

# Cold War Anticommunism and the Defence of White Supremacy in the Southern United States.

Richard Seymour.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
in the Department of Sociology,  
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## **INTRODUCTION: “Are these your children?”**

### **Thesis**

The thesis of this research is that anticomunism in the Cold War was centrally a hegemonic project which, through defining a largely conservative and exclusionary form of Americanism, secured, for most of the period covered, the unity of a broad ‘historical bloc’ including fractions of capital with diverse modalities of surplus extraction, trade unions and state apparatuses. In so doing, it cemented the role of the Jim Crow South within American nationhood, provided its dominant classes with techniques of violence and consent through which to suppresses challenges to segregation, and supplied an invaluable element of a complex ideological nexus in which Southern white supremacy could be understood and valued. The breakdown of the anticomunist consensus exposed great strategic and ideological fractures over the necessity and merits of Jim Crow, both within the dominant and dominated classes, and facilitated its overthrow.



(Photo taken at Candler Park, Atlanta, Ga.)

## Are these your children?

**FACTS:** Are you identified with the Communist Party or connected with Martin Luther King or his organization (the Southern Christian Leadership Conference)?

House Speaker, the Negro leader of Savannah, Ga., has been nominated under the leadership of the Communist party. Dr. W. G. Anderson Negro leader of Albany, Ga., signed the petition to abolish the House of American Activist Committee. This petition carried 10,000 signatures for the Communist benefit Fund, which is not.

These three Negroes have been operating within the state of Georgia. Yet our Governor and Lieutenant Governor refuse to investigate their actions. WHY?

Due to the continuous acts of violence by the Negro leaders, he advised the white community to organize for their own defense.

**Fish Fry, Saturday, July 20, 1963, 6 p.m. Building Fund, Oakwood City, 1000 Peachtree St. N.E. 5th Floor, Dr. W.**

**Atlanta, Georgia, 1000 Peachtree St. N.E. 5th Floor, Dr. W.**

**Cross Burning Public Speaking, Saturday, July 20, 1963, 6 p.m. 1000 Peachtree St. N.E. 5th Floor, Dr. W.**

**Cross Burning Public Speaking, Saturday, July 20, 1963, 6 p.m. 1000 Peachtree St. N.E. 5th Floor, Dr. W.**

**Property and buildings needed for public speaking.**

**Over 8,000 attended this organization's meeting at Savannah, Georgia, June 29, 1963.**

UNITED KLANS OF AMERICA, INC.  
KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN  
P. O. Box 19751, Atlanta, Ga.

Figure 1: 'Are These Your Children?' United Klans of America advertisement.

### **“Are these your children?”**

Did the Cold War free African Americans, or did it prolong their oppression? Put another way, did the Cold War imperative of resisting communism both domestically and internationally thwart the achievement of critical mass in the civil rights struggle, or did it pressure the United States government to embark, however reluctantly, on the major decisions that would lead to desegregation? Did the fear of communism limit the coalition-building potential of the civil rights movement, or did anticommunism provide the civil rights movement with an acceptable patriotic discourse within which they could articulate their democratic demands? Did it do more to unify and expand the segregationist bloc, or did it divide it and ruin its fortunes? (On this debate, see Dudziak, 2002; Hall, 2005; Marable, 2007; Arnesen, 2012; Berg, 2007)

One way of addressing these questions is to ask why segregationists leaned as much as they did on anticommunist discourses and techniques. Consider the advertisement illustrated above. Particularly sinister even by the standards of the Ku Klux Klan, the flyer was published in Georgia, 1963, and featured an image of a biracial crowd of children playing in a park. The headline asked, “Are these your children?” The text, rather than making any specific comment regarding the children, left the image and headline to speak for itself, polysemically. Instead, it stated a number of “facts” concerning recent civil unrest and the connection between “the Communist Party” and “Martin Luther King’s organisation”. Finally, it invited members of the public to a “Fish Fry” and two “Cross-Burning Public Speaking”

events. (Southern Regional Council, 1983). The meaning was clear: communist subversion was responsible for the civil rights movement and for the scenes of ‘race-mixing’ depicted in the photograph. And the Klan was the necessary organ of white solidarity and civil countersubversion, which task undoubtedly included brutally punishing infringements on the South’s racial order.

