dew, the slavocracy's most eminent "theoretician" well understood the premise of that strategy. "The dominant party," he said, "can only be overturned by concert and harmony among the subject

party" (Thomas Roderick Dew, *An Essay on Slavery* [Richmond, 1849], p. 103).

¹⁶³ C.O. 1/38, ff. 35-36 (October 1676), "Proposals most humbly offered to his most sacred Majesty by Thomas Ludwell and Robert Smith for Reducing the Rebels in Virginia to their obedience." Printed in *Virginia Historical Magazine (Virginia Magazine of History and Biography)*, 1:433-35

¹⁶⁴ Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure," pp. 643-44.

¹⁶⁵ The question that historian H. M. Henry speculated on in 1911, was one that confronted the plantation bourgeoisie two centuries earlier:

... why should the non-slaveholders, who formed the majority of the white population have assisted in upholding and maintaining the slavery status of the negro with its attendant inconveniences, such as patrol service, when they must have been aware in some measure at least that as an economic regime it was a hindrance to their progress? (H. M. Henry, *Police Control in South Carolina* [Emory, 1914], pp. 190-91)

¹⁶⁶ Wertenbaker, *Planters of Colonial Virginia*, pp. 97-98, 160. See also Russel R. Menard, *Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland* (New York, 1985), pp. 316-17.

¹⁶⁷ "In the late seventeenth century, southern colonizers were able to forge a consensus among upper- and lower-class whites.... Race became the primary badge of status." Gary B. Nash, "Colonial Development," in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Modern Era* (London, 1984), pp. 244-45.

"Chesapeake planters consolidated their class position by asserting white racial unity" (Ira Berlin, "Time, Space and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *American Historical Review*, 85:44-78 [1980]; p. 72).

¹⁶⁸ Hening 3:87-88. The penalty in such cases was to require the emancipator to pay for the exiling of the freed person within six months, or else pay a £10 fine which would be used to pay for the freed person's transportation out of Virginia as arranged by the church wardens of the parish.

When, in 1712, under terms of the will of John Fulcher of Norfolk County, sixteen African-American bond-laborers were to be freed and given land in fee simple "to live upon as long as they Shall live or any of there Increase and not to be turned of[f] nor to be Disturbed," The Virginia Colony Council reacted by proposing to bar even this door to freedom (Beverley Fleet, comp., *Virginia Colonial Abstracts*, 34 vols., [Baltimore, 1961], vol. 3, Nor-

folk County Wills, p. 26. *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., 3 vols., [Richmond, 1928], 3:332.) The Council justified this infringement of testamentary rights on the grounds that the increase in the number of free Negroes would “endanger the peace of this Colony,” by encouraging the freedom aspirations of others held in bondage.

¹⁶⁹ Philip Alexander Bruce, *Social Life in Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, An Inquiry into the Origin of the Higher Plantation Class, Together with an Account of the Habits, Customs, and Diversions of the People* (Richmond, 1902), pp. 137-38.

¹⁷⁰ Hening, 2:117-18 (1662) In Maryland, also in 1705, laws were passed to guarantee “white” servants against abuse and being detained in servitude beyond their time, and declaring that “Negroes [were] Slaves during their Naturall Lives nor freed by Baptisme” (C. O. 7/15, pp. 14, 15. Report of Governor John Seymour, 3 July 1705, to the Board of Trade on laws passed in Maryland that year).

¹⁷¹ Hening, 3:449.

¹⁷² Hening, 3:451.

¹⁷³ Hening, 3:448 (1705). One rare instance in which an individual owner disregarded the over-arching considerations of “white-race” social control, occurred when bond-laborer Margaret Godfrey sought to claim the protection of her “white” status by defiantly telling her overseer, “If you whip me it will be worse for you for I am not a Slave.” Nevertheless, the overseer, with the express leave of the mistress cut Godfrey’s clothes from her body and beat her severely two successive times. Her offense had been to plead for humane treatment for her severely injured husband. The Godfreys’ petition for relief, was rejected by the Court (*St. George’s County Records*, HH, pp. 165-68 [June 1748]; Maryland State Archives, Annapolis).

¹⁷⁴ Hening, 3:103, 459-60. Hilliard d’Auberville proposed, among other measures for control the bond-laborers of St. Domingue, “to give them wives, encourage them to raise cattle, hold them with ties of property” (Hilliard d’Auberville, *Considerations sur l’État prÉsent de la colonie franÁaise de St. Domingue*, 2 vol [Paris, 1776-77]; 2:59-62. Cited in Gwen Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, [Baltimore, 1971], p. 83).

¹⁷⁵ Hening 2: 267 (1668).

¹⁷⁶ Hening, 2:280-81 (1670).

¹⁷⁷ Hening, 3:251 (1705).

¹⁷⁸ Hening, 3:298 (1705), 4:327 (1732).

¹⁷⁹ Hening, 3:459 (1705).

¹⁸⁰ Hening, 4:119 (1723).

¹⁸¹ Hening 4:131 (1723). A provision was made for free African-American “housholders” to keep one gun and powder and shot (as needed for shooting animals, presumably); and a gun might be allowed to any African-American bond-laborer having the permission of his owner, or to any free African-American licensed by a Justice of the Peace for the protection of “any frontier plantation” (against non-English enemies, presumably).

¹⁸² Thomas Harris, Jr. and John McHenry, *Maryland reports, being a Series of the Most Important Law Cases argued and determined in the Provincial Court and Court of Appeals of the then Province of Maruyland from the year 1700 down to the the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York, 1809), 1:563. “The white man’s pursuit of black women frequently destroyed any possibility that comely black girls could remain chaste for long,” writes Blassingame. According to autobiographies of former bond-laborers, the home of a bond-laborer was “considered by many white men... as a house of ill-fame” (John W. Blassingame, *Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South* [New York, 1972], p. 82).

