

# The Racial Problem: A Socialist Analysis

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## Preface

Socialism is an international question that concerns workers of all countries. One of the hindrances to its acceptance is race-prejudice which sets groups against each other on grounds of colour, religion, and so forth. Before the workers can really understand their fundamental unity they must get rid of this false and harmful race-prejudice.

In the pages that follow the reader will find a statement of the attitude of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to the problem. To treat it fully would require a volume, not a pamphlet; but to draw out and explain the essentials of race-prejudice is, we consider, sufficient for our present purpose.

In dealing with the question of “race”, riddled as it is with so much misunderstanding (mainly the result of ignorance) and distortion (much more often deliberate and calculated), it is as well to state briefly our position right from the outset, so as to leave nobody under any misapprehension whatsoever as to where we stand.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain recognises only one fundamental social division in the modern world—the division that exists between the capitalist class on the one hand, and the working-class on the other. All other divisions, whether they be based on religion, nationality, language or “race”, are incidental to this main division. Regarding our attitude to the problem of race-prejudice, let us state categorically so that nobody will misunderstand:

*The interests of all members of the working-class, whatever the race to which they belong, are fundamentally opposed to the interests of the members of the capitalist class irrespective of the race to which the members of this latter class belong.*

The class division cuts directly across all others.

We say, further, that it is essential to remember that the race problem is but one of the many social problems that spring directly from the contradictions of capitalist society itself. As such, it must be kept in its proper perspective. To attempt to solve the problem of race prejudice in isolation will meet with the same abject failure that has resulted from the efforts to end, piecemeal, the various other evils of the capitalist system.

Only as the workers of the world understand their position under capitalism; only to the extent that they absorb Socialist knowledge, will they cease to be a prey to the hatreds and prejudices arising from fantastic notions of “race”. Only with the establishment of Socialism itself will race-prejudice finally disappear.

In so far as this pamphlet succeeds in spreading this knowledge amongst members of the working-class, it will have served its purpose.

The Executive Committee of the  
Socialist Party of Great Britain  
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## Chapter I : What is race?

Before attempting to discuss the problem of race-prejudice, it is essential to have the terms we intend to use perfectly clear and fully understood. This is particularly necessary in dealing with the subject of race, for there can be very few words in the English language that have been so frequently misunderstood and so often and so flagrantly distorted. Our first task, therefore, must be to define the word race itself. To do so, we must draw upon the results of the extensive scientific investigation in the subject; in particular, the findings made in the spheres of Anthropology (the study of man), Ethnology (the study of the races of mankind); and Biology (the study of life and its processes).

### What is race?

Since life made its first appearance on the earth there has evolved on its surface, in its seas and oceans, and in its surrounding atmosphere, a stupendous number of living organisms. Scientists, over a period of many years, have succeeded in defining millions of distinct, living species of plants and animals. To this already colossal figure must be added the number of those species, now extinct, which have also been discovered. Nor is this all, for the scientist is still busily ranging the length of the earth enthusiastically adding newly-found species to the list.

To deal with this seemingly endless array of life; to reduce what, at first sight, appears to be absolute chaos to some form of order, the scientist was very soon compelled to devise some sort of classification. From a basis first laid down in the eighteenth century by the Swedish botanist Linnaeus, an efficient system of classification has been evolved. By means of it it has been found possible to place almost every known living (and extinct) creature into some sort of relationship, one with the other. This system, it must be stressed, is based *on physical characteristics alone*.

Race is one of the terms used in this system of classification. "*It is a division of the human species based on the possession of sufficient constant heritable traits to characterise it as a distinct and relatively permanent variety of mankind.*" (*Dictionary of Scientific Terms*, Beadnell, Thinkers Library).

It is important to note that when it is used in its strictly scientific sense, race can be applied not only to man, but to all forms of life. Scientifically, one can speak as correctly of the races of the rhinoceros as one can of the races of mankind.

However, it is of race as it applies to mankind that we are concerned in this pamphlet, although it may perhaps be remarked in passing that whilst man can quite impartially and unemotionally discuss, for example, the various races of dogs or rabbits or cattle, immediately he comes to consider the races of his own species, he becomes capable of being completely taken in by the most stupid and unscientific of race theories.

### The races of mankind

In attempting to divide the human species into races the scientist bases his investigations, as has already been stressed, upon physical characteristics. The more important of these are skin, hair, and eye colour; shape of head; hair formation (straight, wavy or woolly); shape of nose (broad or narrow nostrils, high or low bridge, etc); and stature. There are also numerous other features like lip-formation, shape of face, bone-formation, etc, which are of comparatively minor importance. Using these various physical traits, either singly, or, as is more often the case, in groups, scientists have, according to their own particular interpretations, divided mankind into races. And it is here that we encounter our first stumbling-block. For when these scientists, logically and scientifically, and with the available evidence before them, try to distinguish between the various races of mankind, they find themselves in difficulties. Their investigations are quite dispassionate; for the most part they have not the slightest desire to bolster up any pre-conceived theories; yet, whenever they have ventured to put forward estimates even of the number of races of human beings in the world, they have been quite unable to come to anything like general agreement on the question. The great majority of them wisely make no attempts at estimating; they realise the uselessness and absurdity of doing so. Despite the fact that they, more than any others, are in possession of the fullest evidence obtainable, despite the fact that they have often made a life-time study of the subject, and despite the fact that, like all human beings, they are anxious to see some definite result emerge, if possible, from their labours, we find the conclusions of the scientists are tentative, their observations cautious and non-committal, and their whole attitude guarded and reserved.

However, let us examine the attempts that have been made from time to time by certain men who have not been quite so backward at coming forward as the others:

“Linnaeus . . . divided mankind into 3 races: Cuvier followed . . . and divided mankind into 3 races; Saint-Hilaire, Leibnitz and Kant divided mankind into 4; Blumebach, into 5; Buffon into 6; Prichard, into 7; Agassiz, in 8; Pickering, Haeckel and Muller into 11; Bory St. Vincent, Topinard, into 18; Morton, into 32, and Crawford, into 62” (*Race and Civilisation*, Hertz, page 20)

“Certain anthropological congresses established as many as 120 races” (Jean Finot, *Race Prejudice*, p. 55).

“Dr George R. Gliddon, an early American anthropologist, accumulated the enormous total of 150” (*Race Relations*, Weatherford and Johnson, page 5).

Let us leave the scientists and their numbers for a moment and look into the question for ourselves.

First of all, one thing is obvious; physical differences between people do exist. This cannot be denied. We may go further and say that certain groups of people do possess physical traits in common, which serve to distinguish one group from another. We may be even more explicit and distinguish three main groups, the White, the Black, and the Yellow. We may also forestall a probable objection and extend the list to include a further group, the people with Brown skins. But how much further than this can we go? To be quite honest with ourselves, we cannot even afford to be dogmatic about the few statements we have already made, because, when all is said and done, we have only divided our groups on the basis of skin colour alone, and there are many other physical differences between people besides this. To classify mankind rigidly on the basis of skin-colour alone is manifestly absurd. One has only to note the different physical characteristics of the inhabitants of one's own street to realise this. They may all be possessed of white skins, but what differences exist between them in other respects! Even their skins vary, from chalky-white to swarthy, with numerous shades in between. As Whites, we notice all the differing traits of people whose skins are the same colour as our own, but fail to notice all the many variations that occur in other groups. To us, most Negroes look alike; we notice only their black skins. Yet we are surprised to learn that the great majority of Africans are not pure Negroes at all, but are, in fact, a varying mixture of Negro and Arab stocks. The only “true” Negroes are the inhabitants of a comparatively small area of West Africa, and most so-called Negroes are not black but varying shades of brown. This fact in itself, already begins to make our original propositions a little shaky. Our “Black race” appears to be mainly brown.

We look at the inhabitants of India in a similar way, imagining that they are all much the same in appearance, yet Huxley informs us (*We Europeans*, Penguin Edition, page 85) that “India is more of a racial melting-pot than the United States”. The same is probably even more the case with the Chinese and Japanese; to us they may be only possessed of two obvious traits, a yellow skin and slanted eyes, but to each other they are individuals, each with a different physical make-up of his own.

We have not yet finished with our propositions which we thought so cautious and so apparently obvious. We have to answer some other awkward questions. Where do we draw the dividing lines between our four groups? Where do we draw the line when we find, for example, that there are certain people whom we all consider to belong to the White group, who have darker skins than certain members of the Brown and Black groups? Where do we draw the line when we find that there exists in the White group, at least in Europe, a very considerable proportion bearing traces of Mongolian characteristics, the relic of the invasions of the armies of Attila and the other hordes from the East who periodically used to raid and pillage Europe? Where are we to draw the line when it is possible to travel right across Europe from West to East, and trace a gradually increasing concentration of Mongolian racial influences? Where do we place the Malays and other peoples of South-East Asia who quite plainly reveal extensive crossing between Brown and Yellow? Or the so-called “Red” Indians of North America, whom we know to be descendants of Mongoloid peoples who crossed into that continent many years ago, and have, in many ways, developed physical characteristics of their own? A whole page could be filled with questions like these and each one involve us in difficulties. Nor have we asked the obvious ones, concerning, for example, the results of the crossings which have taken place between white and black in the United States, South Africa and Australia; between the whites and the

Indians in the whole of Central and South America; between the British and the Indians in India; and so on.

All this shows one thing, the absurdity and futility of trying to put forward rigid theories about race. Our propositions, by no stretch of the imagination, could be called sweeping. Nobody denies that differences exist between peoples, yet immediately we try to lay down any hard and fast theories from this fact, we land ourselves in difficulties.

Why is it so difficult to divide the human species into races? To the a certain extent, we have already given the answer to this question.

Unlike the other creatures of the earth, man is no longer the plaything of natural forces. Through the countless years of his evolution from the first primitive state, he has gradually made himself the master and controller of nature. He is no longer its slave; through generations he has made himself capable of withstanding and overcoming many of the hostile forces with which he has to contend. By virtue of his superior brain development, he has learned to make and control fire; he has learned to temper the rigours of harsh and bitter climates by means of artificial clothing and shelter; he has learned to fashion tools; and through this increasing control over his environment, he has been able to spread his species over almost the whole of the earth's surface. He has migrated everywhere; into the cold, barren, inhospitable wastes of the sub-Artic regions; into the hot, arid deserts of the five continents; into the humid forests of the Equatorial lands. Wherever he has gone, he has, in course of time, adapted himself to the most varied of environments. And, moreover, most important of all from our point of view, wherever he has wandered *he has interbred*. The process of interbreeding has gone on as long as man himself has existed on the earth. With the possible exception of the Pygmies of Central Africa, a small isolated group that has bred within itself for generations, there is *no "pure race" in existence in the world to-day*.

And at this point we can rejoin the scientists, whom we left endeavouring to reach some sort of definite conclusions about this elusive subject of race. Their efforts, as we have seen, have met with little more success than our own. Huxley puts, in a nutshell, the considered opinion of science on the subject of race when he says:

"It follows that any attempt at racial classification which is based upon the distribution of characters, must be content with an arrangement which holds good only in general terms and is subject to numerous cross-divisions".

It is not surprising, in these circumstances, to find that certain scientists are in favour of dispensing with the word race altogether. Huxley, for example, suggests that the term "ethnic group" is a more correct scientific alternative, and Dr Franz Boas, the American anthropologist, has put forward as a possible substitute, the word "population". Such methods of overcoming the problem are obviously doomed to failure. No harm results from the scientists' use of the word race, because he has full knowledge of its meaning and uses it accordingly. But if he thinks that, by using a different word, he will materially assist in ridding the minds of the majority of false ideas about the subject, he is sadly in error. Even if either of these terms was to become of general use in preference to race, these very words themselves would, in time, be subject to the same misuse as the word they were meant to supplant.

### **Race and nationality**

We have given, as far as it is possible to give at the time of writing, a picture of what science understands by the word race. To go further than that would be to go beyond the point where the scientist himself is prepared to go. By approaching the subject from another angle, however, it is possible to obtain a clearer picture. Let us adopt this "negative" approach and explain what race is *not*.

Probably the most common of all errors is the assumption that race is identical with nationality. Reference is frequently made to the "British race", the "German race", the "Japanese race", and so on, in the belief, we must presume, that the existence of certain frontier lines and political boundaries determines the racial make-up of the people living within them. This belief is utterly false. To talk, for example, of the "British race", is to render the term devoid of all meaning. The inhabitants of Great Britain possess all manner of varying physical characteristics. They vary through the widest extremes of colouring from very fair to very dark; in stature they range from very tall to very short; they are straight-haired and wavy-haired; thin and thickset; long-headed, medium-headed, and broad-headed;

they eyes may be brown, blue, yellow or green; in short, they constitute a great mixture, a “hotch-potch” of different racial types.

“Thus from a mixture of all things began  
That heterogeneous thing, an Englishman”  
(Daniel Defoe, *The True-born Englishman*.)

It is only necessary to take a very cursory glance at British history to see the truth behind the gibe of Defoe. During its history, Britain has received all kinds of peoples, and all of these, whether they arrived as invaders, immigrants, or refugees, have left their mark upon the present population. Most of these peoples have been thoroughly absorbed into the general population, but small “pockets” of individuals bearing closely similar characteristics to the Prospectors, a people who spread into Europe over two thousand years ago, still exist in Wales, as well as in other countries, to remind us of our mongrel ancestry. The investigators, who traced back the ancestry of Charles Darwin found it to include at least twenty-nine different lines of European stock (*History and Social Intelligence*, H E Barnes, page 225.) Even disregarding the changes that must have taken place before the arrival of men belonging to the New Stone Age, Britain had been the place of settlement of the Iberians, the “Beaker” people, Celts, Romans, Saxons, Angles, Jutes, Danes, Norsemen, Normans, Jews (of varying physical types), and periodic influxes of European exiles of whom the Walloons and Huguenots are best known. Many thousands of Huguenots settled in England as late as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Nor should it be forgotten that these peoples were well mixed racially before they arrived here.

The same process has gone on, probably on an even greater scale, in most of the other countries of Europe. Unlike the British Isles, whose geographical position made it less liable to the threat of invasion, Europe was, for centuries, open to the encroachments of invaders, particularly from the East. What applies to Europe, applies in great measure to the other continents.

Race and nationality are not identical terms. United States nationality, as is well known, is acknowledged by people of many varying racial stocks. The same is the case of Canada, Mexico, all the Central and South American republics, Russia, China, Japan; in short, with every nation in the world.

### **Race and language**

Race is often also confused with language. For example, people often talk of the “Latin Races”, the “Celtic Races”, the “Slav Races”, and in doing so use terms which are, strictly speaking, self-contradictory. To take an instance, the use of the phrase “Latin Race” can only be taken to refer to those peoples who speak a language originally derived from Latin. Countries whose inhabitants speak such languages are France, Italy, Spain and Roumania, and their various offshoots and colonies, if they have any. No person in his senses would attempt to link up all these people on a racial basis, but the use of the term can imply this. Most of us use these phrases more in ignorance than by design, but it is as well to remember that they have, on more than one occasion, been used by various governments as cloaks for nationalistic ambitions. Such was the so-called “Anglo-Saxon” movement in England during the nineteenth century, and as though to offset this there also developed in France the cult of “Celtism” in which certain people professed to find the true source of the so-called “French spirit”. Similarly, the idea of an empire which would comprise the whole of the “Slav races” has long been a catch-cry of Russian governments whether the character of the ruling class be Tsarist or “Communist”. The most notorious example, however, of the deliberate misuse of a linguistic term to cover the propagation of false racial theories is the word Aryan, which was seized upon by the Nazis in Germany, and was so distorted by them that in time it came to be synonymous with non-Jewish. The word Aryan is a linguistic term. Used in the sciences which deal with the study of the development of languages, it describes a huge group of languages which are thought to have originated from a common stem. This group, to which is also applied the description “Indo-European”, includes languages as far apart as English, Latin, Greek, German, the Slav grant and Sanskrit. It has absolutely nothing to do with race. Muller, one of the greatest students of linguistics during the last century, said specifically in this connection:

“I have declared again and again that when I say Aryas (Aryans), I mean neither blood nor bones nor hair nor skull, I mean simply those who spoke an Aryan language” (*Biography of Words and the Home of the Aryans*, p. 120).