Such claims of communist instigation behind the civil rights movement were common currency on the segregationist Right. The American Nazi Party published similar claims at greater length in its ‘Rockwell Report’. The John Birch Society went further and asserted that, not only was the civil rights movement instigated by communists, but the US as a whole was “60-80%” under Communist domination. Among more mainstream Southern conservatives, the same doctrine was espoused by the White Citizens’ Council, a mass social movement in the leadership of resistance to desegregation. The issue of segregation was merely, as an article in their publication, *Citizens*, argued, “the leading edge of the Communist attack on America”. In Little Rock, Arkansas, at the height of the ‘Massive Resistance’ campaign, hundreds of white demonstrators gathered outside the state capitol to protest against the integration of Central High School which had been enforced by 101st Airborne two years previously. Their placards bore the legends: “Race Mixing is Communism” and “Stop the Race-Mixing March of the Antichrist”. (Woods, 2004: 145-6; Clark, 1976: 107; Bledsoe, 1959) Southern pro-segregationists were capable of speaking and acting in a complex variety of registers, far from unified on almost anything except their racism. Yet, insofar as there was a consensus upon anything in

Southern politics, whites at least overwhelmingly agreed on this point: that communism was behind the civil rights movement.

Of course, such discourse was not purely the product and provenance of Southern segregationists or their far right allies. Its primary materials were supplied in bulk by agencies of the American federal government, notably the FBI, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC), and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS). These institutions did not merely provide the information upon which charges of communist subversion were based. They legitimised the allegations made by Southern segregationists by reproducing them, justified the repressive measures deemed necessary by Southern states in the defence of segregation, and provided a model for local investigative bodies. (See Woods, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Clark, 1976) Indeed, as Schrecker (2002) points out, the state is an essential element of any successful variant of the anticommunist network in the United States. Thus, it seems that there was an articulation between the national state, Southern state apparatuses and elements of civil society in the anticommunist reaction against civil rights.

There are a number of possible ways of understanding why this counter-civil rights alliance emerged as it did, bound at the nexus of anticommunism. It might be argued that the establishment of an anticommunist consensus, promulgated through civil society organisations, and the development of a series of apparatuses to police that consensus, provided segregationists with a one-off historical opportunity to

conserve the racial order. In this view, their anticomunism was *strategic*. Or, more crudely, a ruse or decoy. Another argument might be that there was an elective affinity between an ideology which claims to defend the American political-economic framework and safeguard it against communist subversion, and one which claims to defend the South's essential Americanism and protect its political-economic order against overthrow. This is treat their anticomunism as *doctrinal*. A third possible explanation would be that, in fact, the civil rights movement was but one element of a global assault on white supremacy that was driven by communist political organisation and informed by communist ideology. This treats the anticomunism of segregationists as essentially *adequate*, or in some important sense correct.

Treating either explanation as sufficient risks, as Lewis (2004) suggests, flattening the historical realities of both American anticomunism and its racial order. Rather, to understand the role of anticomunism in the struggles over segregation, to understand what anticomunism *is*, it is necessary to situate it in its conjuncture in all of its overdetermined complexity.

## Why it matters

These questions are not purely of historical merit, but have an important bearing on the sociology of race, class and political ideology. Further, they have a contemporary resonance, as forms of anticomunism, linked to racial significations, persist and exert powerful effects on US political life.

Though lacking a coherent global narrative to which their cause might be affixed, and while lacking strategic control of the state, the Tea Party anti-socialist movement bears some similarities to past anticommunist networks. When Kovel (1992) predicted the perpetuation of forms of American anticommunism after the Cold War, he may not have anticipated the precise lineaments of Tea Party style anti-socialism. However, he did observe that anticommunism in its American declination is a politics of identity, of national belonging. To be a communist “was to be ipso facto disloyal, a traitor pushed off the edge of society into an abyss of non-being”. There was thus an inextricable link between political identity and acceptance into the national community. So it is today that, as the Tea Party mounts a countersubversive campaign against ‘socialism’ and in defence of free markets, the very charge itself is linked to race and national belonging.