¹⁸³ Philip J. Schwarz, *Twice Condemned: Slaves and the Criminal Laws of Virginia, 1705-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1988), p. 159.

¹⁸⁴ “A white man may go to the house of a free black, maltreat and abuse him, and commit any outrage upon his family, for all of which the law cannot reach him, unless some white person saw the act committed.” Thus observed Mr. Wilson of Perquimon County, speaking at the 1835 North Carolina State Constitutional Convention of 1835 (John S. Bassett, *Slavery in the State of North Carolina* [Baltimore, 1899], bound as one of a number of studies in *Slavery in the United States, Selected Essays* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 42).

¹⁸⁵ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, p. 331.

¹⁸⁶ Hening, 3:447-62, 4:126-34; emphasis added.

¹⁸⁷ In the order of their itemization here, these cited laws are in Hening, 3:459; 4:133-34; 3:87 (1691); 3:453-54; 4:129.

¹⁸⁸ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips spoke of “the methods of life which controlled the history of Virginia through the following centuries and of the many colonies and states which borrowed her plantation system.” This was “Dixie,” where, he said, “the white folk [are] a people with a common resolve indomitably maintained— that it shall be and remain a white man’s country.” (Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *The Slave Economy of the Old South, Selected Essays in Economic and Social History*, Eugene D. Geno-

vese, ed., [Baton Rouge, 1968], pp. 8, 274. The dates of these pronouncements were 1910-11 and 1918, respectively.)

¹⁸⁹ Somehow pundits would not begin to regard "racial preferences" in a negative light until after the passage of Equal Opportunities legislation, some two-and-a-half centuries later.

"Irish-Americans [arriving in the United States in the ante-bellum period] were not the originators of white supremacy; they adapted to and were adopted into an already existing 'white' American social order" (*The Invention of the White Race*, 1:199).

¹⁹⁰ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, "The Slave Labor Problem in the Charleston District," *Political Science Quarterly*, 22:416-39 (1907); reprinted in Genovese, ed., *The Slave Economy of the Old South*, p. 198.

¹⁹¹ Warren B. Smith, *White Servitude in the Colony of South Carolina* (Columbia, 1961), p. 35.

Richard B. Morris's monumental study of labor in the continental Anglo-American colonies found that "the effort of white artisans to keep free Negroes and slaves from entering the skilled trades," radiated from Charleston to "every sizable town on the Atlantic coast" (Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, p. 182.)

¹⁹² Elizabeth Donnan, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C. 1935); 4:595 (1739), 605 (1742).

¹⁹³ Donnan, 4:610. See also, Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor, eds., "Johann Martin Bolzius Answers a Questionnaire on Carolina and Georgia," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, ser. 3, 14:218-261 (1957); p. 242 (19 March 1751). Bolzius, who was attempting to encourage emigration of Salzburgers to Georgia, sought to contrast South Carolina, where, he said, European-American workers could not succeed because of the widespread employment of African-American bond-laborers in skilled crafts, and Georgia, where "Negroes are not allowed to learn a craft except the cooper craft."

¹⁹⁴ Smith, *White Servitude in the Colony of South Carolina*, pp. 30-31. Other variations of the same quota principle were enacted.

¹⁹⁵ Donnan, 4:610. Starika et al., eds., 227.

¹⁹⁶ James Hugo Johnston, *Race Relations in Virginia and Miscegenation in the South, 1776-1860* (Amherst, Massachusetts, 1970), p. 58, citing Archives of Virginia, Legislative Papers, petitions: 9789, Culpeper, 9 December 1831; 9860, Dinwiddie, 20 December 1831; 177707, Norfolk, 12 November 1851). It would seem relevant to note that the first two of these petitions were submitted in the wake of

Nat Turner's Rebellion and during the Virginia House of Delegates' debate on slavery. (See Theodore William Allen, "...They Would Have Destroyed Me': Slavery and the Origins of Racism," *Radical America*, 9:41-63 (1975); pp. 58-59.)

¹⁹⁷ Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. 123. I find Jordan's observation accurate and very pertinent, but I have appropriated it for an argument that he does not support. His "unthinking decision" approach to the origin of racial slavery rejects Morgan's (and my) attribution of deliberate ruling class manipulation for social control purposes.

¹⁹⁸ Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebeian*, pp. 212.

¹⁹⁹ Phillip J. Schwartz, *Twice Condemned: Slaves and the Criminal Laws of Virginia, 1705-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1988), p. 13.

²⁰⁰ *The Speech of Thomas J. Randolph (of Albemarle [County])* Saturday January 21, 1832, p. 13.

²⁰¹ Speech delivered in the Virginia House of Delegates 25 January 1832, and printed in the *Richmond Enquirer* on 2 February 1832.

²⁰² *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 May, 1832. Civis referred to Roman history, to warn against neglect of the plight of the poor "whites" in eastern Virginia. Even after the admittance of "every Italian to the privilege of Roman citizenship," he said, it was a slave revolt (an apparent reference to Spartacus) that had been the direst threat to the power of Rome, except that posed by the forces of Hannibal.

²⁰³ *Richmond Enquirer*, 3 March 1832. Emphasis in original. Dew's letter appeared on 2 February 1832.

²⁰⁴ This phrase was used as the title of a well-known work of William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History* (New York, 1988; originally published in 1966).

²⁰⁵ The germ theory, holds that United States history has been basically an unfolding of the seed of English democratic principles, dating at least from Magna Charta. One of the champions of the concept, Alexander Brown, noted historian of early colonial Virginia, referring to the "evolution" of the United States, said: "The germ is still unfolding and so long as it remains true to the seed it will continue to put forth to the glory of the nation and for the betterment of mankind." (Alexander Brown, *The First Republic in America* (Boston and New York, 1898), p. 332.