It is also clear that people of the same race do not all speak the same language.

This is more obvious, but a few examples may perhaps be quoted to convince those who may still have doubts about it. The Negroes in the American continent, for instance, speak various languages according to the particular area they inhabit. Most of them speak English; in Brazil they speak Portuguese; in the rest of South America, in Central America and in parts of the United States, they speak Spanish; and in certain areas of the United States and Canada they speak French. “*On Cape Breton island in Canada, there are even Negroes who speak Gaelic*” (Huxley, *We Europeans*, p. 123). Such divisions using language as a basis can be made between the Indians of that continent in the same way. The Red Indians of North America, though they are all of the same racial stock, speak *over one thousand distinct languages and many more dialects*.

As far as race and language are concerned, then, there is no argument but that they are both distinct and independent of each other. The factors which go to form the physical make-up of an individual are passed on from parents to offspring; they are hereditary traits. Language, on the other hand, is learned and acquired after birth and the capacity to learn it is in no way affected by the racial composition of the individual.

### **Summary**

To summarise briefly what has been said in this chapter, it is only necessary to repeat: firstly, that race is a scientific term used to signify the possession by a group of the human species of a *certain set of inherited physical traits*. Secondly, that though it is obviously possible to draw *broad* physical distinctions between the peoples of the world, scientists are still unable, and most probably will always be unable, to fix rigid lines of demarcation between them. They can do little more than acknowledge and accept the overwhelming difficulties that confront them in investigating such a subject.

As Socialists, we recognise race as a field of genuine scientific investigation. What we emphatically repudiate are the doctrines of racialism, which deliberately ignore or misuse the findings of science, and seek to convince by clothing themselves in a mantle of scientific jargon and primitive emotionalism.

## Chapter II : Race-prejudice in the past

Those individuals who put forward argued theories to justify racial discrimination, as distinct from the huge majority, whose prejudices are generally of the crudest and simplest kind, usually try to embroider their theories with a smattering of science. By this means, of course, they endeavour to lend an air of scientific truth to their doctrines. This “science” generally consists in little more than the use of high-sounding phrases cunningly and skilfully worked into their other main arguments. Others, with a considerable knowledge of science, by devious means try to make the facts fit the particular theory that they wish to put forward. Some of the less fanatical, very few in number, carry on genuine research work, but go completely off the rails when it comes to interpreting the results of their research. Such a man was Broca, a French investigator, who adopted various new methods of investigation which were afterwards taken over and developed by others of a more impartial turn of mind. These investigations, however, did not prevent him from putting forward race-theories based on the flimsiest of evidence. Of what value as a scientific investigator is he when, to explain on a race basis the existence of classes, he uses an arguments like this?—

“He measured 125 skulls found buried opposite the Palais de Justice in Paris. From their position below the surface he assigned them to the twelfth century, and from the aristocratic nature of the district in that century he believed them to belong to the upper classes. He compared them with 259 skulls originating from nineteenth century paupers’ graves. He measured, multiplied, divided, grouped them, and then showed the difference between the wealthy classes of the Middle Ages and the modern proletarians” (*Race: A Study in Modern Superstition*, Barzun, p. 164).

This sort of argument is used by a man who, in scientific circles, has a standing. In what light must it throw the theories of the others!

Before proceeding to deal with the theories of the more modern “racialists” however, it will be of value to give a brief outline of the development of race-prejudice in previous periods of history.

Since human beings first made their appearance on the face of the earth, they have constantly sought to find excuses and justifications which they can conveniently use to bolster up the needs and aspirations of the moment. It goes without saying that they have usually found these “cover-ups” without the slightest trouble. The practice of picking on differences of race for this purpose is, however, a comparatively recent innovation.

For example, the justifications (if, indeed, there were any worthy of being given such a name) of primitive man were, at most, based on ideas of the crudest kind, partly religious, partly cultural. It is probable that primitive man was seldom in a position to consider anything other than the necessity of keeping himself alive, and ideas of “justification” and the rest can scarcely have worried him. The ideas of race did not worry him either, primitive though he was. In tribal warfare, the victorious tribe killed the captured males of the vanquished tribe and incorporated the females into their own organisation. This occurred whether the members of the contending tribes were racially similar or far apart.

Neither did differences of race count for much in the Greek and Roman eras. Under these civilisations, the emphasis was mainly upon differences of culture. Under the Roman Empire, in particular, the policy was deliberately followed of absorbing conquered groups into the Empire by granting them Roman citizenship. The Romans, right from the outset, made a practice of leaving much of the administration of captured provinces to the inhabitants of the provinces themselves. Thousands of others were taken into the Roman army often under the command of officers of their own province. The Roman Civil Service itself was run by ex-slaves.

With the rise of Christianity and, later, the rise of Mohammedanism, religion came to be the commonest cloak for worldly ambition. The various economic, and very material, issues underlying the Wars of the Crusades, for example, were “played down”, and the campaigns waged to the accompaniment of a frenzy of religious exhortation and encouragement. In spite of the fact that, in this case, the contending parties were of noticeably different racial stocks, the campaign of the Christians was conducted against the *Infidel* and the *unbeliever*. The discrimination against the Jews was also religious in character. When the Spanish Inquisition decided upon the complete expulsion of the Jews



from Spain, it had in mind the Jewish religion. Any Jew who publicly renounced his own religion and adopted Christianity was spared. Also, in those early days, the ostensible reason for the exploitation of the inhabitants of countries discovered by explorers and adventurers, was the fact that they were heathens. Explorers were often accompanied on their voyages by missionaries and any natives converted to Christianity were precluded from being made slaves. This was particularly the case in the possessions held by the French, Spanish and Portuguese. Intermarriage in these possessions was also common.

Quite obviously, when economic self-interest grew too strong these religious restrictions went by the board, but the actual practice does not concern us. What does concern us is that the cover under which discrimination took place was of a religious character and not a racial one.

These religious restrictions never pressed as hard on the Dutch and English adventurers and settlers as they did on the others. In their encroachments upon the American continent, for example, the English settlers kept themselves aloof from the Indians. Their policy was one of extermination, not absorption. This they were able to do, to a great extent, because the territory, though gigantic in area, was sparsely populated. On the other hand such a policy was utterly out of the question in a country like India, and the settlers in that country had to adapt themselves to the circumstances and recognise that they were a minority of intruders.

To return to North America, there is sufficient evidence to show that race-prejudice developed early in that continent. Negroes began to be imported into the Southern States on a large scale towards the close of the seventeenth century and active discrimination against them began to grow soon after that period. By the time of the American Civil War, when the whole of the Southern economic system was dependent upon Negro slave labour, the plantation owners and their apologists had worked out all the necessary justifications for it. Some of them even attempted to prove, with a wealth of biblical and "scientific" evidence, that Negroes were sub-human and, as such, were fitted for nothing other than slavery.

At about this time, on the other side of the Atlantic, the works of the first real racialist were being published. The author's name was Count de Gobineau, a French aristocrat, who endeavoured to attribute the *existence of classes in society* to differences of racial make-up, and attempted to justify the dominance of his class on that theory. The aristocracy had allowed themselves to be contaminated by "alien blood", and this had been the cause of their undoing, he said. He also put forward the argument that the aristocracy was to be identified with the "Aryan race"; on the other hand, the workers were an inferior class because they were descended from a mixture of the inferior "Negroid and Semitic races". Neither, as a "true aristocrat", did he have much time for the capitalist class, who, in most of Europe were still consolidating their position. They, too, were tarred with the same brush as the working class. He was contemptuous of commerce, inventions and most of the other features of the capitalist system as being quite unworthy of "true Aryans".

His ideas were soon seized upon by others and suitably adapted and amended. The results achieved by the followers were no more sensible than those of the master; in fact, they were often a great deal worse. Lapouge, another Frenchman, and Ammon, a German, provide excellent examples of the manner in which a smattering of scientific knowledge can be used to justify the most stupid of conclusions. First, Lapouge:

" . . . he maintains that the 'homo europaeus' (his equivalent of the Aryan race), on the whole, is found in greater material prosperity than the 'homo alpinus' (an inferior grade of the White race); he chiefly dwells in the cities and contributes a higher percentage of the intellectual classes and emigrants; *he is also a more fervid devotee of cycling*. Cycling as a racial characteristic is also explained as an expression of mental alertness (*Race and Civilisation*, Hertz, p. 163. Our italics).

And next, Ammon:

"As a specimen of Ammon's wisdom, the following may be mentioned: he calculated on the theories of probabilities that among the German citizens possessed of the right of voting who in his time numbered 11,000,000, 9,000,000 were average, 800,000 intellectually inferior, etc., and only 2,717 he classed as coming up to the higher standards. *From out of these, he says,*

*Parliament should be elected. The people in the highest class count the full number of eleven*" (Hertz, p. 165. Our italics).

Hertz adds, dryly, "It is to be hoped that Ammon included himself in the eleven".

Space does not permit more specimens, but the general ridiculousness of their ideas is apparent from the two given. Like Gobineau, they were at pains to prove the interdependence of *class* and race.

The racialists who came after these two, however, used the ideas of race to foster and support nationalistic policies. Houston Chamberlain, who was profoundly influenced by Gobineau's work, was an Englishman by birth, but his writings found a tremendous popularity in Germany, the Kaiser being so impressed that he caused them to be generally distributed to all the officers in the German Army and ordered the work to be displayed in libraries and bookshops throughout Germany. The reasons for the popularity will become obvious when it is explained that the dominant theme of his writings was the idea of the superiority of the so-called "Teutons". This idea of a "Teutonic Race", which, upon examination is seen to consist of all manner of varying physical types, is found to be nothing more than a theory so cunningly put together as to include all Germans with the exception of the Jews. He was a violent anti-semitic, and taken together, his ideas bear a strong similarity to the doctrines that were later adopted by the Nazis. There is no doubt that they borrowed extensively from his writings for their own particular race theories.

The influence of Gobineau and some of his disciples spread later to the United States, where their ideas were taken up by Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard, whose literary efforts purported to show the dire results of allowing the non-restricted entry of certain nationalities into the United States to continue. We need not spend any time in dealing with their opinions concerning the non-white races; their ideas on these are little different from others we have already mentioned. What is more interesting is that they also had very strong opinions about the white race itself. Ardent champions of the "Nordic" and "Anglo-Saxon" myths, they have little time for other members of the white race. So much is this the case that their writings are now mainly known for the arguments they used to support the exclusion of immigrants into the United States from South and Eastern Europe. Grant and Stoddard followed the example of some of their predecessors; they discovered "inferior races" within the white race itself. Stoddard cannot forget this, even in a book that chiefly deals with the "Colour Peril":

"... even within the white world, migrations of lower human types like those which have worked such havoc in the United States must be rigorously curtailed. Such migration upset standards, sterilise better stocks, increase lower types, and compromise national futures more than wars, revolutions, or native deterioration" (Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Colour*, p. 308).

The works of Grant and Stoddard apparently bore fruit. When the United States Government finally passed the new immigration laws in 1924, the Immigration Quotas were found to be heavily loaded against the "inferior" peoples, black, yellow, and *white*.

Their actual theories have no more scientific justification than the theories of the other racialists before them. Neither one of them was a scientist, though Stoddard appears to have fancied himself as a historian, and their theories are yet further examples of the manner in which conclusions are reached without any consideration whatsoever for the true facts.

Finally, in Germany, with the rise to power of the Nazis in 1933, the racialists were given another lease of life. Men like Darré, Gunther, and Rosenberg, borrowed from the writings of others before them, some of whom we have already mentioned, and, like all race theorists, they adapted their theories to the particular policy they wished to pursue. They provide still further examples of the pernicious method of making the facts fit the theory.

The use to which the Nazi regime put their race theories stands as a warning to the working-class of the dangers they fall victim to when they lend a willing ear to them. The Nazis, coldly and deliberately, step by step, adapted their theories according to the needs of the occasion. Like Houston Chamberlain with his "Teutons", they so defined Aryan, a distortion in itself as we have already shown, to include every German who was not also a Jew. After the signing of the treaty of alliance with Italy and the subsequent formation of the "Rome-Berlin Axis", they carefully amended their doctrines to include

their new allies, though according to their former ideas the Italians belonged to an inferior racial group. The most amazing example of their contempt for fact was when they “squared the circle” to provide the necessary racial basis for their alliance with Japan. To do this, they had to specifically exempt the Japanese from the ranks of the non-Aryans and by other devious, doubtful, and unconvincing means, they attempted to wriggle round the glaring contradictions between their theory and their practice.

Two more examples of the manner in which the Nazis used their theories on race to assist policy may finally be given. First was their sudden sympathy for their “German brethren” in the Sudetenland when they were hard pressed for a motive to absorb Czecho-Slovakia. In this instance, they found “ties of racial affinity” very convenient for the furtherance of their foreign policy. Secondly, in the years before and during the last war, they tried to use the considerable population of German descent in the United States and in South America for the purposes of espionage and internal disruption. To achieve this end, they employed on a large scale all the old and well-tried methods of stimulating racial pride; they harped on the doctrine of “once a German, always a German”; talked glibly of “German Blood” and “German Soul”; went into raptures over the “fundamental unity” of the German or Teuton, Nordic or Aryan race; and so on. They rang all the changes on the claptrap and nonsense that have always been put forward by racialists and added a lot more claptrap of their own. By this means they built up organisations of some size helpful to their cause in Argentina and the United States, which proved of value to them when hostilities finally broke out. In the South American states, they also used these organisations for the purposes of economic penetration, much to the annoyance of other capitalist groups interested in that part of the world.

With the Nazis the doctrines of racialism reached their logical and inevitable conclusion: the complete and utter prostitution of the true facts to the false theory. The absurdities of previous racialists appear sensible when compared with the efforts of their counterparts in Nazi Germany. As for the results of these doctrines in terms of human suffering and misery, they defy description. Millions of human beings finally fell victims to the Nazi’s policy of racial extermination.

Despite the destruction of the Nazi regime, it is naïve to maintain that race-prejudice is a thing of the past, but with this aspect we must deal in more detail later. We must first deal with some of the commoner theories (or, more correctly, misapprehensions, for most of them have never developed into theories) that have been advanced about race from time to time. These form the substance of our next chapter.

### Chapter III : Some race theories exploded

Some of the theories we deal with in this chapter are long since dead and forgotten; others, suitably dusted and polished up, are still with us. They are all examples of the readiness with which people are prepared to distort the facts to justify their own pre-conceived notions on things.

In the year 1859, Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, and, in 1871, followed it with the *Descent of Man*, two works which caused an immense stir at the time, particularly in scientific circles. In these two works, Darwin demonstrates, among other things, that since life first appeared on the earth there has occurred a gradual evolution from the lower forms of life to the higher. He also outlined the general form which this evolutionary process took, and though minor amendments have been made to it since, its main outline is still substantially accepted. The highest form of life he demonstrated to be man himself, whom he also showed to have descended through a period of many hundreds of thousands of years from the same basic stock as the ape.

