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Discussions happen at **The Landing Strip**, which is located at 2614 30th Ave S.

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THE INVENTION OF THE WHITE RACE

Theodore W. Allen

Summary of Volume One: Racial Oppression and Social Control

RACE TREASON DISCUSSION GROUP 2023

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

I
On the misleading concept of "race"

The concept of "race," in the scientific sense of particular group-identifying characteristics resulting from aeons of inbreeding in isolation, has nothing to do with "race relations," whatever that term may be taken to mean, in the four thousand years of recorded human history; certainly not in the nano-second of evolutionary time represented by the four hundred years since the founding of Jamestown in 1607. We have the assurance of eminent authorities in the fields of physical anthropology, genetics and biology, such as Stanley M. Garn and Theodosius Dobzhansky, that the study of evolution has nothing but disclaimers to contribute to the understanding of "racism" as a historical phenomenon; as Dobzhansky puts it: "The mighty vision of human equality belongs to the realm of ethics and politics, not to that of biology." With greater particularity, Garn writes that Race "has nothing to do with racism, which is simply the attempt to deny some people deserved opportunities simply because of their origin, or to accord other people certain undeserved opportunities only because of their origin."

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

When, therefore, a group of human beings from "multiracial" (the anthropologists' term) Europe goes to North American or South Africa, and there, by constitutional fiat, incorporates itself as the "white race," that is no part of genetic evolution. It is, rather, a political act: the invention of "the white race." Thus it lies within the proper sphere of social scientists, and is an appropriate objective for alteration by social activists.

II
On "race as a social construct"

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

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

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

The logic of "race as a social construct" must be tightened and the focus sharpened. Just as it is unhelpful, to say the least, to euphemize racial slavery

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

The Attorney-General made the following categoric objection:

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

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

Governor William Gooch to whom the question was ultimately referred declared that the Virginia Assembly had decided upon this curtailment of the franchise in order "to fix a perpetual Brand upon Free Negros & Mulattos...." Surely that was no "unthinking decision"! Rather, it was a deliberate act by the plantation bourgeoisie; it proceeded from a conscious decision in the process of establishing a system of racial oppression, even though it meant repealing an electoral principle that had existed in Virginia for more than century.

Find this text online for citations which have been ommitted from this pamphlet.

in continental Anglo-America as "the Peculiar Institution," instead of identifying the "white race," itself, as the truly peculiar institution governing the life of the country after emancipation as it did in slavery times; just as it is not "race" in general, that must be understood, but the "white race," in particular; so the "white race" must be understood, not simply as a social construct, but as a *ruling class social control formation*.

III
Racial oppression defined, without reference to "phenotype"

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

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

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

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

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

with each other and with class oppression. Of these categories, my present remarks will be directed to racial oppression.

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

A comparative study of Anglo-Norman rule and"Protestant Ascendancy" in Ireland, and "white supremacy" in continental Anglo-America (in both its colonial and regenerate United States forms) demonstrates that racial oppression is not dependent upon differences of "phenotype," i. e., of physical appearance of the oppressor and the oppressed.

The African-Americans

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

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

tion" that Governor Notley had warned them of, in order to "build their proceedings" on a new one, a process that historian John C. Rainbolt, titled "The Alteration in the Relationship between Leadership and Constituents in Virginia."

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

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

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

about eighty Negroes and twenty English which would not deliver their Armes....

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

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

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

In January 1677, as Bacon's Rebellion was ending in Virginia, Maryland Governor Notley, who had been anxiously watching events in the neighboring province, sounded a warning. "There must be an alteration though not of the Government yet in the Government" in Virginia, to a manner of rule that would "agree with the common people." Otherwise, in a short while, he said, under another audacious leader, "the Commons of Virginia would Emmire themselves as deep in Rebellion as ever they did in Bacon's time." He repeated the warning four months later:

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

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

Virginia's mystic transition from the era of "the volatile society" of the seventeenth century to "the Golden Age of the Chesapeake" in the middle quarters of the eighteenth century is a much studied phenomenon. It was during that period that the ruling plantocracy replaced "the ould founda-

can-American, however cultured and independent in means.

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

The American Indians

A delegation of the Cherokee Nation went to Washington in 1831, to appeal, first to the Supreme Court, and then to President Andrew Jackson, to halt the treaty-breaking "Indian Removal" policy, designed to drive them from their ancestral homes. The delegation included men who were not only chosen chiefs of their tribe, but who had succeeded in farming and commerce to become "Cherokee planter-merchants." Their appeals were rebuffed; President Jackson was well pleased with the decision of the Supreme Court denying the Cherokees legitimacy as an independent tribal entity in relation to the United States.