I do not consider this theory separately, because I regard it as effectively subsumed in the more complex "paradox" theory, The latter theory does not reject the "germ"

theory; quite the contrary, it adheres most staunchly to the paramount and overriding importance of the ideas of English and Enlightenment philosophers of individual liberty as the shaping force in American history. But the "paradox" theory is designed to reconcile the primacy of "individual liberty" with the vexing problem of racial oppression.

²⁰⁶ Edmund Burke, *Writings and Speeches*, 12 vols. (London, 1803), 2:123-24.

²⁰⁷ Dew, *Essay on Slavery*, p. 99.

²⁰⁸ Two helpful bibliographies of this controversy are 1) Joseph Boskin, *Into Slavery, Racial Decisions in the Virginia Colony* (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 101-12; and 2) James M. McPherson, Laurence B. Holland, James M. Banner, Jr., Nancy J. Weiss, and Michael D. Bell, eds., *Blacks in America, Bibliographical Essays* (Garden City, New York, 1971), esp., pp. 26-28 and 39-44. See also: 1) Alden T. Vaughan, "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 97:311-354 (July 1989), for a more recent, avowedly partisan, analysis of the state of the discussion; and 2) Raymond Starr's earlier review of the discussion, "Historians and the Origins of British North American Slavery," *Historian*, 36:1-18 (1973-74)

²⁰⁹ This was essentially the same question that H. M. Henry had asked more than sixty years earlier and which is cited at note 165 above.

²¹⁰ *American Slavery, American Freedom*, p. 376. The general term "Virginians" is used by Morgan to mean "white" people in Virginia. In the concluding Chapter 18, the term appears some twenty-two times, but only twice is it modified by "white." Morgan's imposition of this "white" assumption on the reader, objectionable in itself, conforms with his treatment of the African-Americans as mere background to the rise of "liberty and equality."

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 364.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 366, 369.

²¹⁴ See note 156, above, for bibliographical notes on relevant works of these historians. See also the discussion in *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:245-47.

²¹⁵ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, p. 386.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 331; cited above in paragraph# 216.

²¹⁷ William T. Hutchinson and William M.E. Rachle, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, 9 vols. (Chicago, 1962) 2:198-201, 209-11.

²¹⁸ Letter from "Civis," an Eastern Virginia slaveholder, in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 May 1832.

²¹⁹ Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom, The American Paradox," *Journal of American History*, June, 1972, pp. 5-6.

²²⁰ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 386, 387.

²²¹ Wertenbaker, *Planters of Colonial Virginia*, p. 160. The term "yeomanry" is somewhat loosely applied by historians of the early colonial period. In this instance, Wertenbaker was obviously referring to self-employed laboring-class non-holders of bond-labor.

²²² Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North-America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782*, translated by an English gentleman who resided in America at that period, 2 vols., 2nd. ed. (London 1787. 1968 reprint), 2:190.

²²³ Letter from "Civis," an Eastern Virginia slaveholder, in the *Richmond Enquirer*, 4 May 1832.

²²⁴ Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebeian*, p. 211.

²²⁵ "[T]here existed a numerous supply of potential tenants... from that group of small planters who, in consequence of the trifling quantity of poor tobacco produced on their overworked land in the east, could not successfully compete with a large amount of excellent tobacco grown on the fresh land of the great planters. Faced with impoverishment they looked to the more fertile lands of the Piedmont and Valley as a means of bettering their condition" (Willard F. Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," *VMHB*, 58 [1950]:427-442).

²²⁶ Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, pp. 150, 152, 153, 296, 297-98. See also *The Invention of the White Race*, 2:104-5.

²²⁷ C.O. 5/1371, ff. 150vo-151. James City County grievance number 10, in "A Repertory of the General County Grievances..." submitted to the King by the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the causes of Bacon's Rebellion, dated 15 October 1677.

²²⁸ George W. Summers of Kanawha County, speaking in the Virginia House of Delegates, during the debate on slavery, following Nat Turner's Rebellion (*Richmond Enquirer*, 2 February 1832).

²²⁹ "[T]he 'warlike Christian men' recruited by Virginia to defend its borders in 1701 were the direct ancestors of the dragoons whose Colts and Winchesters subdued the Sioux of the Great Plains a century and a half later" (Ray Allen Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* [New York, 1966], p. 40). The interior quotation is from an Act passed by the Virginia Assembly in August 1701, designed to encourage English frontier settlers (Hening, 3:207).

I say, "typically," in fairness to the sprinkling of Mennonites and others who opposed the bond-servitude of African-Americans on grounds of Christian fellowship.

²³⁰ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920, 1947), p. 38.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1. A century has passed since that first essay, and Turner's frontier thesis continues to be meat and drink for historiographical evaluation and disputation. But a marked tendency has been apparent to limit the "frontier" concept, reducing it to a Western regional subject, which, of course, risks "abandonment of the cross-regional and national emphasis he [Turner] sought to establish for the field" (William Cronon, cited in John Mack Faragher, Review Article, "The Frontier Trail: Rethinking Turner and Reimagining the American West," *American Historical Review*, 98:106-17 [1993], p. 117). Since the 1960s, critics have shown a welcome sensitivity to Turner's neglect of Indians, Mexicans, and Chinese or, worse, his chauvinistic attitude toward them. Finally, in 1995, a reference was made to Turner's pervasive "whiteness," the significant fact that "his own racial identity was a completely foreign concept to him." (Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Turnerians All: The Dream of a Helpful History in an Intelligible World," *American Historical Review*, 100:697-716 [1995], p. 715.)