With this to stimulate them, the racialists were not slow off the mark and they soon began to adapt Darwin's theories to their own requirements. Some of them proceeded to argue that an evolutionary process had also occurred within mankind itself. No scientist denies this, but the racialists went further, and brought in race. They postulated that the highest in the evolutionary scale was quite definitely the white race, next came the yellow race, and finally, the black race, and called upon Darwin's theories to prove it. Said they: the theory of evolution traces a gradual change of physical features in the living things of the earth; we can also trace a similar development within man himself. To prove their case they instanced certain human physical characteristics which are nearest those of the apes, such as broad nostrils and protruding jaws. As it is the Negroes who mainly possess these traits, it was implied that they were obviously nearest to the apes in the evolutionary scale, and the whites, who seldom have these characteristics, the furthest removed. But this particular theory did not last for long, for it was very soon pointed out that it presented only half the picture. It conveniently left out of account, for example, the fact that apes have also thin lips and extensive body hair, and it is precisely the whites who possess these features to the highest degree. In other words, using these last two particular features, it is just as easy to argue that the whites are lowest in the evolutionary scale and the Negroes the highest; it happens to be nothing more than a question of what traits are picked upon to demonstrate the theory.

The theory we have just mentioned is so obviously stupid as to be ludicrous, but it has been used for a purpose. It shows the lengths to which people will go to justify their prejudices about race. This theory was a ludicrous one, but many theories on race, hardly less ludicrous, have met with wide acceptance and support. And as even now, similar theories to this still persist and win support, it is still necessary to stress that *no theory of superiority, basing itself on physical traits, is capable of scientific substantiation.*

One of the most commonly held notions regarding race is that certain races are intellectually inferior to others. Many white people are quite convinced of this, pointing to the general backward development of many members of the black and yellow races to prove it. Such evidence is flimsy and unconvincing. In the first place, even accepting the basis on which such arguments are put forward, it should be apparent to everybody that only certain "white" countries can be given a place in the forefront. On the other hand, nobody with any knowledge can deny the high cultural level reached in the past by non-white civilisations like those of India and China. The progress or decline of a nation does not depend on its racial make-up but on a host of factors, primarily economic, but also social, geographical, climatic, and traditional. How else can one explain, for example, the fact that one of the most backward and primitive groups in the United States are the "Hillbillies", descendants of original English and Scottish settlers who made their homes in the highlands of Kentucky and Tennessee, and, cut off from most of the usual contacts with the rest of the nation, remained an ignorant and illiterate group whilst the rest of the nation generally went forward. Their condition is not far below that of the "poor whites", also for the most part illiterate, ignorant and poverty-stricken, who live in the Southern States of the same country. Why have these two groups not progressed? Our racist cannot deny that they belong to his so-called "superior race". A group of "poor whites" exists also in South Africa, in a similar state of economic degradation. Why have they not progressed? The racist cannot answer for fear of sending his theories toppling to the ground, but the explanation is quite a simple one, to be found in the peculiar economic conditions which arise in countries where there is racial discrimination. Not every man in the early days of American slavery was fortunate enough to possess slaves. Those planters with

the necessary wealth obtained the biggest holdings of land and ultimately the largest number of slaves. In course of time, as was inevitable, the big fish swallowed the smaller ones, relegating most of the former owners to the ranks of a group whose economic position grew gradually worse. This group, landless and jobless (for in the days of slavery most of the work was done by slaves who also comprised most of the craftsmen), relapsed into poverty and ignorance and became the “poor whites”. A similar process went on in South Africa. These groups of “poor whites” stand as living testimony against all theories which attempt to attribute superiority or inferiority on the grounds of race.

In spite of all this, however, there have been numerous attempts to establish differences of intelligence between races. Such attempts have been made, particularly in the United States, using Intelligence Tests as a basis. The results of such tests are still very much open to question in spite of the many advances said to have been made in recent years, but the findings give absolutely no foundation for the belief that the general level of intelligence is fundamentally a question of race. The first tests on a large scale were carried out during the first World War, when American army recruits were examined, and the results came out as follows:

“The scores on these tests were arranged by crude racial and national groupings—Negroes, Jews, persons of British or Italian ancestry—and an average ‘mental age’ for each group was derived. The differences were great. Whereas the average mental age of the White race in the army was 13.1 years, that of the Negroes was 10.4, and the overlap was only 12 per cent. Among the various immigrant White nationalities the Poles were at the bottom of the list; the Italians were on about the same level as the Poles (*Race and Racism*, Benedict, p. 69).

Many investigators took these results as furnishing concrete evidence for the view that Negroes are mentally inferior to Whites. But not for long, for soon it was observed that the scores made by both Negroes and Whites varied for different parts of the country. Further investigations were immediately made to see whether, in actual fact, these differences were sectional and not racial. The testers proceeded to compare the scores of Negroes from the Northern States with those of Southern Whites. Benedict says:

“ . . . the results were startling—arranged by median scores Southern Whites fell below Northern Negroes.

<i>Whites</i>	
Mississippi	41.25
Kentucky	41.50
Arkansas	41.55
<i>Negroes</i>	
New York	45.02
Illinois	47.35
Ohio	49.50

Such a breakdown of the results showed a fundamental fallacy in the original interpretation. The Negroes of the United States are massed in the South; their I. Q. (intelligence quotient) was significant not only in so far as they were *Negroes* but as *Southerners*. Obviously even the dominant White race did badly in the tests if they had been reared in certain Southern States, where *per capita* expenditures for education are low and the low standard of living is revealed in every survey and to every casual visitor”.

The testers then proceeded to examine White and Negro boys in various centres. In Nashville, in the South (where educational discrimination is the strongest), the Negroes scored lower than the Whites: in Chicago, they scored slightly less; in New York, the scores were approximately equal; and in Los Angeles (where the Negro children are taught in the same classroom as the White children), they scored slightly higher than their White classmates.

Benedict concludes:

“The environmental advantages of the Negro in the United States never equalled those of the Whites of the same economic level, but wherever they became more similar the ‘inferiority’ of the Negroes tended to disappear” (*Race and Racism*, p. 75).

Before leaving the subject of these Intelligence Tests, it is interesting to note, just in passing, that even among scientists there is a liability to allow conclusions to be coloured by pre-judgements. Brigham, the noted American scientist, as a result of the tests already mentioned, was led to the conclusion that the “Nordic race” was superior to the other divisions of the White race, but later reversed his position. In 1930 he said:

“Comparative tests of various national and racial groups may not be made with existing tests . . . In particular, one of the most pretentious of these comparative racial studies—the writer’s own—was without foundation” (C. C. Brigham, *Intelligence Tests of Immigrant Groups*).

The argument that certain races are mentally superior (we use the plural because each individual putting the argument assumes that it is his own race that is superior) is one of the most common and has not the slightest foundation in fact.

We can do no better than finish this chapter with the considered conclusions of science on the subject.

“Anthropologists have not yet reached the point of agreement upon criteria of race which will enable psychologists to isolate with any degree of facility the racial types which are to be studied. Psychologists have not yet been able to develop mental tests which anthropologists are willing to trust as fair gauges of mental capacity. Neither group has yet perfected its technique of measurement. Until we know exactly how to distinguish a race and exactly what intelligence tests test, we shall have to hold in suspension the problem of racial mental differences” (E. E. Houston, *Up from the Ape*, p. 596).

“. . . on the general question of the correlation of psychological characters and race, we must say at once that there is at present simply no evidence worthy of being called scientific which is capable of demonstrating such a relation” (Huxley, *We Europeans*, p. 60).

“Race involves the inheritance of similar physical variations by large groups of mankind, but its psychological and cultural connotations, if they exist, have not been ascertained by science. Anthropology provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority . . .” (Resolution of the American Anthropological Association, December, 1938).

“In the experiments which psychologists have made upon different peoples, no characteristic inherent psychological differences which fundamentally distinguish so-called ‘races’ have been disclosed . . . There is no evidence for the existence of an inborn Jewish or German or Italian mentality. Furthermore, there is no indication that the members of any group are rendered incapable by their biological heredity of completely acquiring the culture of the community in which they live” (Statement of the American Psychological Association, December, 1938).

## Chapter IV : Anti-semitism: its origins

No discussion about the so-called “Jewish Question” is possible without some preliminary knowledge of the history and development of the Jews themselves. Once we obtain some idea of the historical background, we have the basis on which to discuss the other aspects of the case. We say other aspects advisedly because it is precisely to the history of the Jews that we must turn for most of the explanation for the growth of prejudice against them. Curiously enough, although no serious attempt can be made to discuss the general problem of race-prejudice without bringing in anti-semitism, the facts are that the main reasons for the growth of antagonism against the Jews are to be found in history and not in race at all.

### Historical

Much of the early history of the Jews is vague or unknown. Modern research points to the fact that they were originally but one of a number of tribes which infiltrated into the Eastern Mediterranean area from the desert regions further to the East. These tribes, culturally and racially, were similar in character, and belonged to the larger group to which historians have given the loose description “Semite”. The Jews appear to have left the desert much later than many of the other tribes, some of whom had already settled in the Palestine area hundreds of years before.

The Jews entered Palestine as nomadic cattle breeders. Nomadic life is an eternal round of the same activities and the same tribulations, generation after generation, under conditions that do not favour either technical or social progress. Hence these nomads are intensely conservative, retaining old customs and traditions that persist long after the original conditions that brought them into existence have vanished. Nomads meeting different communities in their travels to different pastures were the first traders, both acquiring and exchanging products that were much in demand and were easily carried by them. Trading was one of the customs so firmly engraved in the texture of the Jewish nomads that it was carried over into the settlements in Palestine and was enhanced by the favourable economic situation of that country on flourishing trade routes between the greatest civilisations of the ancient world—Babylon and Egypt—as well as the Phoenician trade routes with Arabia.

The early history of the Jews in Palestine was bound up with warfare. Like all intruders they first had to fight the present inhabitants of the region—the Canaanites—and then they had to defend what they had won against other intruders. Hard settlement makes for unity, but it was long before the scattering tribes living in the hills were able to find peaceful periods long enough to acquire unity; this, however, they eventually did under David and Solomon, who built up a powerful state based on agriculture, cattle breeding, plunder and trade; the latter bringing them the greatest amount of wealth. But at a time when the products of handicraft could be obtained from the highly developed Babylonian and Egyptian communities by trade there was little inducement to foster these crafts at home. It was thus that trading monopolised more and more of the attention of the Jewish people and the old nomadic custom persisted and was strengthened. Those who left Palestine carried the custom with them, and this, along with economic circumstances and political disabilities, influenced their progress down the ages in the same direction.

The trading inclinations of the Jews was not a natural instinct but *a product of economic circumstances*.

At the time the Jews entered Palestine they had certainly progressed little beyond the nomadic stage, living a primitive existence as herdsmen, pasturing their flocks of sheep and goats, and constantly on the move from place to place. There is some evidence, not conclusive, to show that by some means or other, perhaps by capture, they found themselves in Egypt, from which they finally escaped or emigrated northwards into Palestine. They found others already there before them and there ensued numerous skirmishes and battles by which they were able to occupy a considerable amount of territory. They appear never to have been able to establish themselves in the fertile coastal regions which were in possession of the Canaanites, a name familiar to those who still remember their early religious teaching about the Biblical land, “flowing with milk and honey”. The date of this settlement can be given roughly as 1400 B C

They were to find that their troubles were only just beginning. Palestine, then as now, possessed an importance out of all proportion to its size and its natural resources. Those tribes unfortunate enough to inhabit it found themselves placed between the chief contending powers of the Ancient World; as we would say today, they were “buffer” tribes. To the north-east, there waxed and waned the Empires of

the Babylonians and Assyrians; to the north-west lay the Hittite Empire; and to the south was the Empire of the Egyptians. Constant struggles went on between these Powers for years, almost always involving the inhabitants of the lands that lay between them. With the temporary ascendancy of one of them, however, there would result a period of peace, during which Palestine became the main trade link between north and south, and the well-known trade routes would become thronged with merchants and traders from all over the known world of that time.

With this background we are already able to understand much of the early development of the Jews. Firstly, they could never, even in those early days, have been a "pure race". There is ample evidence to show that, in any case, they were not opposed to mingling with other peoples, but, even if this had been so, warfare, invasion, and trade would have made such opposition useless. Secondly, constant contact with trade and traders gave an impulse to the surplus population to emigrate and become traders themselves. Thirdly, their precarious position between other more powerful groups fostered in them a strong national feeling which was reinforced in the course of time by their religion.

Small numbers of the surplus population emigrated as hired soldiers, but they are subsequently lost to history. The majority, as we have said, left as traders and merchants. They could not leave as colonists, for they were an inland community, cut off from all direct contact with the sea. This lack of a coastline was also the main reason for the fact that they never became seafarers, and even as merchants, they appear to have always kept to the land. In this respect, they furnish an interesting contrast to the Phoenicians, the occupants of the coastal area, who travelled thousands of miles as sea-going traders, and even as early as 600 B. C., had commenced trading with the Ancient Britons. In fact, compared with the activities of the Greeks and Phoenicians of this time, the Jews can only be considered as "small fish" in the trade of the then known world.

These traders, whether Greek, Phoenician, or Jewish, followed the usual practice of forming settlements from which they could trade with most advantage. Naturally, they were usually not looked upon with a great deal of favour by the local inhabitants, who regarded them as interlopers and usurpers. The native merchants resented them as competitors, and their wealth and general lack of protection rendered them particularly liable to attack and robbery, and, on occasions, complete annihilation. As is nearly always the case under such circumstances, these groups tended to band themselves together, to rely solely upon themselves, and to look on outsiders with suspicion and hostility. There was another factor making for separation as far as the Jews were concerned, and that was their religion, which had now sunk deep roots into their whole way of life. Although they seem to have made determined efforts to obtain converts, theirs was an intolerant religion and had very little appeal for others. This religion, with its distinctive rites and ceremonies, served even more to widen the breach between the Jews and their neighbours, and was to contribute in much larger measure to their misfortunes later on. Up to the time of the Romans, however, there is little evidence to show that there was any considerably greater prejudice against them than there was against any other community of the time.

During the Roman era, however, two events occurred which were to have a momentous effect upon the course of their history. The first was their rebellion against the Romans which ended with the sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., and their virtually complete dispersal from Palestine. After this there was to be no further mention of them returning to Palestine for almost two thousand years; henceforth they would have to get along as best they could in the countries of their exile. In this connection, it is interesting to speculate whether, after the occurrence of this event, the Jews might in the course of time have become completely absorbed into the rest of the population; but although it may be an interesting speculation, it is an idle one, for another event was occurring of the utmost importance for their future. That event was the rise of Christianity with its gospel of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and its insistence upon the fact that his death was largely due to the treachery and intrigues of the Jews.

With the spread of Christianity during succeeding centuries, prejudice against the Jews grew. The prejudice of the ignorant mass of the population sprang directly from Christian teachings, although, at the same time, they were not slow to seize opportunities of combining economic gain with religious fervour. The ruling class, however, saw the possibilities of lining their own pockets at the expense of the Jews. They protected the Jews when it suited their purpose and left them to the tender mercies of the rest of the populace when they had had their use of them. Many of the Kings of England, for example, took the Jews under their protection, and as "servants of the King", their persons and property were rigorously safeguarded by the laws of the realm. They were obviously not protected for love; the



Kings saw to it that they themselves were well rewarded for their generosity; in fact, a considerable portion of their income was derived from frequent “milking” of the Jewish financiers and moneylenders. Later Kings became too greedy and put the screw down so hard that the Jews were finally unable to pay. Once that stage had been reached, their usefulness was over. In the reign of Edward I, they were summarily ordered to leave the country.