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

> An Indian...is frowned upon by the meanest peasant, and the scum of the earth are considered sacred in comparison to the son of nature. If an Indian is educated in the sciences, has a good knowledge of the classics, astronomy, mathematics moral and natural philosophy, and his conduct equally modest and polite, yet he is an Indian, and the most

stupid and illiterate white man will disdain and triumph over this worthy individual. It is disgusting to enter the house of a white man and be stared at full face in inquisitive ignorance....

The Irish

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

In 1277, high Irish churchmen, having secured support among powerful tribal chieftains, submitted a petition to English King Edward I, offering to pay him 8,000 marks in gold over a five-year period for the general enfranchisement of free Irishmen under English law. The king was not himself unwilling to make this grant of English law. But he thought he ought to get more money for it, and so the Irish three years later raised the offer to 10,000 marks.

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

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

bourgeoisie. When Bacon's forces besieged, captured, and burned the colonial capital city of Jamestown and sent Governor Berkeley, scurrying into exile across Chesapeake Bay, the rebel army was composed mainly of European-American and African-American bond-laborers and freedmen recently "out of their time."

The rebels lost the initiative, however, when their attempt to capture a naval force for themselves miscarried. The death in October of Nathaniel Bacon, the magnetic chief leader of the rebellion was a serious blow, but not necessarily a fatal one. The eleven hundred English troops that were sent to aid the Governor's cause did not arrive in Virginia until the shooting was over, but armed English merchantmen were employed with effect on the rivers to harry the rebels. The captain of one of these ships was Thomas Grantham, whose policy of unabashed deception, and exploitation of an old connection with Bacon's successor, a general, played a decisive role in bringing about the final defeat of the rebels in January 1677.

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

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

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

> I there met about four hundred English and Negroes in Arms who were much dissatisfied at the Surrender of the Point, saying I had betrayed them, and thereupon some were for shooting me and others were for cutting me in peeces: I told them I would willingly surrender myselfe to them, till they were satisfied from His Majestie, and did engage to the Negroes and Servants, that they were all pardoned and freed from their Slavery: And with faire promises and Rundletts of Brandy, I pacified them, giving them severall Noates under my hand that what I did was by the order of his Majestie and the Governor.... Most of them I persuaded to goe to their Homes, which accordingnly they did, except

– Land patent granted to Benjamin Dole, "Negro," 300 acres in Surry County for the importation of six persons.

It has been pointed out that headrights could be sold by the original importers to other persons, and that such a patent might therefore be granted to persons other than the original owners of the bond-laborers. There is no way of knowing whether the Johnsons and Benjamin Dole ever were in possesion of the bond-laborers whose headrights they exercised, or whether they bought the headright from other persons. In any case, the point being made here is not affected. There was no suggestion that African-Americans were barred from the privilege of importing bond-laborers prior to 1670. Indeed, the enactment of such a ban in 1670, clearly implied that it was an accepted practice prior to that time.

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

IX
Rebellion

Bacon's Rebellion demonstrated beyond question the lack of a sufficient intermediate stratum to stand between the ruling plantation elite and the mass of the European-American and African-American laboring people, free and bond. It began in April 1676 as a difference between the elite and the sub-elite planters over "Indian policy," but by September it had become a civil war against the social order established by the land-engrossing plantation

denied their proper portion of inheritance; and, 4) Irish men were denied the right to bequeath property.

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

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

IV
Compelling parallels

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

If, from the beginning of the eighteenth century in Anglo-America, the term "negro" meant slave, except when explicitly modified by the word "free," so, under English (Anglo-Norman) thirteenth-century law, the term "hibernicus," Latin for "Irishman," was the legal term for "unfree." If under Anglo-American slavery , "the rape of a female slave was not a crime, but a mere trespass on the master's property," so, in 1278, two Anglo-Normans, brought into court and charged with raping Margaret O'Rorke were found not guilty because "the said Margaret is an Irishwoman." If a law enacted in Virginia in 1723, provided that, "manslaughter of a slave is not punishable," so under Anglo-Norman law it sufficed for acquittal to show that the victim in a slaying was Irish. Anglo-Norman priests granted absolution on the grounds that it was "no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog or any other brute." If African-Americans were obliged to guard closely any document they might have attesting their freedom, so, in Ireland at the beginning of the fourteenth century, letters patent, attesting to a person's Englishness, were cherished by those who might fall under suspicion of trying to "pass." If the Georgia Supreme Court, ruled in 1851 that "the killing of a negro"