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 280-81.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

²³⁵ James C. Malin, *Essays in Historiography* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1946), p. 38, cited in Harry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land* (Cambridge, 1950), p. 302.

²³⁶ See *The Invention of the White Race*, 1:138-41, 152-53.

The free-land "safety valve" theory at one time was the subject of extensive debate among economic, labor and land historians. Its limitations, even in its own white-blind terms, as an explanation of the low level of proletarian class consciousness were forcefully pointed out decades ago by such historians as Carter Goodrich, Sol Davison, Murray Kane, and Fred A. Shannon, whose names are prominent in the extensive bibliography of the "Safety Valve" controversy. Subsequently it could only be defended in a greatly watered-down form of the original Turner formulation. See Ray Allen Billington, *The American Frontier Thesis: Attack and Defense* (Washington, D. C., 1971), pp. 20-25, and *idem*, *America's Frontier Heritage*, pp. 31-38, 292-93.

²³⁷ See *Invention of the White Race*, Volume One, pp. 145-47, 152-57, 184-86, 195-199.

²³⁸ For the moment, gold appears to have fallen into general disfavor among central banks. The Swiss central bank sold half its gold in November 1997, while other central banks have been lending their gold to speculators who in turn sell it short. This strange contempt for gold is said to express "belief in the wisdom of central bankers" ("Market Watch" article by Floyd Norris, "In Alan We Trust, So Why Own Gold?", *New York Times*, 30 November 1997, Section 3, p. 1; "Alan" is Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board). As that "faith" is sorely tested by a succession of crises and "bail-outs" in Mexico, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, etc., the financial powers of the world have resort to their ultimate "reserve"—the intensification of exploitation of labor, under the slogan of "austerity."

²³⁹ Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan's explanation of this policy has added to the vocabulary of political economy the term "NAIRU," short for "non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment." That is the rate of unemployment, supposedly around 5.8%, that is necessary to keep inflation from increasing (Robert Eisner, "Our NAIRU Limit: The Governing Myth of Economic Policy," *The American Prospect*, Spring 1995, pp. 58-63; p. 62).

In actuality, however, NAIRU-type policies have contributed to a much higher level of unemployment. Economist Lester C. Thurow declares that "[t]he great untold story of the American economy of the 1990s is the disguised rate of unemployment. Properly calculated, your rate of unemployment is well into the double digits... Not since the Great Depression [of the 1930s] has this country had unemployment such as exists today." The effect of the "crusade" to prevent unemployment from falling "too low," as Thurow says, is that "[a]s might be expected the earnings of the bottom 60 per cent fell sharply relative to those of the top 20 percent between 1980 and 1993... (Lester Thurow, "The Crusade That's Killing Prosperity," in Robert Kuttner, ed, *The Ticking Time-Bomb* [New York, 1996], pp. 48, 50, 51-52).

Writing in 1997 with an eye to the much-praised policy of "globalization," Robert Kuttner asserts that "There are more than a billion workers unemployed or underemployed." Workers on this country, says Kuttner, are competing with those of Mexico, Malaysia, and the Philippines, using technology roughly comparable to that used in the United States; and "hundreds of millions of workers in Latin America and Asia are willing to make, say, clothing, at wages of less than a dollar an hour." For the United States working class, the implications of this analysis are ominous: "Only a generation ago... a worker with a modest formal schooling but a strong back and a willingness to work could join the blue-collar middle

class. It is clear that those days are over.... Very few [such jobs] will be available to the generation now entering the [United States] labor force" (Robert Kuttner, *Everything For Sale: the Virtues and Limits of Markets*. A Twentieth Century Fund Book [New York, 1997], pp. 92, 101).

²⁴⁰ Regarding wealth distribution in the United States, as the twentieth century draws to a close, Edward Wolff reports that, "The gap between the haves and have-nots is greater than at any time since 1929" (Edward N. Wolff, *Top Heavy: A Study of the Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America*, A Twentieth Century Fund Report [New York, 1995], p. 2).

²⁴¹ Jeffrey Madrick, *The End of Affluence: The Causes and Consequences of America's Economic Dilemma* (New York, 1996), pp. 19, 163-64.

²⁴² For over twenty years now, the ruling class has appeared to be preparing a strategy to cope with this potential threat to the "white-race" social control system. The Federal Office of Management in Budget, shortly after its establishment on 1 July 1997, issued its Order No. 15 to establish a new set of "Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting, and ordered that "not later than January 1, 1980, all reports involving 'racial and/or ethnic information'" conform to this new system of classification. (See OMB Directive 15 and revisions to it as printed in the *Federal Register*, 62:58781-58790 [30 October 1997.]) Let it be noted, if only within the limits of this footnote, that the new system provides for five official "races" but only two "ethnic" categories, namely, "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino" (Ibid., pp. 58787, and 59789). Since the implementation of this new system, mountains of bar charts and statistical tables have insisted that "Hispanics can be of any race."

If there has appeared a critical examination from the working-class point of view of this new demographic taxonomy, it has escaped my attention. In the meantime, it is perhaps instructive to take note of a 1997 "demographic study" made by a university "research center" whose authors point out "political implications" of this revolution in official policy. In the words of one of the authors:

The traditional black-white image of cities doesn't work for New York any more. Ethnicity is much more important. And the political leadership has yet to understand the magnitude of the change and to incorporate these groups into the political system. (Comment by Michael L. Moss, director of the Taub Urban Research Center at New York University, and co-author of a 1996 up-date of census data [*New York Times*, 1 December 1997])

Jonathan Scott and Gregory Meyerson

An Interview with Theodore W. Allen

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(Editors' note: This interview was conducted via e-mail between March and June, 1998.)