In earlier years, when much of the financial business of Europe passed through their hands, the Jews were often actually encouraged to settle by rulers who wished to have their countries placed upon a sound economic footing. Once this task had been achieved, and a native merchant class had developed and established itself, they were, in many cases, maltreated and plundered, and even hounded out of the country altogether.

Their position throughout the period of the Middle Ages was a precarious one. The population was generally hostile towards them; they survived by virtue of royal protection which, however, did not protect them from discrimination of a less extreme kind. The Lateran Council of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, had drawn up a long list of ordinances for the faithful, many of which were directly aimed at the Jews. By order of the Council, all Jews over seven years of age were compelled to wear a distinguishing badge, which had to be prominently displayed. Christians were severely discouraged from mixing with Jews in any way. They were strictly forbidden from taking in Jews as lodgers and it was this restriction that was to be mainly responsible for the later establishment of Ghettos, which were to cut the Jews off almost completely from the rest of the population. They were prevented from settling on the land or owning it. In any case, as outsiders, they did not fit into the pattern of the feudal system in which each group of holdings was virtually a small unit of its own, isolated and self-supporting. In a society in which the inhabitants of one village looked upon the members of other villages only a few miles away as “foreigners”, the Jews had not the slightest chance of settling on the land. They were prevented from becoming artisans and craftsmen and were generally discouraged from setting up as merchants. Membership of the Guilds, an integral part of the economy and social life of feudal society, was forbidden to them. As the early ordinances of the Church rigorously prohibited Christians from engaging in the practice of money-lending, a combination of forces drove the Jews to concentrate in this particular occupation even further. With the rise of huge financial organisations like the Lombards and Cahorsins, however, the Jews were pushed into the background. They began to be driven into the less “respectable” financial occupations; they became pedlars, pawnbrokers, and petty hucksters. In addition to all these restrictions, they were subject to a whole host of other minor ones, which had the effect still further of isolating them from the rest of the community.

During all this period, popular prejudice had been growing against them owing principally to the nature of the occupations they were forced to follow. Wherever and whenever they were left without protection from above, they were exposed to violence and bloodshed.

As early as the year 1096, there had occurred a terrible massacre in the Rhineland, the first of many that were to take place in Germany. In 1290, they were expelled from England; in 1306, from France. In Spain, as long as the Moors occupied the country, they were accepted and well treated, but after the expulsion of the Moors, the usual massacres began to take place. In 1478, the Spanish Inquisition was revived and was used to hunt out those Jews who had sought refuge by being baptised Christians but who never gave up their own religion. Finally, they were expelled from Spain in 1492. Shortly afterwards they were also compelled to leave Portugal.

Many of the refugees from France, Germany, and other North European countries fled to Eastern Europe, mainly to Poland, where they were encouraged to settle and develop the economic life of the country. Those forced to leave Spain and Portugal went mainly to South-Eastern Europe and Turkey where they were also well-received. This comparatively peaceful state of affairs did not last long, for in the early part of the seventeenth century there were massacres in Poland, from which country numbers of Jews began to return to Western Europe. Many of them went to Holland where they appear to have been reasonably well-received. Others once more began to settle in England, where Cromwell, and after him, Charles II, also received them without hostility.

From this time forward, the restrictions against them began to be lifted, in some countries more quickly than in others. In those countries where the capitalist class was gaining, or had already gained, political power, they were soon lifted. In countries like Poland, where a capitalist class hardly developed, let

alone achieved political power, until very late, they were never able to shake off many of these restrictions. When, in later years, capitalism began to make rapid strides in countries such as Poland, the very conditions of capitalism itself had begun to act as a *stimulant* to anti-semitism. Today, anti-semitism is a feature of most countries; whether they have arrived early or late on the capitalist scene makes little difference. Capitalism is no longer a confident, expanding society, but a society in which competition grows more and more fierce, restriction more and more apparent, and the soil for the growth of anti-semitism more and more fertile.

### **Anti-semitism today**

We have shown that for centuries the Jews have been a group apart and that it was mainly an enforced isolation, and not a voluntary one. Already looked upon with hostility, subjected to all manner of petty restraints and indignities, these factors combined with their isolation from the rest of the community, developed in the Jews many of those characteristics which so many workers resent and dislike. The members of a group in constant danger of persecution naturally react by drawing closer together. They become self-centred and “clannish”. Even after the conditions which originally made them an isolated group disappeared, the tendency to stick together still persisted, although it is important to remember that this cohesion was already being broken down, particularly in the more advanced capitalist countries, until the resurgence of prejudice against them once more compelled them to draw closer together. Before the resurgence of anti-semitism that has occurred in recent years, Judaism was losing ground. More and more Jews were abandoning altogether their religious beliefs; numerous others, although nominally attached to Judaism, were giving up many of their religious practices and habits of thought. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews were becoming more and more common. All these developments took place where discrimination against them was not particularly strong. Where it was strong, as in Poland and the South East European countries, the barriers between them and their neighbours were hardly broken down. In this respect Kautsky correctly sums up the position when he says:

“ . . . it is only in the ghetto, in a condition of compulsory expulsion from their environment, and under political pressure, deprived of their rights and surrounded by hostility, that the Jews can maintain themselves among other peoples. They will dissolve, unite with their environment and disappear, where the Jew is regarded as a free man and as an equal (*Are the Jews a Race?*, page 156).

So much for the historical side. It explains much but a lot more remains to be said. To complete the picture, we must deal with the misapprehensions which many workers have about the Jews, misapprehensions which provide most of the fuel for the flames of anti-semitism. This is the subject matter of our next chapter.

## Chapter V : Anti-semitism: present misconceptions

Before proceeding with this chapter we must repeat what we said in the preface to this pamphlet. *As Socialists, we are only concerned with the class division of society.* We have no more love for Jewish capitalists than we have for their Gentile counterparts; we are opposed to the capitalist class *as a class* irrespective of the racial make-up of its members. There is also one further thing we must say. In dealing with these misapprehensions about the Jews, we in no way commit ourselves about other incidental factors that may arise from them, nor do we in any way accept the basis from which workers put forward these ideas. To make this point clear, let us give an example. Many workers are quite convinced that the Jews possess most of the money in the country, that they control its finances, and so on. Those beliefs are completely without foundation as we will demonstrate later, but in showing them to be absurd we must stress that *we in no way set out to defend those Jews who do possess considerable amounts of wealth.* Jewish capitalists are our enemies no less than Gentile capitalists. All we intend to do is to deal with the facts of the case as they are put forward and nothing more must be read into our remarks than that.

### **The number of Jews in the world**

Much anti-semitic propaganda takes the form of alleging that there are enormous numbers of Jews in the world as a whole or in particular countries. It is therefore of interest to have some idea of how many there are. Admittedly it is bound to be difficult to discover the precise figures and for that reason it is wise to accept with caution the estimates that have been made. The estimate published on the authority of the Jewish Year Book and the American Jewish Committee gives the total number in all the principal countries as 16,838,000 in 1939 and about 11,000,000 in 1945, the big reduction being attributed to the deaths by slaughter and starvation in Nazi-occupied Europe during the war. Of these eleven millions—in a world population of 2,000,000,000—the estimated numbers in the principal areas are:—Russia 2,665,000; USA 5,000,000; Eastern Europe about 1,000,000; South America about 500,000; and in Great Britain about 400,000 or under 1% in a population of 48,000,000. However, even if the estimate we have quoted is an understatement, even if the total were two or three times as large, it would still be true that, in the world as a whole, the number is an insignificant proportion, and that, with one exception—Palestine—there is no country in which the Jews are more than a very small minority, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain's vision that the Jews might swarm "like locusts" and "consume the strange peoples" is clearly a fantasy.

Doubtless the reason why many people readily believe fantastic statements about numbers is that the Jews, through force of circumstances beyond their control, are today mostly town-dwellers. In the United States, for example (according to the estimate quoted above), the two cities of New York and Chicago claim over half of the total Jewish population. In Great Britain there is similar concentration in London, Leeds, Manchester and some other towns. In most countries most Jews have settled in urban areas.

It is this tendency to concentrate which helps to give such an exaggerated impression of their numbers, which in this country, for example, are really quite small. The Jews themselves seem to do little to avoid this. Even in the towns, they tend to gravitate towards certain areas. In London, for instance, they congregate in particular places like the East End, as well as Hampstead, Golders Green, Cricklewood, and do on.

This tendency to concentrate, is, as we have already shown, the legacy of years of isolation and oppression, when there was "safety in numbers". It is very difficult to break down; old habits die hard. The Jews still keep together, and in doing so, stimulate anti-semitism even more.

So much for numbers. They prove little, but at least enable us to get the problem in its proper perspective.

Anti-semitism is not necessarily confined to areas where Jews are established, but is often virulent in places where there is no actual contact with Jews, as in small country towns and villages. In fact, a good deal of antipathy towards the Jew has the same feeling behind it as the antipathy to the foreigner in general.

### **The wealth of the Jews**

The misapprehensions that many workers have about the wealth of the Jews are even more fantastic. Again, what are the actual facts?

First, finance. Do the Jews control finance, as many workers seem to think? According to a recent investigation in this country (1943), there is not one single Jew or representative of a Jewish controlled firm on the Board of the Bank of England, which is a British financial institution of the first rank. The Boards of the "Big Five" Banks (Westminster, National Provincial, Midland, Lloyd's and Barclays), had only five Jewish directors out of a grand total of 150. The London Stock Exchange, another first-rank financial institution, had only one Jewish manager out of a total number of 9, and there were no Jews at all on the Boards of Provincial Stock Exchanges (*Falsehoods and Facts about the Jews*, Rathbone, p. 12).

The wealthiest capitalist to die in England in recent years was Sir John Ellerman, son of a German emigrant and a non-Jew, who died in 1933 worth £40,000,000.

The same applies to the United States, where again the Jews play a minor part in finance. Of the 151 persons listed as millionaires in the United States in 1922, 23 were Jewish. John Pierpoint Morgan, the wealthiest banker in the United States, was a non-Jew. Of the 1,375 members of the New York Stock exchange, 252 were Jews, in spite of the fact that Jews comprise 30% of the population of that city. Of the 93,000 Bankers and Bank Officials of the United States, just over half of one per cent were Jews. Of the 420 directors of the New York Clearing House in 1933, only 30 were Jews, again in spite of their high proportion of the population of New York. In 1939, of the total, outstanding loans made by American Finance Houses to countries abroad only 3% were made by Jews. *Yet the House of Morgan alone had issued 19.87%* (*The Jew in a Gentile World*, Graeber and Britt, published by Macmillan).

Of the Brokerage Houses of the United States, only 8% are Jewish firms.

So much for finance. In industry the Jews occupy an even less important position. In Great Britain, in Iron and Steel, Engineering, Chemicals, Automobiles, Shipping, and Rubber, they are almost non-existent. The same was the case in the Coal-mining industry and the Railways, before they were nationalised. In most other manufacturing industries they play a very minor role.

The same applies to the United States. Little heavy industry is in the hands of Jewish capitalists. The big names of American capitalism, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Ford, Morgan, were all non-Jews.

"Two of America's leading historians, Charles and Mary Beard, writing of the eleven outstanding figures in the growth of the great American trusts, say: 'All were of North European stock, mainly English and Scotch-Irish'. They were also, with one exception, practising Christians. Among them the Baptist John D. Rockefeller, whose methods in building Standard Oil were notoriously ruthless, lawless and pitiless; and the Episcopalian, J. Pierpoint Morgan, head of the 'money trust' which dominated not only Wall Street but also a large section of American industry" (*Race, Reason and Democracy*, Styler, page 11).

95% of American five and ten-cent stores are non-Jewish, together with 90% of the drug-stores (chemists), and 95% of the grocery stores.

Finally, it is also worthy of record that none of the major armament manufacturing concerns were in the hands of Jews. Vickers, Schneider-Cruesot, Krupp, and Borsig, were all in the hands of "true Aryans".

In what industries then, are Jews to be found? In this country, mainly in tailoring, where they constitute about a quarter of the total firms in the trade; in furniture manufacturing, where they comprise about one-seventh of the firms; in the jewellery business where they form one-fifth of the firms, and in the manufacture of footwear, in which one-eighth of the firms are Jewish. Two-thirds of the fur trade is in their hands, which fact should not give members of the working-class very much cause for anti-semitism. Just over 10% of the firms in the electric and radio trade are Jewish, and rather less than this percentage are engaged in the manufacture and distribution of cosmetics and other toilet preparations. Of the food shops, one-sixth of those in London, and one-sixteenth of those in the provinces, are in the hands of Jews (*The Jews in Industry and Trade*, Trades Advisory Council). Even in all these trades we

have listed, it would appear that most of the Jews function as middlemen; comparatively few are manufacturers.

In the United States, the position is much the same. In New York, for example, 82% of the fur business is carried on by Jews; 56% of the clothing industry; 39 % of the leather goods trade; and 38% of the glass industry. Although they are so prominent in the tailoring trade, only 5½ % of the wool and cotton textile industry, and about 15% of the silk and rayon industry, is in their hands. (*The Jews in Industry and Trade.*) They are prominent only in the actual processing and distribution of these goods.

There is no argument but that in the world of finance, trade and industry generally, the Jews play a comparatively unimportant role. As distributors, as middlemen, as wholesalers, and most of all, as retailers, they play a more prominent part, and it is this fact, more than any other, which gives the worker cause to think that the Jews are more important in the world of trade than, in fact, they really are. The worker's most frequent financial contact with the capitalist world is through the shopkeeper, the retailer, from whom he buys all that the size of his wage-pocket will allow him to buy. If, as it so happens, a *fairly* large proportion of those retailers are Jews, he tends to give them a financial importance far greater than they actually possess. The worker forgets, or is ignorant of the fact, that by far the greatest part of the wealth of the country is in the hands, not of the "small fry" of the capitalist world, but of the industrialists, the manufacturers, the bankers, and the big share-holders, the overwhelming majority of whom are, in fact, as we have conclusively shown, non-Jewish.

#### **The Jews as members of the working-class**

Not all Jews are capitalists; or even small, petty capitalists. In fact, surprising as it may seem to some, the great majority of them are workers.

In this country, however, the information on this score is very scanty, and definite information is difficult to obtain as to just how many Jews are wage-workers. Most of them are to be found in those trades in which Jewish capitalists are also prominent. Thus a very high proportion of Jewish workers are employed as tailors or as assistants in clothing shops and stores. In 1932, an investigation revealed that there were about 40,000 Jewish workers employed in the clothing industry alone. Considerable numbers are engaged in the furniture trade, on the manufacturing side as cabinet-makers, or again as shop assistants and salesmen. Others are employed as assistants in shops handling such diverse commodities as food, jewellery, and furs. Although more detailed information on this particular aspect of the question would be useful, there is, however, no doubt about the main general fact: that the majority of Jews in this country are wage-workers.