was not a felony, but upheld an award of damages to the owner of an African-American bond-laborer murdered by another "white" man, so, in 1310 an English court in Ireland freed Robert Walsh, an Anglo-Norman charged with killing John Mac Gilmore, because the victim was "a mere Irishman and not of free blood," it being stipulated that "when the master of the said John shall ask damages for the slaying, he [Walsh] will be ready to answer him as the law may require." If in 1884 the United States Supreme Court, citing much precedent authority, including the Dred Scott decision, declared that Indians were legally like immigrants, and therefore not citizens except by process of individual naturalization; so, for four centuries, until 1613, the Irish were regarded by English law as foreigners in their own land. If the testimony of even free African-Americans was disallowed as uncreditable; so, in Anglo-Norman Ireland, native Irish of the free classes were deprived of legal defense against English abuse because they were not "admitted to English law," and hence had no rights which an Englishman was bound to respect.

V
Protestant Ascendancy and white supremacy

In 1792, Edmund Burke pointed out the peculiar nature of the system of Protestant Ascendancy in terms that are equally applicable to white supremacy. Burke compared various forms of the normal principles of social hierarchy characteristic of class societies, as exampled by the Venetian oligarchy, on the one hand, and the British constitutional combination of aristocracy and democracy on the other. In the former, the members of the subject population are excluded from all participation in "the State." But they are "indemnified" by the untrammeled freedom to find places in the "subordinate employments," according to their individual competitiveness and their mutual accommodation. "The nobles" in such a society, said Burke, "have the monopoly of honor, the plebeians a monopoly of all the means of acquiring wealth." The British state, on the other hand, has a plebeian component; yet the aristocrats and plebeians do not compete with each another, and social rank among the non-aristocrats is arranged, again, by the normal process of free competition. But, he declared, "A plebeian aristocracy is a monster," and such was the system of Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. There, he said, "Roman Catholics were obliged to submit to [Protestant] plebeians like themselves, and many of them tradesmen, servants, and otherwise inferior to some

vived by less than a year.

Landholding by African-Americans in the seventeenth century was significant, both for the extent of it, and because much of it, possibly the greater portion, was secured by headright. This particular fact establishes perhaps more forcefully than any other circumstance the normal social status accorded to African-Americans, a status that was practically as well as theoretically incompatible with a system of racial oppression. For the reader coming for the first time to the raw evidence in the Virginia Land Patent Books, or to the abstracts of them done by Nell Nugent, or to the digested accounts presented by historians of our own post-Montgomery boycott era—for such first readers, the stories carry a stunning impact. Thanks particularly to the brief, but penetrating, emphasis on the subject by Lerone Bennett and to the special studies made by Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Innes, the story of the Anthony Johnson family is readily available. Another African-American in this category, Benjamin Dole of Surry County, may yet find biographers. It is especially noteworthy that the persons for whose importation these particular patents were granted were mainly, if not all, bond-laborers brought from Europe.

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

– Land patent granted to Anthony Johnson, on 250 acres for transport of 5 persons: Tho Benrose, Peter Bughby, Antho: Cripps, John Gessorol[?], Richard Johnson.

– Patent granted to John Johnson, son of Anthony Johnson, on 550 acres, on Great Nassawattocks Creek, adjacent to land granted to Anthony Johnson, for the transportation of eleven persons: John Edwards, Wm Routh, Thos. Yowell, Fran. Maland, Wm Price, John Owe, Dorothy Reely, Rich Hamstead, Law[rence] Barnes.

– Patent on 100 acres bounded by lands owned by Anthony, Richard's father, and by brother John Johnson, granted by Governor Richard Bennett to Richard Johnson, "Negro," for the transportation of two bond-laborers: William Ames and William Vincent.

In the colonial Chesapeake in the seventeenth century, marriage might be a significant factor for social mobility. The prevailing high death rate and the high sex ratio resulted in a relative frequency of remarriages of widows the records. Whatever a widow might own became generally the property of the new husband. Phillip Mongum, though only recently free, had begun an ascent in the social scale, eventually to becoming a relatively prosperous tenant farmer and livestock dealer. In 1672, he was a partner of two European-Americans in a joint lease of a plantation of three hundred acres. When Mary Morris, a widow with children, and Phillip Mongum were contemplating marriage early in 1651, they entered into a prenuptial agreement regarding the property she then owned. Mongum agreed in writing that her property was not to be sold by him, but to remain the joint heritage of her and the children from her previous marriage(s): "one Cowe with a calfe by her side & all her increase that shall issue ever after of the said Cowe or calfe[,] moreover Towe featherbeds & what belongs unto them, one Iron Pott, one Kettle, one fryeing pan & towe gunnes & three breeding sowes with their increase." Mongum signed the agreement and bound himself to see to its faithful performance.