Question: What's been your feeling about the reception of *The Invention of the White Race*?

T.A.: Volume One (published in 1994) received respectful reviews in, among other publications, *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of American Ethnic History*, and *Contemporary Sociology*. *Choice*, the research library journal, gave a very positive though brief notice, and included it in its list of "Outstanding Academic Books, 1995." A friendly, though critical, treatment of Volume One appeared in the English journal *Ecumene*, written by a well-known Irish historian at the University of Ulster. I have spoken on the book before audiences at forums at two universities, each time at the invitation of the department of African-American studies. I was interviewed on two New York City talk-show programs regarding the first volume. I was understandably pleased to learn from a PBS "All Things Considered" broadcast earlier this year that a University of Massachusetts Women's Studies Professor links *Invention* with Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* as required reading in her course relating to racial and gender privilege. Sales of Volume One have been sufficient to warrant a second paperback printing.

It being now just four-and-a-half months since Volume Two was published, it is perhaps too early to assess its reception. A brief, but fair-minded, review by Martin H. Quitt appeared in the Winter 1998 issue of the venerable *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. The book was given a long and favorable review by Jonathan Scott, of Wayne State University, in *Against the Current*. Brief favorable mentions of it have appeared in *Choice*, and in the Memphis, Tennessee *Tri-State Defender*. I should expect that journals that reviewed Volume One will also undertake to comment on Volume Two. I know personally two eminent historians in the field of early Anglo-

American history who chose to wait until they could see both volumes before commenting; I look forward to their reviews.

But, relative to the attention that was accorded to the most extensive previous studies of the origin of racial oppression— Jordan's *White Over Black*, and Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom*— my work has scarcely made the scene, although (or possibly *because?*) it fundamentally diverges from those established interpretations in major respects. It also appears that my work has gotten less notice than that given to such "whiteness-as-a-social-construct" authors as David Roediger and Noel Ignatiev. Perhaps it will eventually be concluded that this relative neglect was justified by the merits of the case. And, possibly my identification as an "independent scholar," without any visible means of support from academic institutions, may count against *Invention* as a work worthy of major consideration.

In any any case, whatever *Invention's* merits, "official society" will at best likely tend to hold at arm's length this or any other work directed at throwing off the incubus of "white" racial privilege that has historically paralyzed the will of "the common people" in their struggle against the "Titans" of capital (quotes from Frederic Jackson Turner). We have precedent, in this respect, in the "white-centric" attitude that greeted the appearance of DuBois' *Black Reconstruction*, the classic class-struggle interpretation of the history of the the post-Civil War South.

QUESTION: How did you arrive at "social control" as a conceptual framework through which the origins of racial oppression could be analyzed and understood?

T.A.: A short answer is "doesn't everybody?"— doesn't every "political scientist" understand that the first principle of "governance" is the maintenance of social control? My book is simply a study of the history of governance as instituted by the ruling class of colonizing powers, particularly, the English and Anglo-American plantation bourgeoisie. I offer the following summary argument of the matter.

In regard to those class societies that I have had a chance to study, in connection with research for *The Invention of the White Race*, and also those in regard to which I have merely relied upon studies made by other scholars, the following generalization seems justified:¹

In such class societies there is the ruling class, that part of society which, having established its control of the organs of state power, and having maintained domination of the economy through successive generations and crises, is able to limit the options of social policy in such a way as to perpetuate its hegemony over the society as a whole.

Being itself economically non-productive, the ruling class is optimally a small numerical proportion of the society. Therefore, the maintenance of state power in the form of military forces and their attendant bureaucracy is an indispensable condition for the continued dominance of the ruling class.

Reliance on force alone, however, is ill-advised. Military forces, being economically unproductive,² must be compensated by deductions from the gross social resources; therefore, the greater the reliance on the military, the greater this unproductive outlay. Secondly, such reliance on military force for social control tends to political destabilization through military coups conducted with or without the connivance of other partisan factions.³

It is for these same reasons that the ruling class, in effect, commissions an intermediate buffer social control stratum, classically composed of self-employed small landowners or leaseholders, self-employed artisans, and members of the professions, who live in relative economic security, and in social subordination to the ruling class and normally in day-to-day contact with their social inferiors. This is a far less expensive bulwark of ruling-class power than mere military force.

Finally, at the bottom of the social pyramid are those devoid of productive wealth (except their ability to work), who constitute the majority of the population, and whose general condition of extreme dependency and insecurity is essential for the purposes of the ruling class.

That provides a rational basis for explaining the phenomenon of class oppression; but how can the social structure characteristic of racial oppression be explained in terms consistent with this theory of class rule? That simple question contains the alpha and omega of the struggle for a consistent theory of United States history. If white supremacy was brought to these shores as an inborn trait from England, the fundamental nature of the society established here, and the interpretation of its historical development, cannot be analyzed in terms of class differences.

How can racial oppression,⁴ with its implicit denial of the significance of social class distinctions, be explained in terms that conform to the simple class theory of bourgeois social control as schematized in the paragraphs above? That is the essence of the issue I sought to address in this work. My study of the historical record of the colonial period in Ireland as well as in Anglo-America led to the understanding of the invention of the "white" race— not as the outcome of some inherent predisposition, a "need to know they were white," as Jordan puts it— but as a bourgeois social control formation, inclusive not merely of the upper and the intermediate

social classes, but of the very "white" workers who were themselves the subjects of class exploitation.