Former Republican congressman Tom Tancredo lamented in 2010 that “People who could not even spell the word ‘vote’ or say it in English put a committed socialist ideologue in the White House … we do not have a civics, literacy test before people can vote.” With the reference to literacy tests, Tancredo touched on one of the measures used in the Jim Crow south to deny African Americans suffrage. (Zimmerman, 2010) The imagery of the ‘Tea Party’ is also heavily racialised, with Obama depicted variously as a ‘witch doctor’, a ‘barbarian’ or, perhaps most potent of all, a Muslim. These images, argues Enck-Wanzer (2010), “serve to mark Obama as a threatening, uncivilised, racialised Other without invoking the term ‘race’”. For Wise (2009), the charge of ‘socialism’ is itself heavily racialised, “little more than

racist code for the longstanding white fear that black folks will steal from them, and covet everything they have”. Taking this approach, of course, risks enacting precisely the type of ‘flattening’ that Lewis warned against. Before alighting on such conclusions, one would have to account for the peculiar Hayekian pedigree of the Tea Party, and specifically the conception of ‘socialism’ embedded in Hayek’s warning to “socialists of all parties”. One should also take seriously the Tea Party’s defence of property rights against redistributive taxation and public healthcare, which surely cannot be reduced to their racially laden aspects. (Zernicke, 2010; Hayek, 2006: 37)

Nonetheless, this research is not intended simply to excavate patterns of ideation and practice which can be put to use in interpreting a contemporary problem. Rather, to pose the questions raised at the start of this introduction is to:

1. address at a sociological level the controversial arguments about the impact of Cold War anticommunism on the struggles over segregation and civil rights;
2. raise crucial sociological questions about the organisation of the US social formation both in this specific conjuncture and more generally;
3. query the relationship between what could be called generic elements of social organisation, such as ideology, politics and production;
4. interrogate the relationship between race and class, persuasion and power, consent and coercion; and

5. examine the modalities of political domination and leadership in capitalist democracies, and the role that race can play in organising both cohesion and antagonism.

In this research, the central sociological question I ask is: what is race, what is its relationship to class and other antagonisms, and how does it function in hegemonic projects, of which anticomunism can be considered a type? The ‘global’ problem addressed by this research is therefore that of *hegemony* in the Gramscian sense. In the literature review, I address in more detail my reasons for adopting this theoretical purview. Here, I will restrict myself to stating the case briefly. This research is intended in part as a contribution to historical materialism, developing its categories and applying them to the ‘concrete analysis of concrete situations’. The questions it addresses are posed very much on that terrain. This is not to say that the categories of historical materialism are asserted as *a priori* truths. They do not have that status, and the ‘scientificity’ of marxism remains an open question. I simply assert that marxism is one way of explaining societies which has advantages regarding what I am attempting to explain, above all in its attention to the practices through which a society is reproduced, the antagonisms structuring those reproductive practices, and the complex unity of many levels on which those practices operate.

In this research, I will be particularly interested in deploying those developments of historical materialism which give most attention to the conjuncture – that is, to the unity-in-difference of many elements of society at a given historical moment – and to

the role of what marxism calls the superstructures (ideology, politics) in the organisation of a society. It seems to me that since both anticomunism and race inescapably operate as ideological and political practices, and since they have clearly been linked in the period I'm discussing to questions of political leadership, consent and violence, the Gramscian optic of hegemony offers the most advantageous perspective for considering the questions raised above.

## **CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review. “Even its children know that the South is in trouble.”**

“[T]he theme remains always the same, the verdict is ever ready and invariably reads: “Socialism!” Even bourgeois liberalism is declared socialistic, bourgeois enlightenment socialistic, bourgeois financial reform socialistic. It was socialistic to build a railway where a canal already existed, and it was socialistic to defend oneself with a cane when one was attacked with a rapier.

“This was not merely a figure of speech, fashion, or party tactics. The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself, that all the means of education it had produced rebelled against its own civilization, that all the gods it had created had fallen away from it. It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its class rule at its social foundation and its political summit simultaneously, and had therefore become ‘socialistic.’” – Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

### **Introduction: a general statement of the problem**

In the residuum of World War II, the United States seized the leading position in a system of competing nation-states. Having relieved the United Kingdom of many of its imperial assets and emerged from the war less scathed than any other participant,

it embarked upon a struggle against the USSR. The premise of this struggle was that the USSR was not just a dictatorship, but an expansionist totalitarian state which was unable to live peacefully alongside competitors. The international communist movement was thus a conspiracy for global domination. The US assembled an alliance of capitalist states in order to contain this power, including military alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but it also constructed an architecture of liberal world governance, from the United Nations to Bretton Woods. It worked to restructure the production processes of allied states along the Fordist lines then prevalent in the US, and encouraged the development of indigenous capitalist industries in developing nations. America's expansion, then, was a complex, multifaceted enterprise, hardly reducible to any single imperative – but for the duration of the Cold War, the master-narrative of American ascendancy was one of 'Free World' resistance to global communism.