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

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

of them...exercising upon them, daily and hourly, an insulting and vexatious 'superiority.'"

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

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

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

IV
"There were no white people there."

Some scholars concerned with the problem of the origin of racial slavery have emphasized that the status of the African-Americans vis-a-vis European-Americans in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake can not be fully determined because of a deficiency in the records for the early decades. Others, by reference to Virginia statutes, assert that the differentiation of the status of African-Americans and European-Americans can be determined as beginning only about 1660. I would like to suggest that the matter can and ought to be resolved by recognizing that the record taken as a whole makes apparent that the relative social status of African-Americans and European-Americans at that time can be determined to have been *indeterminate*, because it was being *fought out* in our society's first living cell, in the context of the great social stresses of high mortality, the monocultural economy, impoverishment, an extremely high sex ratio, all of which ills were based on or derived from the abnormal system of chattel bond-servitude.

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

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

English ship captain Richard Jobson made a trading voyage to Africa in 1620-21, but he refused to engage in trafficking in human beings, because, he said, the English "were a people who did not deal in any such commodities, neither did we buy or sell one another or any that had our own shapes." When the local dealer insisted that it was the custom there so sell Africans "to white men," Jobson answered "they [that is "white men"] were another kinde of people from us...." George Fox, founder of the Quaker religion, in 1671 addressed some members of a Barbados congregation as "you that are called white." Another seventeenth-century commentator, Morgan Godwyn, found it necessary to explain to the English at home that, in Barbados, "white" was "the general name for Europeans." Even a century later, a historian writing in Jamaica for readers in England, felt impelled to supply

for his wages for his service so long as he remayneth with her." In October Brase was assigned to Governor Francis Wyatt, as a "servant"; no particulars are recorded as to his terms of employment with his new employer. Although there is no record of the terms of this assignment, there is no suggestion that, "being a Negro," he was to be a lifetime bond-laborer.

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

The Indian king Debeada of the Mussaugs gave to Jone, daughter of Anthony Johnson, 100 acres of land on the South side of Pungoteague Creek on 27 September 1657. In 1657 Emannuell Cambow, "Negro," was granted ownership of fifty acres of land in James City County, part of a tract that had been escheated from the former grantee. In 1669, Robert Jones (or Johns), a York County tailor, acting with agreement of his wife Marah, "for divers good causes and considerations him thereunto moveing...bargained & sold unto John Harris Negro all the estate rite [right] title & Inheritance...in fiftie Acres of Land...in New Kent County." A series of land transactions—lease, sub-lease, and re-lease—were conducted by Emanuell Rodriggus with three separate individuals over a ten-year period, 1662–1672.

Principles of English common law were also an obstacle to the imposition of lifetime hereditary bond-servitude. Those principles were rooted in the English Parliament's historic retreat from slavery in England, following Ket's Rebellion in 1549 that prayed "that all bondmen be may be made free, for God hath made all free with his precious bloodshedding" It was wrong, said those rebels, "to have any Christen man bound to another."

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

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

VIII
African-Americans in the normal class status

Most significant are the seventeenth-century Virginia court records of legal recognition of normal social standing and mobility for African-Americans *that was and is absolutely inconsistent with a system of racial oppression*. Illustrative cases are found most frequently, though not exclusively, in the Northampton and Accomack county records. In 1624, the Virginia Colony Court had occasion to adjudicate an admiralty-type case, in the routine course of which the Court considered the testimony of John Phillip, a mariner, identified as "a negro Christened in England 12 yeares since...." In a separate instance, a Negro named Brase and two companions, a Frenchman and a "Portugall," were brought of their own volition to Jamestown on 11 July 1625. Two months later, Brase was assigned to work for "Lady Yardley," wife of the Governor, for forty pounds of good merchantable tobacco "monthly

a like parenthetical clarification: "...white people (as they are called here)." Winthrop D. Jordan, author of *White Over Black* found that, "After about 1680, taking the colonies as a whole, a new term appeared—*white*." During my own study of page after page of Virginia county records, reel after reel of microfilm prepared by the Virginia Colonial Records Project, and other seventeenth-century sources, I have found no instance of the official use of the word "white" as a token of social status before its appearance in a Virginia law passed in 1691, referring to "English or other white women." When considered in the context of events, these linguistic details are seen to reflect the reality of social relations as they existed in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake.