When we come to the United States, we have much more information at our disposal. Of the million and a half Jewish immigrants into the United States between the years 1900 and 1925, almost 1,200,000 were skilled workers, 266,000 were unskilled workers, 59,000 were traders, and 25,000 were farmers. In a survey in New York in 1937, it was found that almost a quarter of the city's Jewish population were occupied in the retail trades as either shopkeepers or employees; of another quarter who were engaged in the manufacturing industries, only 9% were employers, all the others were workers; almost another quarter were "professional men" in services (doctors, dentists, teachers etc) and entertainment; and 13% were unemployed. In Chicago, 36% of the Jews were employed as factory workers alone; in Detroit, 27% were skilled and unskilled workers, 39% were clerks, and 10% were "professional men". (*The Jews in Industry and Trade.*) In the United States, therefore, even allowing for those earning a precarious living as petty traders and small shopkeepers, there is absolutely no doubt that the great majority of its Jewish population are wage-workers.

In Canada, where there are about 180,000 Jews, rather more than 1% of the population, 18% of the total were classed as wholesale and retail merchants; 5% as "professional"; 30% as clerks; 14% as skilled workers; 20% as semi-skilled workers; and 6% as unskilled workers.

In Palestine, where there are now over 550,000 Jews, the percentages according to occupation, are as follows: 38% in industry, transport and building; 18% in clerical posts and the civil service; 16% in agriculture; 10% in trade; 8% in domestic service; 5% in finance and investment; and 4% in the police force.

In Russia, which has the second largest Jewish population in the world, the figures in 1939 were as follows: 30% “workers”; 41% “employees” (clerical and professions); 6% farmers; 20% artisans; and 3% miscellaneous (*The Jews in Industry and Trade*).

So much for the Jews and their occupations. While the rich Jew is fair game for the rich non-Jew, the poor Jew, the working-class Jew, is fair game for both of them under capitalism.

### **Are the Jews a race?**

This is one further question to which we must give an answer, though it is of secondary importance. The Jews are *not a race*, in spite of the ideas to the contrary held by some of the more nationalistic of their number. They were not a “pure race” when they left the desert over 3,000 years ago; they are even less of a “pure race” today. Despite their segregation, compulsory and voluntary, they have frequently mixed with other peoples. As a result, at least three distinct strains can be traced in their racial make-up. There are the Ashkenazic or German Jews; the Sephardic or Spanish Jews; and the Oriental Jews. These groups not only differ one from the other, but each group itself shows wide variations of physical type. Many people will be surprised to know that even the “Jewish” nose is not Jewish.

“The ‘Jewish’ nose, though generally called ‘Semitic’, is Armenoid in origin, and the modern Jews, if not predominantly Armenoid, certainly exhibit more Armenoid than ‘Semitic’ characters . . . The ‘Jewish’ nose is said to be present in only about 15% of adult male Jews in New York City, though in Galicia one observer describes its presence in as many as 30%” (*We Europeans*, Huxley, Carr and Saunders, p. 154).

Similarly, all those workers who think they can classify Jews because of their “dark, sleek hair” and their swarthy complexion are also in for a surprise.

“There is an impression that Jews are strongly brunet. Dark hair and eyes do exist in the majority but in certain districts of Poland a very substantial minority, given as one-third to two-fifths of the Jewish population, are light-coloured, while the blondness of Alsatian Jews has long been recognised. Even among the Sephardim there are many blonds. Moreover, there is a strong tendency to redness, most marked in the Near East, but very obvious in many western Jews. There is further, a considerable proportion with light brown hair and blue eyes” (*We Europeans*, Huxley, Carr and Saunders, p. 155).

There is thus not the slightest scientific evidence to show that the Jews are a race. Huxley describes them as a “socio-religious” group, and there is little to quarrel with in this. Although some Jews have themselves become bitten with the “racial bug”, they can no more justify their belief in a “Jewish race” than the Nazis could justify their “Aryan race”. In their efforts to defend themselves against the racialists, some Jews have become racialists themselves.

“There is no evidence for the existence of a distinctive Jewish blood or ‘race’, nor has there ever been a group of family lines of Jews that could be called a ‘race’. The Jewish leader who speaks about ‘our race’ is talking unadulterated nonsense” (Dr. M. Jacobs, Asst. Professor of Anthropology, University of Washington, in *The Jews in a Gentile World*, p 53).

## Chapter VI : Zionism

We cannot deal with the problem of anti-semitism without also discussing Zionism. Again, we can only deal with it on broad, general lines, because of obvious limitations of space.

Although the beginning of what we know today as the Zionist movement took place towards the end of the last century, it is only in recent years that the movement has gained any great strength. Today, there are over 550,000 Jews living in Palestine; yet in 1919 there were only some 60,000. In 1919, they constituted 9% of the population of Palestine; today they constitute 33%. The early movement was weak and poorly organised. Most Jews were quite indifferent to the movement; certainly they did not wish to go to Palestine. Of the two million Jews who emigrated from Russia, Austria, and Roumania between the years 1881 and 1908, over one and a-half millions went to the United States, 300,000 went to Western Europe, and *only 26,000 went to Palestine*. Even among those people who did emigrate to Palestine in the early days, there was little of the active, colonising spirit. Most of the younger element preferred to try their fortunes elsewhere.

Since the end of the first World War, conditions have changed. Anti-semitism has become stronger than ever before, with obvious results. First of all, those Jews in countries where anti-semitism was most active tried to emigrate to countries where they would be less badly treated. Secondly, as the tide of anti-semitism rose higher and higher, so did many Jews become more and more interested in the idea of a “National Home”, where, as they thought, they could be together and be free once and for all from the hostility of people around them.

Although all manner of places had been suggested for this “National Home”, including British East Africa, British Guiana, and San Domingo—and, more recently, Eritrea and Madagascar have also been mentioned—for various reasons, the final choice of the Zionists has been Palestine.

The Zionists themselves do not constitute one united group. At least four separate organisations go to make up the movement. The largest group is the Histadruth, the Trade Union wing. The others are the Revisionists, an extreme group, whose methods and activities are strongly anti-democratic and violent in character; a religious section; and lastly, the Democratic Zionists. Although some of them are now prepared to accept the compromise of Palestine, i. e., the division of Palestine into two separate states, the overwhelming majority, irrespective of the group to which they belong, now want the whole of the country as a Jewish state.

The essence of Zionism is escape; escape once and for all from hatred and persecution. Its supporters argue that the main cause of the troubles of the Jews is the fact that they have no country of their own. Only by settling in a country of their own will they be safe from anti-semitism. No longer then will they be a small minority of outcasts, dependent upon the tolerance of others, but members of their own Jewish state. As such they will be free from interference and discrimination.

Such beliefs are mere wishful thinking. In the first place, many Jews are not the slightest bit interested in going to Palestine. This is recognised by many Zionists themselves in their more realistic moments. In any case, even if it was a fact that every Jew wanted to go, the country itself is incapable of supporting such an increased population. This, too, was recognised by David Ben-Gurion, a well-known Zionist leader, when he said:

“We shall go to Palestine in order to become the majority there. If need be we shall take the country by force. If Palestine proves too small . . . her frontiers will have to be extended”  
(*Manchester Guardian*, 3.7.46).

The declared and avowed aim of the Zionists is to make Palestine a Jewish state. They are, in short, “nationalists”, looking to solve their problems not by abolishing capitalism but by creating one more national state in a capitalist world of national states and empires. Zionist nationalism, as such, is not different from the other nationalisms and we, as Socialists, are opposed to them all, whether they be British, American, Russian, Polish, Indian, or any other. The most that could be said for nationalist movements where directed against alien rulers was the argument that, with alien rule ended, it would be easier for the workers to grasp the fact that their enemy is capitalism, whether the capitalists are aliens or not. It is, however, clear, that in practice the capitalist class in each country finds it about as

easy to set the workers against the workers of other countries as it was to set them against a foreign ruling-class. What are called nationalist movements are essentially the movements of capitalist groups striving to drive out foreign exploiters so that they can mount the vacant saddle.

The spokesmen of nationalist movements do not in the main declare their capitalist objectives. British capitalism talked of pacifying the Middle East, or of helping the Jews and Arabs. Actually, British Imperialism was in Palestine for reasons of Imperial strategy and to protect oil interests in that region; which also of course explains the increasing intervention of the USA in the Middle East. With all this, a new factor is becoming of importance, which we shall refer to again later, the factor of rising Arab nationalism.

It is against this background that the demand is made for the settlement of Jewish people in Palestine, with the usual irrelevant arguments so beloved of all nationalisms. The Principal Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues, Kopol Rosen, writing to *The Times* (13/7/46), claims, for example, that those who work for the return of the Jewish people to Zion, "whether they be Zionists or non-Zionists, are fulfilling not a secular ambition, but the Divine will as revealed in the visions of Israel's prophets". Moslem Arabs can, of course, invoke a like "Divine" mission.

Similarly the Zionists talk of the "historical connection" of the Jews with Palestine. The Jews, they say, are returning home to the land of their forefathers, which they left many centuries ago. As we have already seen, this is no claim at all. The Jews were certainly not the original inhabitants of Palestine, and, further than that, they have had no contact with the country worth speaking about for almost two thousand years. The Welsh could just as logically argue for taking back England again, or the Red Indians for taking back North America. Such sentimental arguments are always to be found associated with nationalism.

The Zionists also attempt to bolster up their case by referring to the progress and prosperity they have brought to Palestine. They instance the large increase in the Arab population itself; the higher standard of living of the Palestine Arabs compared with that of Arabs in other countries; and the fact that no Arab has been turned off his land without compensation. But here again, these arguments count very little. They in no way face up to the fact that there is a considerable section of Arab landless labourers in Palestine, many of whom are compelled to work for Jewish farmers and capitalists, and that generally their wages are less than those paid to Jews. Nor should it be forgotten, when comparing the wages of Arabs in Palestine with those earned by Arabs in other countries that the cost of living tends to be considerably higher in Palestine.

But, in any case, all these arguments are really incidental to the question. The crux of the matter is that the Zionists are now determined at all costs to make a Jewish National State in Palestine. As such they come into direct conflict with the Arab ruling class in Palestine itself, and, more particularly, they become the objects of hatred of the Arab world generally. The main point of the Zionist case is that by establishing a National Home of their own they would be free from anti-semitism. In this, they have been proved completely mistaken. In their efforts to flee from the anti-semitism in Europe, they have only succeeded in generating another, Arab anti-semitism. Even on the short view of helping the homeless refugees, the wisdom of this policy is more than doubtful.

Finally, it must be stressed that Zionism, even if it were to succeed in Palestine, which is doubtful to say the least, is itself no solution to the Jewish problem. To set up a Jewish state in Palestine in no way solves the problem of anti-semitism in Britain, the United States, Russia, Canada, South Africa, or any other country. Whatever happens about the National State in Palestine, the Jews will still be the object of hatred and discrimination in those countries. Anti-semitism will not be eradicated by the founding of Jewish National States, whether they be in Palestine or anywhere else. The root cause of modern anti-semitism, as we have already pointed out, is to be found in the capitalist system of society, and only when capitalism itself is abolished will anti-semitism disappear. If any Jewish worker reading this pamphlet feels himself filled with the need to reproach us for what he thinks is an "unrealistic attitude", let him reflect for a moment upon the so-called "realistic attitude" of the Zionists in Palestine and the results which have ensued. It is the Zionist policy which is "unrealistic", as many Jews will find to their bitter cost. Our case to the Jewish workers is that under no circumstances should they allow themselves to be deluded by ideas of nationalism and "race" into supporting such movements as Zionism which will not solve their problems.



The only solution to anti-semitism is Socialism, and to the extent that Jewish workers co-operate with other members of their class to bring about Socialism will the complete eradication of anti-semitism be more quickly achieved.

## Chapter VII : Race-prejudice in the United States

The problem of race-prejudice is not so important or serious in this country as it is, for example, in South Africa or the United States of America. British workers need not start giving themselves airs on this account, because the reason for it has very little to do with them. It only happens that the conditions which make for race-prejudice are not present to the same degree in this country as they are in the others we have mentioned. Given conditions here similar to those that operate in the United States, for example, the reactions of workers in this country would not differ from those of their fellow-workers across the Atlantic. If this was not so, we would not be spending our time and energy writing this pamphlet. As we have already shown in the previous chapters, the British worker makes the fullest use of what few opportunities he does have for indulging his tendencies towards race-prejudice. Although most of what follows does not directly concern the British worker, we think it will provide him with ample food for thought. Through a knowledge of the way in which race-prejudice hinders the development of working-class understanding and unity in other countries, he will be better fitted to deal with it in this country.

In no other country is race-prejudice more complicated than in the United States; in no country does it present so many varied aspects. The United States is the "classic" land of race-prejudice; prejudice against the Jews; prejudice between White and Negro; prejudice between White and Yellow; prejudice between White and White. Dominating all others is the prejudice that exists between White and Negro.

### **The Negro in the U S A.**

Of the 136,000,000 inhabitants of the United States (1943 estimate) about 13,000,000 are Negroes, almost 10% of the population. They are thus sufficiently small in numbers to have become an oppressed minority, but sufficiently numerous to have influenced considerably the pattern of American social development.

Upon the backs of the Negroes was built up the whole of the Southern slave-system, a system based on the land, and more particularly, on cotton and tobacco, two crops which require large supplies of human labour for their cultivation. To meet this ever-growing demand for human labour, millions of Negroes were transported from Africa to work as slaves on the plantations. The nightmare conditions under which they were taken to America are well known. Thousands perished before they even reached the African coast; thousands more died in the terrible ocean crossing and were flung overboard

"For every slave introduced into the routine of the American slave system, from two to five died or were killed on the way" (*Race Relations*, Weatherford and Johnson, p. 274).

Once settled in the country, most of the Negroes became agricultural labourers, but as slavery developed, they became artisans and craftsmen as well. In course of time they almost completely eliminated the White workers from the skilled operations. At the same time, the workings of slavery itself were gradually ousting the smaller farmers from the land in favour of the bigger ones. Together with White skilled workers, these small farmers deteriorated into the "poor whites" of whom we have already spoken. In a society in which Negro slaves did most of the work, skilled and unskilled, White

craftsmen and independent farmers had no place. Thus the seeds of hatred and prejudice between White and Negro had already been well planted long before the Civil War.

When the Civil War ended in 1865, and laws supporting slavery were abolished, conditions began to change. In theory, the Negro became a "free man" but in practice, he found that the fetters he had worn under slavery had become even more closely riveted to his limbs. Under the slave-system, he had been to a considerable extent protected. It was in the slave-owner's own interests to keep his slaves reasonably fed, housed, and clothed. As a "free man", however, the Negro now found himself exposed to all the rigours of capitalism. He found an ever-growing economic barrier being thrown up against him by the White man, who feared his competition. Although under slavery he had done the skilled as well as the unskilled work, he was now pushed more and more into the hard, dirty and routine jobs. In a very short while, he found himself relegated to the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder. As a farmer, too, he was discriminated against, being compelled to cultivate the poorest land or finally ending up as a "share-cropper", a particularly vicious form of exploitation in which he did all the work of growing the crop for the privilege of receiving a share of it when, and if, it was harvested.

It must be remembered that, during this period, which lasted up to the outbreak of the first World War, the Negroes were mainly confined to the Southern States. With the war, came a boom; the wheels of American industry began to turn more and more quickly; the need for labour-power became more and more acute. To meet this demand the American capitalists were finally compelled to draw upon the Negroes. Hundreds of thousands of Negroes left the South and entered the factories of the North. Some of them returned home; most of them remained. The Negro had become a "problem" to the North as well as to the South.

Even after the end of the War, the tendency to migrate northwards persisted. At the same time, industry was beginning to develop in the South itself. Said the American capitalist, "Why should I bring cotton all the way to New England when I can have it processed more cheaply where it grows?" The huge coalfields of Alabama began to be exploited; new factories began to open up; blast furnaces and steel mills were constructed; and Whites and Negroes left the land to enter them.