But the 'Free World' was not entirely free. Much of it was in colonial chains, apartheid was taking root in South Africa, genocidal 'White Australia' policies were in place, many of America's allied states were dictatorships constructed by the US military itself, and in the twelve Southern states of the US there existed a one-party white-supremacist tyranny which was sharply at odds with the democratic creed the US claimed to uphold. Globally, the US found itself trying to sustain a multiracial anticommunist coalition, while at the same time upholding white supremacy where it was efficiently anticommunist, and where the racist assumptions of policymakers led them to fear the 'premature independence' of black populations. (Schmitz, 2006).

Domestically, the US power bloc – fractions of American capital fused together under the leadership of manufacturers, acting through the state – sought to assemble a broad anticommunist coalition, in which was incorporated leading businesses, unions, state personnel, and both of the dominant parties. Here too, the ambiguities of managing hegemony in a white supremacist system were felt. While the national liberal state embarked on a limited, cautious civil rights agenda, in the Deep South a virulent form of racial anticommunism emerged to defend the institutions of white supremacist capitalism. Indeed, Southern planter and textile capital, representing politically powerful fractions within the US power bloc, constituted a bulwark of hard-line anticommunism. Despite the problems that a one-party racial dictatorship in the South posed for the United States' global projection of 'soft power', policymakers in Washington were extremely reluctant to chasten or roll back this system. For, with all these difficulties, the specific configuration of class and race relations, the conjunction of different modes of rule in north and south, served the purposes of hegemony for a time. Indeed, for the South, anticommunism proved an exceptionally potent weapon against the emerging civil rights coalition, despite the fact that segregation itself posed challenges to Washington's ability to maintain its anticommunist coalition internationally. This structuring ambiguity is the problem addressed by this research. Why, given the problems that segregation posed for Cold War strategies, was anticommunism such an effective weapon in the hands of segregationists? How did the latter come to believe, and convince others, that the civil rights struggle was driven by communist subversion? What political and

ideological resources did anticommunism provide and when, and why, did it cease to be effective?

This research will study an historical problem through a sociological lens. It will look at the interdependence and inter-penetration of racial and anticommunist politics in the US South, in the period 1945-65, which I will refer to as the ‘classical’ phase of Cold War anticommunism. It will seek to demonstrate that the anticommunist practices — first at the international and national levels, then in the South after *Brown v the Board of Education* — constituted a countersubversive programme aimed at responding to transitional pressures first at the international level (represented, for example, by decolonisation), then at the level of the national state (in terms of the necessary centralisation and concentration of American state capacities to manage its global dominance), and then at the level of Southern states and economies (in terms of the reorganisation of productive spaces, the collapse of the traditional rural and small-town bases of segregation, the growth of urban industries, and the development of local and municipal state capacities in absorbing the dysfunctions produced by these changes). It will show that crises in the Southern system enabled the emergence of a new civil rights coalition capable of challenging interdependent hierarchies of power, supported by a transformation of the balance of class and political forces within the Federal state. This in turn called into existence a white resistance coalition, extending from state apparatuses to paramilitary forces to civil institutions. In order to adequately explain the real course of events, I will also seek to explain not just the strategic rationality but also the *subjective meaning* of

anticommunism in these contexts. This is where marxism reaches its limits, or so I will argue, and I therefore turn to a form of discourse analysis grounded in Lacanian psychoanalysis. This analysis will show that connecting white-supremacy and anticomunism, enabling it to be far more effective than if segregationists simply used anticomunism as a cover, was a kernel of ideological fantasy, structurally very similar to antisemitic fantasy. For a time, this fusion of racism and red-hunting was able to cohere a hegemonic alliance of class forces, providing it with a strategic and moral direction.