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

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

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

That same month, the Virginia Colony Council and General Court commissioned a Charles City County posse to pursue "certain runaway Negroes." The provision that the cost was to be shared by all the counties from which they had run away, suggests that the phenomenon was extensive. Since no further record seems to exist regarding this particular undertaking, per-

haps these workers avoided recapture. As if encouraged by such a possibility, seven bond-laborers—Andrew Noxe, Richard Hill, Richard Cooks, Christopher Miller, Peter Wilcocke (presumably English); an African-American, Emanuel; and John Williams ("a Dutchman")—set off one Saturday night a month later in a stolen boat, with arms, powder and shot. They, however, were taken up before they could reach open water.

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

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

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

him with the customary allowance of "Corn and Clothes, and to pay Moore 700 pounds of tobacco for his overtime.

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

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

Superstructural factors

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

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

In March 1656, bond-laborer Dego took his owner, Minor Doodes, to Lancaster County court. Apparently, Doodes was intending to leave the area and wanted to sell Dego as a lifetime bond-laborer. A paper was presented signed by Doodes providing that if he sold Dego, it was to be for nor more than ten years.

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

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

small advantage the Enemy main gained upon us, would revolt to them in hopes of bettering their Condicon.

VI
Social status: a matter in contention

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

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

Professor Jordan directs particular attention to this decree, and cites it as evidence for his belief that the enslavement of Negroes was the result of an "unthinking decision," arising out of a prejudice against Negroes. It may be true that the Court in this case was motivated by such feelings. Other inferences are possible, however. Under English common law Christians could not be enslaved by Christians; presumably, Scots and Dutchmen were Christians; but Africans were not. As a practical matter, England's relations with Scotland and Holland were critical to English interests, so that there might well have been a reluctance to offend those countries to whom English concerns were in hostage, whereas no such complication was likely to arise from imposing lifetime bondage on an African, or African-American. The Court members in all probability were aware of the project under way to establish an English plantation colony on Providence Island, using African lifetime bond-laborers; and they surely knew that some Africans were already being exploited elsewhere in the Americas on the same terms. They might have been influenced by such examples to pursue the same purpose in Virginia. They were also aware that the African-American bond-laborers arriving in Virginia from the West Indies (or Brazil via Dutch colonies to the north of Maryland did not come with English-style, term-limiting indentures. The members of General Court may thus have felt encouraged to impose on John

Punch the ultimate term, lifetime, in such cases. Whether the decision in this instance was a "thinking" or an "unthinking" one, the Court by citing John Punch's "being a negro" in justification of his life sentence, was resorting to mere bench law, devoid of reference to English or Virginia precedent. What the record of this case does show, as far as the ideas in people's heads are concerned, is a disposition on the part of some, at least, of the plantation bourgeoisie to reduce African-Americans to lifetime servitude.

As the proportion of bond-laborers who were surviving their terms increased, some employers began to see an appeal in extending the bond-laborers' terms generally. The "custom of the country" for English bond-laborers in Virginia, which had been set at four years in 1658, was increased to five in 1662. With the flourishing of the Irish slave trade in the wake of the Cromwellian conquest, laws were enacted to make Irish bond-laborers, and, after 1658, "all aliens" in that status, serve six years. That provision was eliminated, however, by the post-Cromwell law of 1660, in the interest of "peopling the country."

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

The records show that some planter-employers were in general agreement with the repressive spirit of the General Court order regarding John Punch. A 1661 law specifying punishment for runaway bond-laborers referred to "any negroes who are incapable of makeing satisfaction by addition of time." In 1668, free African-American women were declared tithable on the explicit grounds that "though permitted to enjoy their freedome…[they]

ought not in all respects be admitted to a full fruition of the exemptions and immunities of the English." It was this law, being directed explicitly at free African-Americans, that most explicitly anticipated racial oppression. Another law passed in October 1669, granted immunity to employers who, in the course of "correcting" killed their Negro or Indian lifetime bond-laborers, on the grounds that it would not be reasonable that an owner would destroy his own property with malice aforethought. Three years later similar immunity was granted to any person who killed "any negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life," who was sought by hue and cry as a runaway. Private sale contracts and last wills and testaments tended to increase the number of African-Americans bound for life. Others incorporated the ominous phrase "and her increase," implying that the bondage was not only lifelong, but hereditary.

The countervailing tendency

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

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

One of most common ways by which African-Americans resisted