The essence of the analysis can be stated thus: Where the particular pattern of the establishment and conduct of a colonial economy resulted in a critical attenuation and weakening of the presumptive intermediate social stratum; or, as in the Anglo-American continental plantation colonies, where the colonial economy created a mass of non-essential labor that could not be absorbed into the ranks of a normal middle stratum, the ruling class resorted to *racial oppression*. Under this form of social organization, capitalist exploitation of labor is intensified, while the potential social control problem that might arise from the combined resistance of the propertyless classes is addressed by: 1) recruiting a strictly defined portion of the laboring classes into the intermediate social control stratum by a conferring on them a system of anomalous privileges vis-a-vis all members of the excluded group; and, concomitantly, 2) by denying to all members of the excluded group, propertyless or otherwise, the normal social distinctions characteristic of class systems.⁵

Thus there was created an anomalous all-class social control formation, the Protestants as the "Protestant Ascendancy" in Ireland,⁶ and the "white race" in continental Anglo-America. This undeniable fact of life presents the greatest obstacle to "the ascendancy of the working classes"⁷ in the United States, and to the most basic premise of the theory of it.

QUESTION: Volumes One and Two of *Invention of the White Race* make a number of brief but provocative references to gender oppression. Could you expand on this? More precisely, what is the role of gender oppression in the maintenance of class rule through "white skin privilege" and the invention of the white race?

T.A.: In my references to the corrupting impact of male supremacy on social progress in general, I was guided by principles that were first enunciated by Mary Wollstonecraft two hundred years ago, and which have been a constant theme of feminism ever since. As a Marxist historian, I have merely highlighted, however briefly, aspects of the historical records of England and Anglo-America that illustrate how male supremacism was integrated in the general system of ruling-class social control. (I refer for instance to Volume One of *Invention*, pp. 24, 163, and 165; and to Volume Two, pp. 6-28, 128-35; and 250-51, together with accompanying substantial end-notes.)

The establishment of capitalism in English agriculture, with its mass expropriation of the English copyholder, and the start of English colonization in America, coincid-

ed with the triumph of the Reformation. But, for English women there was to be no Reformation in the Reformation; the "wrongs women immemorially wear" remained rooted in bedrock constitutional principles. A woman was not a legal person (except for purposes of public punishment). How, then did the ruling class maintain social control when it thus continued the degradation of half the population? It did so the old-fashioned way, namely, by the preservation of the age-old institution of male privilege on the patriarchal principle, which was held inviolate with respect to even the most poverty-stricken and dispossessed peasant or laborer. Every *man's* home was *his* castle, and on that basis he was enlisted in the role of buffer between the ruling class and the women. By this means, the mass of men, who were themselves impoverished by the rampaging effects of nascent English capitalism, were made partners of the very ruling class that had authored their catastrophic social degradation that they vainly struggled to prevent. Around 1618, Lord Chancellor Sir Francis Bacon, by way of a classical allusion, elucidated the connection between gender and class oppression. To forsake male privilege, he said, would be as "preposterous" as to suggest that slaves should govern free men. Therefore, he cautioned, before men became involved in attempts against their rulers they should understand that in so doing they would be undermining their privileges over "their" womenfolk.

In the pattern-setting Anglo-American Chesapeake plantation colonies, Virginia and then Maryland (carved out of Virginia's side in 1634), the great majority of the people came as chattel bond-laborers. As chattels, alienable by sale or gift, the bond-laborers were denied the right to marry such as was a regular part of the course of passage to adulthood in England or in the realms of Asante or Dahomey. That revolution in relations of production entailed the abrogation of the male privilege for men thus employed; and the women bond-laborers were deprived of whatever benefit they might have had by the rule of "coverture," against direct exploitation, sexual and otherwise, by their owners. But the gain made by the plantation bourgeoisie in terms of return on their capital by the transformation in the relations of production from wage labor and tenancy to chattel bondage in the early seventeenth century was offset by suspension of the male privilege system it entailed. This is seen in the demands for "freedom from their Slavery," and for the break-up of the large Tidewater plantations that drew the bond-laborers, and rank-and-file free men, into Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. On behalf of generations of "fornicators" whose backs had been bloodied, their bondage extended, and their children made "bastards,"

these demands intended the restoration of the right of laborers to marry and to have a (yes, patriarchal) family life. Here, in the course of Bacon's Rebellion, was demonstrated the connection between the weakening of the male privilege and the breakdown of ruling-class social control.

The invention of the white race at the beginning of the eighteenth century was the solution to the problem of the participation of the bond-laborers and the poor free in Bacon's Rebellion, namely, how to maintain social control while continuing to base the economy on chattel bond-labor. Since the great majority of the free men could not become employers or even secure long-term leaseholders, they were to be enlisted in the system of social control, not by a class interests, but by being "promoted" to the "white race." This arrangement was implemented by conferring on the poor European-Americans a set of white-skin privileges; privileges that did not require their promotion to the class of property owners. Such were the civil rights to possess arms, to plead and testify in legal proceedings, and to move about freely with the presumption of liberty. Thus, *rights* that were the birthright of every man in England, were passed off as *privileges* in America, but privileges that, by the principle of racial oppression, necessarily excluded any person, free or bond, of any perceptible degree of African ancestry (the "one-drop" rule).

Among these "white race" rights, was the right to marry. (The diminishing proportion of European-American bond-laborers, being bound for a limited term of years, had marriage as a prospective right.) This right, however was denied to the African-American hereditary bond-laborers who, in the eighteenth century, became the main labor force in the plantation colonies. The denial of "coverture" to African-American females, contributed to the creation of the *absolutely unique American form of male supremacy*, the white-male privilege of any European-American male to assume familiarity with any African-American woman or girl. Men of the employing classes have customarily always exercised this privilege with regard to women of the laboring classes. What the "white race" did that was unique was to confer that privilege on an entire set of laboring-class men over the women of another set of laboring people, and underwrote the privilege by making it a capital offense for any African-American man to raise his hand against any white man. This privilege was exercised not only with regard to African-American bond-laborers, but to free African-Americans, who lived under general writs of proscription of racial oppression.