The last war repeated the process, only on a larger scale. Every available worker was drafted into the armed forces or into industry. By the end of the war, 1½ million Negroes were working in American war-plants alone. It was reckoned that in 1944, the number of Negroes employed in the shipyards was greater than the total of all shipbuilding workers in 1940 (*Racial Pride and Prejudice*, Dingwall, p 79). At the same time, about three-quarters of a million Negroes were absorbed into the armed forces, and at least half of them went overseas. Capitalism, in its many ways, was breaking down the barriers of isolation and widening the Negroes' horizon.

This is the position to-day. As to what implications it holds for the American working-class, we must leave discussion about them until later. We must first sketch a little more of the background.

### **Discrimination against the Negro**

Today, discrimination against the Negro is an integral part of the American social system. This applies to the "more tolerant" North as well as to the South; the difference is only one of degree. In the South, a Negro asking for accommodation in a "White hotel" would be lucky to escape without violence being done to him; in the North, he would quite politely be told that the hotel was full. The result is the same—he is refused admission. In one case the discrimination is open and avowed, in the other it is simply understood.

In the South, the Negro is "kept in his place" and there are no bones made about it. Virtual segregation is the rule. If a Negro wishes to travel by train, he pays the same fare but travels in special "Jim Crow" compartments or coaches, which are usually considerably below the standard of comfort of the rest of the train. If he wishes to take a tram or a bus ride, he knows "his place" is at the rear of the vehicle, and he goes there. In some Southern towns, this type of discrimination is made more definite; the vehicles even carry notices to this effect.

Strict segregation is also the rule in restaurants and hotels. Negroes and Whites each have their own separate eating-places. In railway stations and bus-termini, there are "White waiting-rooms" and "Negro waiting-rooms". In many cases, the Negroes have to do without such facilities altogether, and even when they do have them, the rooms are usually below the standard of those provided for the Whites. At some railway stations in the South, there are even separate entrances and exits provided for Negroes. This arrangement is, however, too cumbersome, and, in most cases, the "unwritten law" is adhered to and understood—Negro "gives way" to White.

In education, also, the scales are heavily weighed against the Negro. In the South, White and Negro children are kept strictly apart. As far as the schools for Negro children are concerned, the financial allocations they receive for upkeep and equipment are considerably lower than those received by White schools. The salaries between Negro and White teachers show similar differences. The quality of the Negro teachers is generally poorer than that of their White colleagues, not because of their racial make-up, but because they, in their turn, have also been subject to the same difficulties and handicaps in acquiring an education as the children they are now called upon to teach. An indication of this can be gained from the figures for illiteracy. In 1930, approximately 16.3% of Negroes were illiterate, compared with 1.5% among native-Whites.

Discrimination also takes its full toll of the Negro as far as his general health and welfare are concerned.

“Apart from the comparatively small upper and middle class minority, the Negroes, be they in the rural regions of the South or in the congested slum areas of the large cities, can be described only as very poor, even if the word ‘destitute’ . . . be not used to suggest the extremity of their poverty. In the United States, the average life of the Negro is *ten* years less than that of the whites: the material death-rate is three times that of the white race: and infant mortality shows a rate which, taking the whole of the United States, is just over 70 per thousand live births as compared with the white rate of just over 40 . . . Generally speaking, although there appears to be an annual decline in tuberculosis mortality, the Negro mortality is somewhere between three and four times the mortality in white people” (*Racial Pride and Prejudice*, Dingwall, p. 86).

The number of hospitals at their disposal are very few compared to the number of those provided for Whites. In the North, they are allowed entrance to the wards of public hospitals, but in the South

“ . . . it is a fact, which has often been given dramatic and fatal acuteness, that the great majority of hospitals, public and private, will not admit Negro patients under any circumstances” (*Racial Relations*, Weatherford and Johnson, p. 380).

Put more bluntly, and without trimmings, the above quotation means, no more, no less, that most Southern hospitals would rather see a Negro die than admit him and save his life. In fact, to be quite accurate, we should use the past tense: they *have* seen Negroes die rather than admit them.

In view of what has already been said the position of the Negro before the Law can readily be imagined, particularly in the South. Most of his contact with the Law comes via the White policeman, who is no more proof against race-prejudice than the rest of his fellows, but has many more opportunities of exercising it. In fact, the Negro is subject to particularly strong discrimination from the police, which often deteriorates into violence of the most revolting character.

Of policemen and their activities, an American investigator has the following to say:

“The authority to administer physical punishment and to kill a Negro without fear of serious censure gives special significance to their role as agents of the law in the South” (*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, Johnson, p. 32).

Which is another way of saying that the Negro has to be very careful not to run foul of them.

As far as the actual higher administration of the Law is concerned, the Negro finds himself in little better plight. Prejudice against him still makes itself felt, as he often finds to his bitter cost. A Negro, asked for his comments on this specific question, said all that there is to say about it, when he replied:

“The Whites are a good bit ahead in court. They let the Negro know he’s a Negro there. They call him a nigger, of course. They don’t sit together. A Negro’s word won’t take like a white man’s, unless he’s got a mighty good reputation with the white people” (*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, p. 30).

In the South, there is even segregation in gaol, Negro prisoners being housed in one block of cells, White prisoners in another.

Finally, there are occasions when even the Law, biased as it is, is ignored and lynch-law prevails. From 1889 to 1929, a period of forty years, there were 3,703 known lynchings in the United States, the real number being considerably higher. Of those persons lynched, 78.7% were Negroes. During recent years, although lynching itself has tended to decline, the proportion of Negro lynchings has tended to rise. Of 148 known lynchings between 1930 and 1943, 136 were committed against Negroes. The process of keeping the peace has become more efficient and has resulted in a decrease in the number of lynchings, but not too much should be inferred from this. Although the forces of prevention may have become more effective, there is not much reason to think that the underlying passions of race-prejudice have to any considerable extent abated.

In the South, segregation is the rule in entertainment and recreation, as it is in other more serious spheres of life. In cinemas, a special block of seats is kept apart for Negroes, usually in the gallery. They are not admitted to other seats, even if they are willing to pay the increased price. From many of the more modern cinemas they are excluded altogether. Similar restrictions apply to outdoor recreation. Negroes, for example, are generally excluded from public parks in most of the Southern States. *In Richmond, Virginia, they are allowed entrance but restricted to walking, sitting and fishing.* In some towns they have small parks of their own, but, in general in the South, they possess little in the way of open spaces. They are also specifically excluded from such places as swimming-pools, dance-halls, etc.

Besides these major forms of discrimination, there are many other minor ones. In some Southern cities, for example, there are curfew laws against Negroes still in operation. Segregation even follows them after death—there are separate cemeteries for Negroes and Whites. In one State, there is even a law forbidding Negro mortuary attendants to handle White corpses. In the South, a Negro will call a White man by his first name, but only when there are very few others present. In the ordinary way, he will address him as “Mr” to show his “respect”. On the other hand, a White man will address a Negro he knows by his first name, but very seldom by “Mr”. If he does not know him, and the Negro is young, he will call him “boy”; if he is old, he will call him “uncle”. By these devices is the Negro constantly reminded of his inferior status.

The Negro makes way for the White man on the sidewalk; is even expected to make way for him on the public highway. If he calls at the house of a White man, he is expected to go to the back door. One Negro said on this question:

“I don’t know of a Negro here that the white folks all don’t expect to come to their back door. He had better have a good excuse if he goes marching up to the front door” (*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, p. 129).

On the other hand, a White man need not stand on so much ceremony if he wishes to see a Negro.

“They don’t care what you’re doing. They bust in and don’t knock. They don’t pull their hats off or nothing. I don’t say nothing. All I can see is that a coloured man ain’t much . . . What can a man do when it’s like that? Nothin’ that I can see. This is a white man’s country and there ain’t much that we can do about it” (*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, p. 134).

Economically, the effects of capitalism bear harder on the Negro than they do on the White worker. Generally speaking, the slogan “the last to be hired, the first to be fired”, is a true one as far as the Negro is concerned. In 1932, 56% of all employable Negroes were unemployed compared with 39.7% Whites. If part-time work is also taken into account, the discrepancy between the two becomes even greater. At the same time, an investigation in Baltimore revealed that although Negroes constituted only 14.7% of that city’s population, they were 32.6% of the unemployed. In New York in 1930, again at the time of the depression, 64.2% native-white men were employed full-time, 53.8% foreign-born white, and 42.5% Negroes. In Philadelphia, during the same period it was found that in 1929 when 9% Whites were unemployed, there were 15.7% Negroes unemployed; in 1930, 13.8% Whites, 19.4% Negroes; in 1931, 24.1% Whites, 35% Negroes; and in 1932, 39.7% Whites, 56% Negroes. In the same investigation it was shown that:

“The average length of the longest job of Negroes was 3.8 years as compared with 6 years for whites. Earnings of whites were from \$5 to \$10 more weekly in the same general labour classification . . . Nearly twice as many Negroes as Whites were in arrears on their rents . . . in 1931-32, while Negroes formed 20% of the city’s unemployed, 27% of the children under relief care were Negroes” (*Race Relations*, Weatherford and Johnson, p. 319).

In an investigation conducted in Chicago in 1935 and 1936, it was found that 27.4% native-white families had incomes of less than \$1,000 per year, 34% foreign-born white families, and 71.7% of the Negro families (*US Dept of Labour Bulletin*).

These are sufficient examples to show the general economic position of the Negro worker compared to that of the White worker. Both are exploited under capitalism, but the Negro suffers the poverty, insecurity, and the rest of the evils that flow from capitalism in extra measure.

We have tried to give as briefly as possible, a picture of the present relations between Whites and Negroes in the United States. Most of what we have said, in its extreme form, is mainly confined to the Southern States, where prejudice against the Negro is most bitter, but it must be stressed that the discrimination practised in the South has its counterpart in the North, differing only, as we have already said, in degree. In the North, Negroes and Whites may sit next to each other in trains or in street-cars, in cinemas or in waiting-rooms; their children may sit next to each other in class-rooms, they may share parks and playing-fields; they may even share the same cell in gaol; but underlying it all there is still hostility and prejudice, ready to break out into violence if the conditions favour it, as for instance happened in New York City in 1943, when five people were killed, some hundreds injured, shops looted, and damage done to the tune of several million dollars; or in the Detroit riots in 1943 when over thirty people were killed, hundreds injured and more than a thousand arrested.

There is also another point which must be made. Race-prejudice is not the prerogative of one side, and it must not be inferred that race-prejudice is an attitude possessed only by the Whites. *This must particularly be stressed.* There is ample evidence to show that the reactions of Negroes are broadly similar in character. As they cannot effectively give vent to them against the Whites, in particular the native-born Whites, the Negroes often work out their frustrations against the Chinese, the Filipinos, the West Indians, and even against the Mexicans, the Jews, the Poles, the Lithuanians, and other groups of recent White immigrants.

Which raises one more issue that we must deal with, before finally discussing the effects of race-hatred on the American working class generally.

There are other prejudices at work in the United States besides the prejudice between White and Negro. There is prejudice against the Indians, not very strong now, because their numbers are no more than 450,000 all told, and for the most part they live on reservations away from the main stream of American social life. There is prejudice against the Chinese and Japanese, who, although less in numbers than the Indians, take a much more active part in American life. They have also tended to concentrate, particularly on the Pacific seaboard, which apart from tending to aggravate the problem has also had the effect, at least as far as the Japanese are concerned, of stimulating nationalistic sentiment against them.

In the case of the Chinese, they also provide an interesting example of the effects of economic conditions on the growth of race-prejudice. To-day, prejudice against them is not so great as it was in the early days of their immigration, when it was mainly due to their lower standard of life. Then some 30,000 Chinese worked in the Californian mines, where their employment generated a great deal of animosity. To-day, only about 150 work in the mines; they now work mainly in laundries, restaurants, and the like, where they cause very little economic disturbance, and consequently, less racial animosity.

Last, but not least, there are all kinds of prejudices existing between the various White groups themselves. Anti-semitism is strong in those areas where the Jews constitute a considerable proportion of the population, notably in New York, Chicago, and the various towns of New England. There is prejudice between the native-born Whites and the more recent immigrants, and the further back they can trace their native ancestry the prouder they feel. Apart from the hostility between native and foreign born, there is also prejudice based on nationality. The members of each particular nationality tend to look with disfavour upon the others, and coin derogatory slang terms for each other. Englishmen they call "Limeys", Poles "Polaks", Italians "Wops", Mexicans "Greasers", and so on. All these minor streams help to swell the mighty river of American race-prejudice.

Quite apart from any question of Socialist understanding, the American worker has yet to grasp the idea of working-class solidarity even upon the industrial field. In this respect he is, of course, no different from workers in other capitalist countries. When, however, in addition to all the usual factors which operate to keep the workers divided, there also exists the factor of racial differences, then this idea of the essential unity of the working-class becomes even more difficult to appreciate.

There is no doubt that the effects of race-prejudice upon the American working-class movement have been profound. We have already shown the general background to the problem. How, step by step, the Negro has been forced into the unskilled and lowly-paid jobs. How, in all manner of ways, he is discriminated against and looked upon as an inferior. How, on occasions, this resentment, one for the

other, develops into actual violence and bloodshed, which only serves to heighten the mutual feelings of enmity and mistrust. How the Negro “takes it out” on other groups who, in turn, “take it out” on each other. How, generally, there persists an undercurrent of prejudice between all the various racial elements that go to make up the population of the United States. All these can hardly be said to be favourable conditions for the growth of the idea of working-class solidarity. Their effects are, however, worthy of treatment in greater detail.

### **The American trade unions**

Nobody will be surprised to learn that race-prejudice and discrimination also exist in the American Trade Unions. As many of the older established skilled trades exclude Negroes from employment, it automatically follows that Negroes are excluded from the Trade Unions which cover those trades. This does not, however, prevent many of these Unions from inserting a clause in their rules which specifically excludes Negroes from membership. This exclusion clause also appears in the rules of other Unions which cover trades in which all the workers are not White. In some Unions, on the other hand, Negroes are admitted into membership, but are encouraged to form their own branches; what, in effect, amounts to Union “Jim Crowism”. Many Unions, particularly those affiliated to the C. I. O. (Congress of Industrial Organisations) allow Negroes into membership and the Branches are open to both White and Negro. Finally, there are the all-Negro Unions, which cover trades and occupations in which Negro workers are predominant. An example is the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters.

From what has been said, it will be seen that if Negroes are numerically small in any particular trade or industry, then the tendency is for them to be excluded altogether from membership of the Union concerned. If they are so numerous as to present a “threat” to the standard of the White worker, then they are usually admitted. There is little real working-class understanding about the business. The Negroes are not admitted into the Unions because of the sound working-class understanding of the White workers, but rather on the grounds of economic expediency.

To a small extent, the White worker can be excused for this. As is obvious, the Negro worker (and White worker, for that matter), coming straight from the land into industry, has very little idea of even the most elementary principles of Trade Union action. As such, he was often used by the American capitalist class as a strike breaker, so much so that the name of the Negro became synonymous with “scab” and “blackleg”.

Quite apart from this aspect, the capitalist class were also not slow to take advantage of the hostility existing between the White and Negro workers to play one off against the other. As a Negro worker said on this issue:

“The poor-whites and niggers is worked together up at No.—. They is using the poor-whites to whip the nigger and the nigger to whip the poor-whites. If the poor-whites sort of get out of line, they fire them and put niggers in their jobs, and they do the niggers the same way”  
(*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, Johnson, p. 102).