## **A research paradigm**

Since the 1990s, there has been belated and growing historical attention to the international dimensions of America's racial order. The specific connections between civil rights and anticolonial movements (Horne, 2009; Bush, 2009), between America's battle for dominance in the Third World and its domestic policies (Dudziak, 2002), between its internal suppression of communism and the counter-civil rights struggle (Woods, 2004; Lewis, 2004, 2005), and between its global racial politics and anticomunist precepts (Borstelmann, 2001) have all been explored by historians. Vitalis (2000, 2002, 2007) has produced compelling studies of the globalisation of Jim Crow structures by American capital, from within the discipline of International Relations. The intersection between anticomunism and race management in Southern industries has also been subject to a detailed historical treatment by Korstad (2003).

What is now needed is a sociological approach to this subject, a working theoretical articulation which explains the nature of the intersections whose history has been excavated. This is what this research seeks to do, using Gramscian categories – notably, ‘hegemony’, the ‘historical bloc’, and ‘passive revolution’ – in order to determine the extent and manner of the inter-dependence of Southern white supremacy and Cold War anticomunism. The master-concept here is hegemony. In class-democratic societies, hegemony is that state of affairs, always temporary and usually unstable (Hall, 1986), wherein the ruling class achieves such a broad consensual basis for its operations that it no longer merely dominates, but *leads*. This is the result of a complex series of practices, compromises, threats and inducements at the level of production, social and civil life, and the state and its modes of presence in society.

As such, this research is conducted firmly within the terrain of a particular strain of historical materialism. There were a number of alternative theoretical approaches available to me. I might have, for example, adopted a Weberian approach in which the relationship between race and class would be theorised as, first a relation between different modes of stratification, between status and marketable advantage; second, between productive types (industrial mass production) and legitimacy (race and, later, anticomunism); third, between diverse modes of domination – charismatic, traditional and rational-legal – as embodied in Democratic Party dominance; the bureaucratic rationality of the modern state and its possible tension with pre-modern

state forms. Indeed, the Weberian approach to social action, power and dominance offers a rich and suggestive conceptual apparatus with which to approach this subject. Alternatively, I might have approached this question with a functionalist, structuralist or neoliberal purview, and each could have yielded fruitful results. There is no compelling proof that the theoretical underpinnings of either of these approaches is necessarily stronger or weaker than any of the others.

So why have I opted for an historical materialist problematic? In part, the answer is simply that this is the research programme that I am committed to, and this project is an attempt to develop and refine the conceptual materials of historical materialism through their application to a concrete situation. But marxism also offers some advantages for those conducting this type of research. First, it is a problematic whose démarche, as Goran Therborn put it (2008: 138), is the central attention it gives to the reproduction of social relations. (In fact, feminist writing did a great deal to bring out this particular dimension of marxist thought. See, for example, Federici, 2012). This allows us to ask, for example: what contribution does race make to the reproduction of the basic relations of a society? Does it inhibit, allow or catalyse that reproduction? By what means? How do the institutional forms and actions of a state accelerate or retard reproduction while being themselves reproduced? Secondly, it is an approach which radically de-naturalises the phenomena that are made to appear as ‘natural’ or ‘given’. This allows us to treat ‘race’ as something that is historically produced, socially constructed, not a biological given. The palpable ‘confirmations’ that we experience as race can be understood as the socio-symbolic outcomes of social and

political struggles. (Hall et al, 2013; Omi & Winant, 1994) Thirdly, I think the marxist emphasis on the fundamentally antagonistic nature of social relations calls attention to the dysfunctions and discontinuities that are likely to be present in the process of reproduction, such that no outcome can be adduced as necessarily functional to the social formation. Given that the period I cover is one of intense social transformation and struggle, featuring the deformation, preservation and breakdown of old forms of domination, and their replacement with new types, it is advantageous to adopt an approach which permits this process to be theorised.

Further, the historical materialism of which I make use is of a particular type. The research involves the ‘concrete analysis of concrete situations’ whose theoretical object is the specific conjuncture of the post-war United States. I do not attempt to present a rigorous demonstration of the operation of historical ‘laws’ identified by Marx. Rather, the historical determinacy of laws in Marx’s research project points to the need for concrete investigation to determine “the boundaries” of the articulation of “productive force and relation of production” at any given conjuncture. (Banaji, 2010: 47) When Marx turns his attention to concrete situations, for example in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, his approach is far from the positivist attempt to validate laws already supposedly established by historical data. On the contrary, he sets out to discern the lineaments of class and political formations, the shifting valences of ideological cynosures, the class alliances and mutating allegiances: this highly conjunctural analysis pays off with the emergence of concepts such as ‘Bonapartism’, or the ‘praetorian state’. (On the text’s relevance for the analysis of political power