This study has served to confirm for me a concept of strategic principles for the struggle for social justice.

Male supremacy, gender oppression, is the oldest, most pervasive, and most fundamental form of social oppression, being built as it is into the family form by the principles of patriarchy. Yet, its overthrow presents a more complicated strategic difficulty than is seen in any other form of social oppression. The reason lies in the presence of a gendarme, spy, and boss in every house, and that perhaps seven times out of ten that gendarme, spy or boss is a loved one.

For those in our country who are committed to ending all forms of social oppression and replacing it with forms of social organization that can succeed in making vital the inherent contradiction between the individual and the collective, the first main strategic blow must be aimed at the most vulnerable point at which a decisive blow can be struck, namely, white supremacy. This is the ineluctable conclusion to be drawn from a study of the great social crises— the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Populist Revolt of the 1890s, and the Great Depression of the 1930s. In every case the prospects for a stable broad front against capital has foundered on the shoals of white supremacy, most specifically on the corruption of the European-American workers by racial privilege. Being thereby encapsulated in the incubus of "white" identity, the historical significance of their class identity has been unrealized.

But the attack upon white supremacy must necessarily at the same time be an attack on white-male supremacy. Briefly, the reasons, *based on actual historic lessons*, are these: 1) The necessary maximum mobilization of women for the overthrow of male supremacy requires that it be "race-free"; and 2) In order for European-American workers to participate in their own class liberation, they must repudiate the system of white-skin privilege, including sexual privileges with regard to "not-white" women. To the extent that these principles are honored, any persisting attachment of men in general to patriarchal notions will surely be forced on the defensive.

QUESTION: In his Introduction to *The Wages of Whiteness*, in the section "Marxism and the White Problem," Roediger states:

It is certainly true that racism must be set in class and economic contexts.... Clearly, as Edmund Morgan and others have shown, labor control and land ownership provided the context for the emergence of strong white racial consciousness in early Virginia. Nonetheless the privileging of class over race is not always productive or meaningful. To set race within social formations is absolutely necessary but to reduce race to class is damaging."

He goes on to claim that pointing out the economic dimension of racism is already done within the political

mainstream, that the “race problem” is consistently reduced to one of class,” or as he puts it elsewhere “race disappears into class.” He gives media analysis of the Duke campaign as an example: “viewers were thus treated to the exotic notion that, when white workers react to unemployment by electing a white supremacist who promises to gut welfare programs they are acting on class terms rather than as working-class racists.”

It is implied that both Marxists and the media “[naturalize] whiteness and oversimplify race” (p. 5).

It seems pretty clear that he would object to your social control interpretation since he implies that focusing on the role of ruling classes in reproducing racism is conspiratorial and even condescending, positioning white workers as “dupes, even if virtuous ones.” Both of you claim to be doing class analysis— you focus on racism as ruling class social control; he focuses on race as the form by which the American (white) working class makes itself, implying perhaps that if class and economic contexts were important for the “emergence” of racial consciousness, they’re decidedly less important from that point on. How do you respond to this kind of analysis?

T.A.: I appreciate very much your question concerning Roediger’s thesis. I have in my c-drive a file tagged “Roediger,” a still uncompleted criticism of the of Roediger presentation of the “whiteness-as-a-social-construct” concept. I began it in anticipation of a projected forum in Boston to be arranged for the Fall of this year, but it now appears that it will not take place. I justified putting off the completion of that essay on grounds that there were more immediate demands on my time. In that meantime, I composed the Summary of Vols. 1 & 2. There, the first paragraph on page 4 (“Nevertheless, the thesis of ‘race as a social construct’ as it now stands..”) indicates the course that my full and overt criticism of Roediger’s work is to take. I hope that will serve for the moment, until I can get back and complete my critique of Roediger. (Having by now perhaps noted my tendency to go on and on, you will not be surprised to know that that draft article, before it is done, takes up the matter of Gutman’s Eurocentric “making of the American working class” theme, with its assumption— explicitly shared by Roediger— that everything before 1820 was American labor’s “pre-history” and its denial that slavery was capitalism; and that therefore the African-American bond-laborers were not “workingclass.”)

I hope this will do for now for a response to your very perceptive question.

[Editors’ Note (added 12-1-02): Mr. Allen’s discussion of Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness* appears in *Cultur-*

al Logic, Vol. 4, No. 2, at clogic.eserver.org/4-2/allen.html.]

Question: What is your stand on affirmative action?

T.A.: My response to the first part of the question is in the form of the article, “In Defense of Affirmative Action in Employment,” which appeared in a much shorter and less developed form in *Z Magazine* in 1995, which may be found at clogic.eserver.org/1-2/affirmative.html

Question: Some might say that affirmative action is compatible with new forms of racial oppression which would be similar in certain ways to your definition in *Invention* of national oppression— with the working classes racialized and superexploited, but now by an emergent multiracial bourgeoisie. The even larger question looming behind this on affirmative action is how you see the mechanisms of racial oppression as defined in *Invention* as changing in significant ways.

T.A. My first and last reaction to this question is to say that in this country the emergence of a multi-racial bourgeoisie (if it were possible) would be a consummation devoutly to be wished. It would mean the end of racial oppression, the historic system of ruling-class social control. That whole system of bourgeois social control in this country is dependent precisely on the denying African-Americans normal social mobility.