Finally, there is the most important factor of all, the lower standard of living of the Negro worker, which makes him, in the eyes of the White worker, a constant “economic threat” to his interests.

Thus once having relegated the Negro to a position of comparative economic inequality, the White worker tries his utmost to keep him there, and resents any effort the Negro worker may make to better his economic position. For example, in August, 1944, the whole of the transport system of Philadelphia was paralysed by a strike of White workers who objected to eight Negro workers being upgraded to operators. So determined was the strike that the American government finally had to call in the Army to break it. In Detroit, a strike ensued in the Chrysler plant as the result of certain Negro workers being promoted to jobs carrying higher responsibility. In 1941, again in Detroit, the Packard Motor Corporation was disorganised by a similar strike and in the riots which followed 35 people were killed and 600 injured. In 1943, in Mobile, Alabama, when the Alabama Dry Docks and Shipbuilding Co. promoted twelve Negro workers, the White workers objected, attacked the Negroes and seriously injured them, troops finally being called in to restore order.

The White workers have generally been most concerned to keep the Negroes in the unskilled jobs, and, at one time, so long as Negroes kept to those occupations, they were usually left unmolested. In jobs as railway-car attendants, porters, domestic servants and the like, they had almost an open field. But prior

to the War, the situation was beginning to break down. After the depression of the nineteen-thirties, millions of workers were thrown out of employment, and competition for jobs became even more bitter. Jobs which, at one time, White workers would have scorned as being beneath them, were snapped up eagerly. The Negro even began to experience competition in fields which had long been considered to be especially his own. In fact the stage had been reached when Whites began to compete with Negroes for any job at all. One Negro worker expressed the situation very well when he said:

“No white man did my kind of work till lately. They just like us, kinda poor and they want to stay. They all want to keep a job here now” (*Patterns of Negro Segregation*, Johnson, p. 102).

The outbreak of war temporarily stopped this development, but with the coming of another slump, the process will start again. Then the White worker will once more be forced to encroach upon the “Negro’s jobs”, only this time the competition between them will probably be even more bitter than it was before. It is probable that, as usual, the Negro worker will get the dirtier end of the stick, yet, at the same time, whether the White worker likes it or not, the Negro worker will always be there to constitute a perpetual threat to the White worker’s efforts to maintain and improve his economic position.

### **Other groups**

This economic competition, with all its many racial complications, is not only confined to conflicts between Negroes and Whites; it also exists between many of the other racial and national groups in the United States. It exists, as we have already pointed out, between the Whites themselves. The reason for this is obvious if one remembers the dozens of different nationalities that have gone into the American “melting-pot”.

At one time, it was possible to draw a rough comparison between nationality and occupation, the native-born Americans holding the more skilful jobs and the later immigrants the less skilled. Those who came latest on the scene, like the immigrants from the South-East European countries, were usually the lowest in the scale. Unlike the Negro, however, the colour of their skin has enabled them, to a certain extent; to become absorbed into the general population. This is even more the case with the next generation which grows up and acquires the general American background. This is not to say that prejudice against them disappears altogether; much still remains to add itself to the other prejudices. Polish, Slav, and Italian names are still sufficient basis for resentment and hostility.

Such prejudices, together with others, like those that exist between Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos all help to keep the American working class divided. There has even developed a “Mexican problem” which has already caused several riots and disturbances, and reveals to the full the utter absurdity, and, at the same time, the tragedy, of race-prejudice. White workers generally refuse to accept the Mexican because they do not consider him to be white; on the other hand, the Negro resents him because he is a fierce competitor in the struggle for jobs and has, in fact, ousted the Negro from some of the very lowly paid occupations. Whatever the race or nationality of the American worker, he can always find some other group that he can blame for his misfortunes.

Sooner or later, the American workers will have to face up to the position, for the conditions of capitalism are making the problem more and more acute. They must realise that their only hope lies in acting together as workers, unaffected by differences of race, nationality, or colour. On the other hand, failing to appreciate this need for class solidarity, they may quite easily be led into paths which can only end in disaster. Many American Trade Union officials have been possessed of enough Trade Union understanding to realise that, at least on the industrial field, the workers must stand or fall together, and have made strenuous efforts to convince their members of this, but with what success it is difficult to discover. Even when they act along sound working-class lines, it takes more than the words of Trade Union officials to overcome the ingrained ideas and prejudices of workers. The working class can no more be *led* out of the morass of race-prejudice than they can be led from Capitalism to Socialism.

One thing is certain: the American capitalist class can assume its system is safe and assured while the American working class is divided and at odds with itself. The burden rests solely upon the shoulders of the American workers to prove this assumption unfounded.



## Chapter VIII : Race-prejudice in Africa

In this chapter we do not intend to go over ground that we have already covered in the previous chapter on the United States, the main points of which apply, in greater or lesser degree, to other countries where there exists a "race problem". For that reason, as far as these other countries are concerned, we propose to deal only with those aspects of the race question which differ in marked degree from those operating in the United States.

### Race-prejudice in South Africa

Of the total population of the Union of South Africa (estimated in 1944 as just over 11 millions), the Natives number slightly over 7½ millions; of the rest, over 2¼ millions are of European (mainly Dutch and British) stock, almost 900,000 are Coloured (the result of the mixture of White, Malay, Bushman, and Hottentot stocks), and the remainder are Asiatics (mainly Indian) who number about a quarter of a million. These racial ingredients are more than enough to make a rare "devil's brew" of race-prejudice and discrimination.

### The Natives

Looking at these figures, one fact immediately strikes the eye. In contrast to the United States, the Whites in South Africa form only a minority of the population. To that extent, their determination to "keep the Native in his place" is even stronger than in the United States. The whole coercive power of the State, whether expressed in discriminatory laws and economic policies, or in actual armed violence, is directed to preserve this White supremacy. The White man in South Africa is not only afraid of the economic competition of the Native; he is even more afraid that one day, perhaps, the Native will throw him out of the country altogether.

As in the United States, so in South Africa; segregation is the rule. Apart from the segregation which exists in the towns in the form of "Black Belts" to which the Natives are severely restricted under penalty of the law, nearly three million Natives are kept on Reserves, where they derive a miserable living from the soil. If the Whites could do so, they would probably like to see all the Natives kept out of the way on Reserves, but there is one over-riding factor which prevents this, the need of South African industry for more and more Native labour-power.

The labour-power of the Native is in constant demand, particularly in the gold and diamond mines, which are the foundations of South African industrial economy. In 1940, almost 517,000 workers were employed in the mining industry of South Africa, of whom 460,000 were non-Europeans. In spite of all the White man's dreams of complete Native segregation, large numbers of Native workers are constantly on the move between the mines and the Reserves and White farms. Even before the War, this demand for cheap labour-power became so acute that considerable numbers of Native workers were recruited from neighbouring territories, including Portuguese East Africa. In such ways does economic necessity triumph over racial discrimination.

Almost all these Native workers are unskilled, for the White workers monopolise the skilled occupations, and jealously safeguard this privilege. As in the United States, so bad did economic conditions become in South Africa before the War that the Whites began to infringe upon many of those occupations regarded as only suitable for Natives, but, during the War, things changed. So rapidly did industrialisation develop, and so acute did the demand for skilled workers become, that the White trade unions and employers agreed that certain of the semi-skilled trades should be handed over to Natives. This arrangement served its purpose in time of war, but it has no doubt raised further problems for the future.

Natives are precluded from membership of the "white trade unions" and have been compelled to form their own Unions, which now number over a hundred and have over 150,000 members. These Unions are not registered and are technically illegal organisations. Every difficulty is put in their way and their bargaining power is comparatively small.

The conditions of the Natives are poor in the extreme.

"In the goldfields the average yearly wage paid to the European was about £404 in 1938. The non-European worker received about £34; although it must be remembered that native workers in gold and coal receive food and quarters and medical care and attention in addition

to the wages paid in cash. In the diamond mines the European, in the year 1938, received about £326, and the Native £44 (out of which food has to be bought), whilst in the coal-mines the European wage is about £403 and the Native £28” (*Racial Pride and Prejudice*, Dingwall, p. 139).

According to the report of a Special Commission in 1941, the average wage of a White worker was 22/- per day compared with a wage of 20/- to 30/- *per week* for the non-European worker.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the extremely wide disparity between the wages of the White and Black workers is not entirely explained by the exclusion of Black workers from the more skilled jobs, but these figures are sufficient to indicate the general economic conditions “enjoyed” by the Native worker in industry. On the Reserves, the position is even worse, for although the Natives own their own land and are nominally independent, so great is their poverty *that it forces them to leave the Reserves to work in the mines*. With this poverty are to be found all those conditions usually associated with it; bad housing (bad is an understatement), and its accompaniments, overcrowding, lack of sanitation and drainage, etc.; disease and malnutrition; and a heavy mortality rate.

Such are, briefly, the conditions of the Native population of South Africa.

### **The Coloured people**

So far as their economic conditions are concerned, the Coloured people are in little better plight than the Natives. It has been asserted, for example, that of the Coloured population of Cape Town, 70% of their number live below the poverty-line. In the country, their position is even worse.

“Only one section of any importance among the Coloured people may be said to live definitely above a mere subsistence level—the skilled and semi-skilled workmen of the towns” (*The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937*, Marais, p. 259).

They have to face particularly strong competition from the Natives; they have also to compete against the lower-paid White worker; and generally in the economic field their conditions tend to become worse instead of better. Recent legislation, for example, now precludes them from Government service, and the general trend seems to be one of discrimination against them in favour of the White worker.

Although in the Cape Province, Coloured males still have the right to vote, Coloured women are denied this right, and no Coloured person of either sex is allowed to sit in the House of Assembly or the Senate. In the other three Provinces, Transvaal, Natal, and the Orange Free State, they have no right to vote at all.

### **The Asiatics**

These are mainly descendants of Indians who were originally brought into South Africa to work on the sugar plantations of Natal, and who have since found their way into other occupations, particularly as traders and independent farmers. Unlike the Natives, they have shown a marked aptitude for business, have managed to acquire a considerable amount of land and property. Naturally, this has not pleased the European capitalists, and, to put a stop to this development, an Ordinance passed in Natal in 1944 provides for the Natal Housing Authority to step in and purchase property in European areas rather than allow it to fall into the hands of non-Europeans (which means Indians).

We are not interested in the misfortunes of the capitalist class, whether they be European or Indian, but this does provide an excellent example of the manner in which race arguments are used purely and simply to bolster up economic interests. The Europeans in South Africa justify their treatment of the Native on the grounds that he is backward, uncivilised, and intellectually incapable of reaching the same status of the White man. When it comes to dealing with the Indian, however, who can play the Europeans at their own game and make a success of it, this argument is conveniently forgotten. They drop all pretence at theoretical justification, they cease to talk about White superiority, and proceed to have recourse to the law. Although this action exposes the fallacy and expediency of their racial arguments, it is nevertheless effective as far as the immediate interests of the South African capitalist class are concerned.

### **The poor-whites**

We have already had reason to mention the “poor-whites” of the United States. They are to be found in South Africa as well. These “poor-whites” are the natural result of conditions where there are two “races”, one of which is regarded as inferior and kept strictly to the non-skilled occupations. As a result of the workings of capitalism, where there is normally a “reserve army” of unemployed, the White workers, unable to find jobs of a skilled character, refused to do “nigger jobs”, and in the course of time fell into a state of economic degradation from which most of them never again emerged. They finally become mentally and physically derelict.

The Carnegie Commission Report of 1932 found that about 22% of the White population of South Africa could be classified as “poor-white”, and above them a *further 34% were unable to support themselves without Government assistance*, which gives some idea of the conditions under which the “poor-whites” themselves must have been living. The ratio of the “poor-whites” to the rest of the White population, before the War at any rate, was tending to increase rather than decrease.

As far as the White population is concerned, most of their discrimination is directed against the Native. The White worker fears for his job and his privileged position, the White capitalist fears for his profits, and both together they fear for their place in the country itself. In so far as the Indian encroaches upon their interests either as capitalists or as wage-workers, to that extent they are also hostile towards him.

Towards the Coloured population their attitude is rather different. Although they do to a considerable extent discriminate against the Coloured group, the attitude of the Whites is not nearly so hostile towards them as it is towards the two other groups, the Natives and Asiatics. In some industries, Coloured workers are allowed to join the White Trade Unions, and the general economic level of these particular workers is correspondingly higher than most of the others of their group. Segregation is not so marked against them as it is with Natives and Indians. Although, as is natural with all groups against which there is hostility, they tend to keep together, many of them do live in “White areas” without arousing violent antagonism. Unlike the United States, where a Negro attempting to “pass” as a White must do so with the utmost secrecy and caution, in South Africa “passing” is much easier and accepted with much more tolerance. In South Africa, for example, a situation can occur, and quite often does occur, where a “White” child of Coloured parents can go quite freely to a White school, whilst at the same time, his sister, darker in colour, is refused admittance. Such a situation could seldom happen in the Southern States of the USA.

The attitude of the Coloured people towards other groups is also a peculiar one. Some are apathetic; others consider themselves to be superior to the Natives and Indians. There are some who are beginning to show signs of complete independence from the Whites as well, from whom they once expected assistance and to whom they used to look for leadership and support. Their general attitude towards the Whites is now tending to harden, chiefly because of the more intensive discrimination they are beginning to experience at their hands.

As far as the Indian is concerned, as we have already seen, active discrimination against him is becoming more and more evident. His encroachments upon the preserves of the White man are being jealously watched. The various laws which have recently been passed have aroused particularly fierce resentment, and relations between the two groups have become notoriously strained. The Indian, although he is always more readily prepared to do business with the Natives, differs little in his general attitude towards them than does the White man.

As for the Natives, they have very little reason to show affection towards anybody, but it is difficult to find out what they do think at all. Maybe as a result of their grinding poverty, their constant struggle to keep alive, and their almost total lack of education, many of them do not think about it and accept everything as inevitable. But the Whites in South Africa should not draw too much satisfaction from this. Despite all the obstacles put in their way, the Natives are not slow to learn. Their tribal life has been for the most part broken up; they have been forced by one means or another into industry; they have become part of capitalism, and as such they learn quickly. At least 150,000 of them have already learned sufficient about capitalism to organise into trade unions, in spite of the opposition of the South African government. As industry develops, they will learn more, and want more, and then the same position will face the South African White worker as faces the American White worker at the present time. Then will the South African workers, White, Native, Coloured, and Indian be at their own cross-roads. What their decision will be we do not know nor do we intend to guess. What we say to the South African workers we have already said to the American workers. They must realise that their interests as

workers lie together; until they do so they will remain divided and weakened, wide open to the attacks and encroachments of the capitalist class. Much worse may result: the logical end of the road which the South African White worker is treading can only be bloody violence and destruction. No group can permanently hold down another many times more numerous than itself, and sooner or later the working class, particularly the White section will have to face up to the situation and make their decision.

### **Other parts of Africa**

Racial animosities similar to those in South Africa exist in other parts of the continent. They provide excellent examples to show the influence which economic conditions have upon the growth of race-prejudice. Where the Europeans have entered the territories as administrators and not as colonists and settlers, there prejudice does not amount to very much. Immediately there are economic interests of various groups involved, then strong prejudice almost certainly arises.