and the state, see Jessop, 2002). The selection of a specifically Gramscian idiom to provide the framework of the research has two motivations. In the first instance, I value Gramsci's insistence on the analysis of the “conjunction”, of “situations”, of the “socio-historical moment” which is never “homogenous”, but which is “rich with contradictions”. (Sassoon, 1981: 180-193) That approach will give me some means to theorise a quite complex texture of social transformation. In the second, Gramsci's acknowledgment of the formative effectiveness and autonomy of the ‘superstructural’ aspects of a social formation, above all ideology, political organisation and the state and their role in constituting social classes, is extremely useful in a study of the role of the intersection of race and anticomunism – both of which I theorise as political-ideological formations – in securing class rule.

I will also, in theorising the role of the state, make use of the work of Poulantzas (1978, 2014) where the Gramscian problematic of hegemony is articulated with an Althusserian materialism (Thomas, 2011). By resisting the reification of ‘the state’ in classical political theory, and by treating it as a specific material condensation of the balance of class and political forces, he provides a theoretical underpinning to Foucault's observation that the state has no heart, no essence, and is merely “the mobile shape of a perpetual statification or statifications”. (Foucault, 2008) This conceptualisation also stresses the fissiparousness of the state, the role of ‘pockets of resistance’ within it, the tensions between its hierarchically distributed apparatuses and spatially distributed ‘sites of power’, and the always complex ‘play’ of opposing class and political forces from which the general ‘line’ of ‘the state’ emerges. Much

has been done to build on those insights (Aaronowitz & Bratsis, 2002) and give them concrete historical applications (Panitch & Gindin, 2012), but I consider Poulantzas's work on the state to be unsurpassed within the marxist tradition. The advantage of this approach for this research is that it helps situate the cultural, and moral-regulative aspect of state practices, and particularly law, in the constitution of race. (Gilroy, 1982; Gilroy & Simm, 1985)

However, it is not my intention to produce an obsessively cohesive, theoretically closed, account of the problem. This is why, in regard to certain aspects of state power (legitimacy, territoriality, representation), I will also find it useful to engage with other sources, such as Harvey (2005), Lefebvre (2009), Holloway & Picciotto (1979), Arrighi (2009), and Tilly (1992) among others. Likewise, when it comes to ideology and the analysis of state discourse, I find Gramscian concepts such as 'common sense' and 'hegemony' useful, alongside Poulantzas's emphasis on the state's monopolisation of knowledge in the division between manual and mental labour. However, I will also make use of Laclau's (1977) articulation of Marx and Lacan. I will return to Lacan but here it suffices to say that by stressing the emptiness of signifiers, their overdetermination within a given discourse, and their ability to be articulated within distinct discursive regimes, Laclau offers some means by which to understand the struggles over 'Americanism', 'communism', 'liberty' and their related thematic more clearly.

It is also useful to specify the role of Althusser's materialism in this study. Although I don't habitually refer to Althusserian concepts throughout the work, there is a real sense in which the "aleatory materialism" which I think is characteristic of his work, and particularly the concepts of "overdetermination" and "contradiction", has a formative role in guiding my interpretation of situations. (Althusser, 1999; Althusser, 2005; Lahtinen, 2009) I also find useful Althusser's stress on the materiality of ideology, its role in the reproduction of social relations, and the integral relationship of ideological "apparatuses" to the state. (Althusser, 2014) I am aware that there are criticisms, including from within the marxist tradition, of the theoretical resources I'm making use of here. While Gramsci was rebuked by Althusser as the bearer of an idealist 'historicist' problematic – quite unjustly (Elliott, 2006: 27-30; Thomas, 2009: 1-37) – Althusser is often taxed with a 'structuralism' that is rigidly mapped onto a mechanistic and outmoded base-superstructure topography, and which permits no theoretical space for human agency and is thus profoundly conservative in its effects. (Thompson, 1978) For my part, I find Montag's (2013) attempt to read Althusser in relation to his theoretical conjuncture, convincing as an effective reply to these criticisms and defence of a non-structuralist, 'aleatory' current in Althusserian marxism. One criticism which would apply to both Gramsci and Althusser, which I find more compelling is that they attempt to sustain, in their own distinctive articulations, an historically unjustifiable 'base-superstructure' dichotomy. (Thompson, 1978; Wood, 1981) It is more accurate to speak of the *relative separation* of economic and political practice in the capitalist mode of production. The 'base-superstructure' figure, however, does fulfil two useful

purposes. First, it maintains an analytical distinction between economic and political-ideological practices; and second, it assigns the primary determining role, “in the last instance”, to economic or productive processes – even if “the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes”. (Althusser, 2005: 113)