In *Invention* I have tried to explain the root source of this social anomaly, by showing that ruling-class social control over the anti-capital elements has been made effective primarily by the system of “racial” privileges conferred on laboring-class “whites”:

The exclusion of *free* African-Americans from the intermediate stratum was a corollary of the establishment of “white” identity as a mark of social status. IF the presumption of liberty was to serve as a mark of social status for masses of European-Americans without real prospects of upward social mobility, and yet induce them to abandon their opposition to the plantocracy and enlist them actively, or at least passively, in keeping down the Negro bond-laborer...the presumption of liberty had to be denied to *free* African-Americans.” (*The Invention of the White Race*, 2:249; emphasis added)

Times have changed but the principle of bourgeois rule in this country remains the same as it was first formulated in the aftermath of Bacon’s Rebellion. Sociologists Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro document the continuation to this very hour of that “racialization of state policy, [that] has impaired the ability of many black Americans to accumulate wealth and discouraged them from doing so...” (*Black Wealth, White Wealth* (New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 4). If, as you put it, a “multi-racial

bourgeoisie," which I take to mean a "non-racial" bourgeoisie, actually did emerge, that transformation would inescapably entail the emergence of a "non-racial" laboring class because it would imply the end of the white-skin privilege system, the basic most prevalent and historic form of class collaborationism in this country.

Let me point out what seem to me miscues in your suggestion that the establishment of a "multi-racial bourgeoisie" in the United States would be still "a form of racial oppression" that could be likened to the transition of British social control in Ireland in the second quarter of the nineteenth century from one of racial oppression to one of national oppression. The same British Protestant bourgeoisie did not become a "multi-" merger of Irish and British bourgeoisies. Rather, the essence of the transition was merely the inclusion of the Catholic Irish bourgeoisies into the intermediate social control stratum in Ireland. This is discussed in *Invention*, Volume One, Chapters 4 and 5.

There is indeed a parallel in the fact that the social promotion of the Catholic Irish bourgeoisie and the socially upward mobility of a segment of the African-Americans since the 1960s were both made possible by mass revolt—the peasant uprisings in Ireland and the defiance of the state by civil rights revolt in the United States. But the promotion on the Catholic Irish bourgeoisie to the intermediate stratum (not the ruling class) in the British rule in Ireland, is not to be compared with the *individual* promotions of African-Americans, as important as the struggle for affirmative action is, not merely for the resistance to racial discrimination but for helping to bring and to keep to the fore the historic significance of the struggle against the system of racial oppression as the fundamental key to social progress in this country.

The difference of the two cases is explained by fundamental different problems of the maintenance of bourgeois social control. On the one hand, the Irish Catholic bourgeoisie could serve in that intermediate capacity *only because* of its Catholic identity, which alone enabled it to retain the requisite degree of authority over the Catholic laboring classes in those three southern provinces.

On the other hand, in the United States in the post-civil rights period African-Americans who have moved into some higher socio-economic quintile are under unrelenting pressure to dissociate themselves from their "black" identity, and, above all, the anti-discrimination struggle of their people. For instance, a 1991 poll of Black executives, mainly high officials in the *Fortune* 500 companies, showed that "African-American executives might have to make difficult value decisions between

their 'black identity' and orientation and corporate acculturation" (Ellis Cose, *The Rage of a Privileged Class*, [New York, 1993], pp. 81-82).

The difference is illuminated by reflecting on the distinction between the British reaction to the liberation struggles of the Catholic Irish in Ulster, one one hand, and to that same struggle in the three southern provinces, on the other. In Ulster, Protestants were in the majority in town and in country. The Protestant workers and peasants in Ulster were impoverished, but even in their poverty they were assured their racial privileges vis-a-vis Catholics. In Ulster, then, the continued Protestant Ascendancy system of religio-racial oppression not only could be maintained by the British, it *had* to be maintained by the British to forestall a revisit of the rebellion of 1798, in which Ulster Protestants made common cause with Catholics in the struggle for Irish independence.

For elaboration on the historical contrast between the ruling-class abandonment of the system of racial oppression in the Catholic-majority provinces of Ireland, and the ruling-class option for the perpetuation of the system of racial oppression in the United States even after Emancipation, see "Anglo-America: Ulster Writ Large," Chapter 6, of Volume One of *Invention*, particularly, pp. 139-49.

Scott and Meyerson: Thanks very much for your time.

T.A.: My pleasure.

Notes

¹ It is supported by evidence presented particularly in *The Invention of the White Race*, Chapters 2,3,4,5, and 6, and Appendix G of Volume One, and Chapters 2, 3, 6, 9,11, 12. and 13 of Volume Two.

² And in some cases absolutely counter-productive. See, for example, *ibid.*, 2:31-32, "Social Control: Haiti (Hispaniola), Cuba and Puerto Rico."

³ Witness the retrograde economic consequences for Latin-American countries where "the military" has frequently exercised its "custodianship" of political affairs through military coups. However, despite the defects of this political tradition, it enjoys the support of "the Colossus of the North" as long as it furnishes the only means of guaranteeing uninterrupted payment of debt service to United States investment banks.

⁴ See the definition of racial oppression and the accompanying discussion in *The Invention of the White Race*, Volume One, Chapter 1, "The Anatomy of Racial Oppression."

⁵ See particularly *ibid.*, Chapters 1, 3, 5 and 8 of Volume One, and Chapters 9, 11, and 13 of Volume Two.

⁶ Religio-racial oppression was the system of social control that was instituted in Ireland with the Plantation of Ulster in 1609 and which prevailed until it was succeeded (except in Ulster) by the system of national oppression, after the victory of "Catholic Emancipation" in 1829, and the subsequent defeat of the struggle for the Irish Repeal of the Union with Britain in 1843. (See *ibid.*, Volume One, Chapters 3, 4 and 5.)

⁷ A phrase used by Karl Marx in a letter sent to Abraham Lincoln on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association. (See *ibid.*, 1:143.)