In British East Africa, for example, the economic basis of race-prejudice is plainly to see. Unlike South Africa, there is little industry, and almost the whole of the economy of the territory is based on the land. The Whites, who constitute *but a very small section of the population*, have occupied an area of land out of all proportion to their numbers, and the best land at that. The Natives are forced to gain a living as well as they can from their own meagre plots of poor land or are compelled to work as wage-labourers on the White farms. The problem is made even worse by the Indians and Arabs, who compete with both White and Native alike. The way in which race-prejudice is tied up with economic interest is obvious. The struggle to retain or obtain land is intense and the struggle reflects itself in open discrimination by the Whites who wish to keep their holdings, and resentment on the part of the Indians, Arabs, and Natives striving to acquire land.

On the other hand, in West Africa, the contrast is complete. This was the "White Man's Grave", where fortunately for the Natives, the climate is still unfavourable for White settlement. As a result, in West Africa the Whites are mainly to be found, and even then in very small numbers, as administrators and traders. The actual economic competition with the Natives is so small as to be negligible. A similar situation is also to be found in those French colonies where the emphasis is upon administration rather than settlement.

As a contrast, in French colonies like Algeria, Tunis and Morocco, race-prejudices run very high between the French settlers and the original Arab inhabitants. Here again, large numbers of French emigrants have settled on the land, displaced many of the Arabs, and then employed them as wage-workers. With the rise of Arab nationalism, the resentment of the Arabs has become more and more pronounced and relations between the groups have become more and more strained and tense. Thus once more the basis for race-prejudice is to be found in economic conditions, but this time complicated by yet another aspect of capitalism, the influence of rising nationalism.

Finally, race-prejudice is to be found in other parts of Africa such as Egypt and the Belgian territories, and also Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which closely follow the lines of South African racial discrimination by which they have been considerably influenced. About the only territories where there can be said to be almost no race-prejudice worth speaking about are the Portuguese possessions. Although their administration in Africa and other parts of the world has, in common with the other colonising powers, been at times very brutal in its treatment of the Natives, the Portuguese have seldom shown any signs of race-prejudice, freely marrying with Natives and accepting them and their mixed offspring as being on a par with themselves. Discrimination in Portuguese possessions takes on more of a straight class form without the complication of race. But the Portuguese colonies are the exception. The shadow of race-prejudice hangs heavily over the whole of the continent, and the shadow grows darker. As with race-hatred the world over, only the growth of Socialist understanding will banish it from Africa.

## Chapter IX : Race-prejudice in the West Indies

Most of the inhabitants of the West Indies are Negroes, descendants of the slaves taken from Africa to work on the sugar plantations, and mulattoes or "coloureds", the result of past crossings between White and Negro. Their numerical proportions vary from island to island. As far as the Whites are concerned, they are most numerous in Barbados, where they number about 7% of the total population; in other islands the proportion is much less than this. In Trinidad, Indians and Javanese constitute about one-third of the population; in British Guiana, about two-fifths; and in Dutch Guiana, about one-half. There are also some Chinese, Syrians, and Jews. Like South Africa, it is a racial melting-pot.

Apart from Trinidad, Cuba, and British Guiana, where industry has developed considerably, almost the whole of the West Indian economy is based on agriculture, which is mainly in the hands of big foreign operators, particularly British and American capitalists. For example, American companies in Cuba control three-fifths of the area under sugar-cane, employ three-fifths of its sugar workers, and operate one-third of its sugar factories. Almost 70% of the total land under sugar in Puerto Rico is in the hands of American absentee capitalists. The same occurs in the British possessions, only this time, of course, British capital is involved.

"... the sugar firm of Tate and Lyle, with a capital of approximately ten million pounds sterling, made a profit of over eleven million pounds in five years, and in 1930 declared a dividend of 13½ on ordinary capital" (*The Negro in the Caribbean*, Williams, p. 17).

Tobacco, coffee, cocoa, and bananas, are other crops grown on a large scale also for export.

The conditions of the workers on the plantations or in industry are pitiful in the extreme. In Puerto Rico, for example, a study revealed that the overwhelming majority of the workers in the coffee, fruit, and tobacco regions were earning less than £36 per year; three-fifths of them earned less than £24 per year. In the sugar plantations, the average wage worked out at less than £29 per year. In the British islands, the average wage of labourers is about one shilling a day, and even then they seldom work a full week. In industry the position is similar; the average wage for workers in the Trinidad oil fields, for example, is 3/- a day. To make matters worse, prices, particularly food prices, are high.

With these miserable wage-standards go malnutrition and disease. The report of a Commission in Barbados gives sufficient indication of conditions which are general in all the islands.

"The diet of the average worker can be classed at the best as a maintenance diet, and . . . There is no reason to doubt that many households live on the borderland of extreme poverty".

Malaria, hookworm, tuberculosis, and venereal disease wreak havoc with the population. In rural parts of Trinidad the percentage of the population suffering from hookworm alone varies from 79 to 98%; in certain areas of Barbados it reaches 69%, and in Puerto Rico, 83%. The infant mortality rate is appalling; compared with the figure for England and Wales of 58 per 1,000, in Trinidad the figure is 120, in Jamaica 137, in Antigua 171, in St. Kitts 187, and in Barbados 217.

Such, briefly, are the economic conditions which have, to a large extent, affected the development of race-prejudice in the West Indies.

As we have stated, there are three main racial groups to be found in the islands; the Whites, the Mulattoes, and the Negroes. Taken together, the Mulattoes and Negroes show all kinds of colour variations, ranging from the almost white to the darkest black. As a direct result of this, there has developed a whole series of the most complicated racial animosities. The "pure white", of course, tends to look down on everybody; the "almost white", in his turn, looks down on the "almost brown"; and so on right down to the darkest black who cannot look down on anybody. With these variations of skin-colour are linked occupation and class. For example, those workers who do not consider themselves workers, but who are workers none the less, i.e., the so-called "middle class", are mainly Mulattoes. As such they try in all kinds of ways to link themselves up with the Whites, and like the Whites, hold the Negro in contempt. If they marry, they try to marry individuals with light skins. Should they marry individuals whose skins are darker than their own, then they "lose caste". The whiter the skin of an individual, the higher his social status.

It is chiefly among the ranks of the “middle class” that this struggle for “social recognition” goes on. The mass of the working class is unaffected by it. Unfortunately for them, their skins are black. That fact is sufficient to “keep them in their place”.

This, in effect, is almost all that need be said of race-relations in the West Indies, but there is one more point that should be mentioned. It is the danger that may arise of the Negro workers of the West Indies reacting more against their exploiters as White men than as capitalists; that, in other words, they will allow the racial issue to assume greater importance than the straight working-class issue. So far, there have not been many signs of this happening, but it is always a danger. As we have seen, they are to a great extent exploited not by capitalists with the same colour skin as their own, but by White capitalists who back up their exploitation with all the power of the law and, in the last resort, with armed force. Such a situation can easily lead workers to forget the sound working-class issue of worker against capitalist, and lead them into a struggle of Negro against White, so seeking the solution to their problems in nationalism and not in Socialism. Should they take this former course, they will find, like the Indian workers, that it makes no fundamental difference to their position whether their exploiters are White, Black, or Brown; they are exploited just the same.

### **Conclusion**

In these last three chapters we have dealt in some detail with race-prejudice in the United States, the African continent, and the West Indies. In addition, we have dealt at fair length with the problem of anti-Semitism which is prevalent in many countries of the world. As far as race-prejudice in other parts of the world is concerned, in South America, India, Mexico, to name but three for example, questions of space must unfortunately prevent us from dealing with them. Apart, however, from sketching in the background, which, of course, differs to some degree in every country, there is really little else to say that is of general importance. The ground has to a large extent been covered by what has already been said.

One thing, perhaps, we ought to say, which will sufficiently cover the point. Race-prejudice is not confined to a few countries. What we have said about the United States, Africa, and the West Indies, applies broadly to every other country in the world—there is no country in which race-prejudice does not exist in some form or another. It is a problem which confronts the working-class of all countries—it is a world problem.

Its dangers and its solution will be the subject of our next and last chapter.

## Chapter X : Race-prejudice: its dangers and its solution

The number of books and pamphlets that have been written on the subject of race-prejudice must run into thousands, and there can be no doubt that, viewing the matter solely from the scientific and logical standpoint, all these millions of words have been built up into an unanswerable case against the racist, whether that racist be a German professor trying to prove the superiority of an "Aryan race" or an ordinary member of the working-class leading off against the Jews. As far as this aspect is concerned, the critics' case is unassailable. When, however, it comes to putting forward the solution to the problem, they fail miserably. Many of them are openly pessimistic about finding a solution at all; others think that only a "change of heart" will solve the question; others again see quite clearly the effect of economic conditions upon the growth of racial animosities, but go no further than to suggest reforms which they hope will provide the solution. Few of them attempt to look outside the present system of society; few of them even perceive the influence of a *society* at work. None of them, to our knowledge, sees that the only solution to race-prejudice is the abolition of the conditions which give rise to it; none of them realises that the only solution is *the complete abolition of one system, Capitalism, and its replacement by another system, Socialism.*

The root cause of modern race-prejudice is the capitalist system of Society, a society of competition and struggle; struggle between capitalist and worker; struggle between capitalist and capitalist; struggle between worker and worker. For the working-class, who constitute the overwhelming majority of its population, it is a society of poverty and insecurity; to most of them it offers not the slightest chance of escape from a lifetime of constant, heart-breaking effort to earn a living. For the working-class, it is a society which breeds war and strife, in which their masters, on whose behalf they fight, use every device to stimulate antagonism and hatred between them. From the cradle to the grave, they are subjected to a mass of propaganda which deadens their minds, works on their prejudices, and endeavours by every means possible to turn their thoughts away from the real cause of their troubles. They are the tools of political leaders and demagogues who make them promises which they do not keep. Disappointed, they exchange one set of political leaders for another, whose promises are no more fulfilled than the promises of those before them. They become disillusioned, bitter, and cynical; fair game for dictators and "strong men" who promise to lead them to a "promised land", but instead lead them into greater disasters and misfortunes. All the time they are experiencing unemployment, poverty, insecurity, competition for jobs, struggles to "rise up the ladder". They seek to escape from the harsh world of reality in dreams and games of make-believe, in football pools and cinemas, but only for brief moments, for capitalism soon brings them back to things as they are, and not as they would wish them to be. They still have to contend with poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and war. For the working-class, Capitalism is a society of mental, social and economic frustration; as such it breeds race-prejudice as a swamp breeds pestilence.

It can breed it in many ways. There are its direct economic effects, when worker competes against worker to obtain a job, or retain it against others who would take it away. Such an effect operates, as we have seen, in the United States or in South Africa when White workers seek to exclude Negro workers from the skilled occupations, hoping as a consequence to lessen the competition. Or it may be that no such "accepted" discrimination exists, and workers irrespective of race or nationality, all compete on "equal terms" for employment. Then prejudice still arises, as it did, for example, before the War, when Welsh workers came to London looking for work, or when Irishmen come to this country with the same object. It may be in New York during bad times, when Jewish workers compete with others for jobs and anti-Semitism becomes more pronounced, or when Mexicans compete with Negroes in the Southern States, or when the "poor whites" compete with Natives in South Africa.

It may make its efforts felt between a ruling-class of one "race" and an exploited class of another, as, for example, in Kenya and the other territories of British East Africa, where a dominant White group acquires large tracts of land at the expense of the Natives and exploits them for profit, at the same time causing a "land problem" giving to bitter resentment and hostility. Or like the West Indies, where White absentee capitalists exploit Negro workers and condemn them to abject poverty and degradation. It would surprise nobody if, as a result, the tension which now exists *between worker and capitalist* should flare up into a conflict between White man and Negro.

Then again, there is no doubt that the general effects of the system upon the working-class help to foment race antagonism. What, for example, is the main reason for the growth of anti-Semitism in this and other countries but the resentment of the workers against capitalism being deflected against the

Jews? That, in other words, the Jews are the scapegoats for capitalism? The workers see rich Jews, and imagine that, once rid of them, things will be all right, yet the facts are that if the Jews were all taken off the earth tomorrow, the conditions of the working-class would not change; the working-class would still be propertyless and exploited.

We have not finished yet. We have still to mention the conflicts of interests of rival capitalist national groups and the tensions generated by their intrigues and suspicions which periodically flare up into war. Then each group tries to out-do the other in playing upon the nationalistic feelings of its working-class, inspiring them with patriotic sentiment, and filling them with racial pride, at the same time feverishly fanning the flames of bitterness and hatred between them. The aftermath of each bloody conflagration, in which the victorious ruling-groups squabble over the spoils like vultures over a carcass, only serves to heighten the animosity and suspicion.

At the same time, other national groups are appearing on the scene and rising to power, helping themselves to achieve this by fostering the ideas of national and racial unity. We can see, for example, the “arrival” of India, the rising tide of Arab nationalism, the efforts of ruling groups in Burma, Indo-China, even Madagascar, to throw off the yoke of foreign capitalism. All these ruling-groups, in their efforts to achieve the right to exploit their own wage-slaves, have used, and are using, the glib and easy phraseology of “nation”, “blood”, and “race”.

We would not be so unscientific as to maintain that only the working-class are prey to race-prejudice and that the capitalist-class, *as a whole*, just cynically make use of race-prejudice to jog their workers along the road they wish them to travel. Such is certainly not the case. It is none of our business to teach the capitalist class how to run their own system, but there is no doubt that many aspects of race and race-prejudice react harmfully upon the interests of the capitalist class themselves, in South Africa, to quote just one example, where the policy of restricting Natives to only unskilled occupations is beginning to have a restrictive influence upon the growth of South African industry. But there is equally no doubt that the capitalist class do frequently and quite cynically use race for their own ends. They use it to keep the working-class divided among themselves and we have already given examples of this in the United States. In the West Indies they do the same. The success of the Nazis in Germany with their anti-semitic propaganda is so well-known as to need no further stressing. What could be more bare-faced than this:

“My Jews are a valuable hostage given to me by the democracies. Anti-Semitic propaganda in all countries is an indispensable medium for the extension of my political campaign. You will see how little time we shall need in order to upset the ideas and criteria of the whole world—simply and purely by attacking Judaism. It is without doubt the most powerful weapon in my political arsenal” (Hitler in a conversation with Hermann Rauschning).

Thus, in all these many ways, does Capitalism create the basic conditions for the easy growth of race-prejudice. To get rid of race-prejudice, therefore, there is only one method, to get rid of its cause, Capitalism. *There is no other way.* In its place will arise Socialism, where the causes of race-prejudice will no longer exist; a society in which the whole of the working-class will co-operate in producing all the things required by society; where each worker, irrespective of differences of race, nationality, or colour, will contribute what he is able to society, and take from it what he needs. A society in which production of the means of life will not be determined by the needs of profit, but by the needs of mankind; a society in which there will be enough for everybody; where economic competition between human beings will cease to exist; where privilege will be abolished; and where workers, irrespective of race, will live in harmony together.

But there is more to say than this; something we have already said but which will stand being said again. Even before the advent of Socialism finally puts an end to race-prejudice once and for all, the spread of Socialist ideas will push race-prejudice more and more into the background. We repeat:

*To the extent that Socialist ideas permeate the minds of the working-class, wherever they may be, to the extent that workers realise that their interests are in common, irrespective of race, and opposed to the interests of the capitalist class, irrespective of their race, to that extent will they become proof against race-prejudice and will work together for the establishment of Socialism which will end, once and for all, the “problem” of race-prejudice.* In the words of our Declaration of Principles:



“ . . . THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS WILL INVOLVE THE EMANCIPATION OF ALL MANKIND WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE OR SEX.”