In order to begin to define the terrain in which my research takes place, I will begin with a discussion of anticommunist practices in US history. ‘Practices’ is used here in the sense discussed by Althusser, viz.: “all the levels of social existence are the sites of distinct practices: economic practice, political practice, ideological practice, technical practice and scientific (or theoretical) practice. We think the content of these different practices by thinking their peculiar structure, which, in all these cases, is the structure of a production”. (Althusser & Balibar, 2009: 58) At the most general level, the structure of production has three stages: i) raw materials are brought into relation with one another; ii) a labour of transformation is performed using some means of production; and iii) an end-product results. The determinant moment in this process is the labour of transformation itself; it is this which decides the kind of practice involved. When investigating anticommunist practices, I will consider them largely as operating at the political-ideological ‘level’, even where they have a constitutive role in productive processes.

Anticommunism belongs to a family of ‘countersubversive’ practices. Countersubversion has an especially long pedigree in the United States, where the presumed conspiracies of Freemasons, Catholics, Mormons, African Americans, the

‘yellow peril’, and of course ‘Reds’ have serially aroused movements in defence of Americanism. In addition to its racial and national connotations, countersubversion is intimately bound up with patriarchal practices and the masculinist ‘regeneration through violence’. (Melley, 2001; Slotkin, 1973; Davis, 1960) In the liberal tradition, countersubversion is treated as an aberration, a ‘paranoid style’ in politics birthed by the inability of certain marginal social groups to adapt to the pragmatic, compromise-based politics of the United States. (Hofstadter, 1972) As Corey Robin points out, (Robin, 2004: 15), this is rooted in an inadequate liberal analysis of the sources of political fear. While the Cold War state was repressive, it was not openly lawless, not flagrantly crushing civil liberty in the manner of the ‘totalitarian’ nemesis. Because of this, Cold War liberals were remarkably blasé about its abuses, reducing political fear to a psychopathology. However, this both underestimates the true level of state repression and misses the way in which political fear is distributed through the vectors of civil society which are supposed, in liberal theory, to be the bulwark against state terror. It is therefore important to take countersubversion seriously, as a typology of repressive (but not merely repressive) practices aimed at conserving relations of domination.

However, there is a problem in speaking about anticomunism at this level of abstraction. Ruotsila and Power both point out that anticomunism does not speak in a single voice, while Power seeks to redeem traditions of anticomunism that were not marred by extra-legal assaults on civil liberties. (Power, 1998; Ruotsila, 2001) The generic category ‘anticommunism’ is thus inhibitive if left undifferentiated. I will

momentarily come to the different political and ideological strands of anticommunism, but it's also worth noting the different modalities in which anticommunism can be practiced. For example, a mainstay of writing on anticommunism is the 'network'. These networks triangulate around three basic coordinates: civil society organisations ('patriotic' vigilante, liberal, trade union), capital, and the state. Of these, the most potent constituent is the state, which is the unifying element, the weaponised cutting edge, producing the public inquiries, the executed traitors and the raids – capable of raising anticommunism from being the obsession of an organised lobby to the level of being a 'national obsession'. (Schrecker, 2002: 12-14 & 25) Yet, this poses questions which cannot be answered in terms of the 'network'. Why, and under what circumstances, does the state become an anticommunist combatant? What does it contribute that the other elements cannot? Above all, how does the state relate to the social terrain in which communist and anticommunist practices operate? As soon as these questions are posed, it is clear that is necessary to separate the network into its different dimensions in order to answer them.

I proceed by situating the South in relation to the US capitalist system during the Cold War. This entails, to start with, a theoretical clarification of what is included in the capitalist 'mode of production'. For example, is it merely a particular combination of forces and relations of production? If so, what manner of combination persisted in the US in the reference period? Can we speak of articulated modes of production in the South, and the persistence of feudal forms, or does Jim Crow effect

a total subsumption of social relations under capitalism? (Kayatekin, 2001; Post, 2011) How far need our account specify the mechanisms of the system's reproduction? (Wolpe, 1980: 6-19) In examining the southern social formation, the possible articulation of combined modes of production within it, and the extent to which capitalism 'underdeveloped' black America (Marable, 2000) and perhaps even the south itself, I will ask how this determined the possibilities for hegemony within the South, its position within the US social formation and its impact on the political management of different types of space (local, national and international).

Having thus located the South, I turn to the question of the relationship between race and anticomunism in the construction of hegemony during the period of 'classical anticomunism' in the Cold War. Using the concept of the Fordist 'historical bloc' to explain the relations of production and the specific form of productive forces which dominated the US in this period, I also avail myself of Gramsci's analysis of 'Americanism and Fordism', to explain the relationship between Fordist production methods, 'Americanist' ideology and US global hegemony. (Rupert, 1995; Gramsci, 1971) I examine the question of 'hegemony', and the exceptionally broad alliance of class forces that massed under the rubric of anticomunism. Here, the key problem is what combination of coercion and consent permitted the assembly such forces unified around a broad set of anticomunist objectives and theses. It is clear that coercion played a significant role in the marginalisation of insurgent social forces excluded from the post-war class compromise. It is equally clear, however, that significant popular forces not only

consented to the anticommunist vulgate, but actively participated in its promulgation. The reconciliation of antagonistic interests and subject-positions thus needs to be explained partially in terms of persuasion and particularly the formulation of hegemonic languages through which these diverse agents are incorporated as a ‘chain of equivalences’. If, as Voloshinov argues, “the word is the most sensitive index of social changes”, the mutations in political discourse should provide a symptomatic insight into the changing lived relation of American subjects to their political environment. (Voloshinov, 1986: 19) Importantly, we are speaking of languages in the plural, and specifically the decussation of the Southern lexis of conservative white-supremacy, racial populism, anticommunism, and what might be termed ‘national liberal’ discourses.

This is where Lacan enters as a disruptive element in my approach. One of the starting points of this research is that the anticommunism of segregationists should be taken very seriously. It may be that the conflation of “Race-Mixing” with “Communism”, so common in segregationist discourse in the phase of Massive Resistance, is literally untrue. This is not a reason to dismiss such claims, either by treating it as a ruse, or as a delusion. It would also be a mistake to try to rationalise such beliefs. There are certainly ways to make sense of white-supremacist anticommunism. For segregationists, white-supremacy was a meritocratic system, reflecting innate differences between people. It was also a delicate local *modus vivendi*, a carefully elaborated cultural ecology. Finally, it was built in to American traditions, validated in the north as much as the south. The attack on it could be

construed as an unAmerican, state-sponsored assault on a well-maintained, free enterprise society – ‘socialism’, or ‘excessive government’ at best. (Lewis, 2000: 233) There is truth in this, but to leave it at that would be to gloss over, rather than encounter, what is disturbing about this discourse. It is one thing to look for the ‘rational kernel’ in social behaviour; it is another to forget, in doing so, that the irrational is part of social life as well.

Lacan’s work was devised for clinical applications, not for social criticism. It is imperative, in using Lacan for a discourse analysis, to be aware of the limitations of transposing concepts devised for a clinical practice into academic work. One very clear limit is that when an analysand ‘slips’ or says something polysemic or garbled, the analyst is in a place to draw attention to it and encourage the analysand to speak more about it. The analyst who is reading texts composed over half a century ago and whose authors are beyond contact is not in this position. Likewise, where the analyst interprets for the analysand, the intention is to “make waves”, to allow the subject to undertake a radical shift in his or her subject-position. (Lacan, quoted in Fink, 2007: 81) Nothing like this is involved in academic interpretation. I will develop this further in Chapter Six. Nonetheless, there are two key aspects of this approach which suggest that it can be useful here. First, Lacan’s contention that the unconscious is “structured like a language” (Lacan, 2006: 737), and indeed is filled with language, explodes the dichotomy of subject and structure. The Lacanian subject, rather like the Althusserian subject, is the bearer of a structure. In the case of Lacan, the subject is the bearer of the *signifier*: this means that subjectivity is not a hidden essence, but something that

is accessible because we are “parlêtres” – speaking beings. Second, Lacan’s insistence on the *letter* of speech – that is, not on what is supposedly ‘meant’, but on what is actually *said* – allows one to explore the contradictions, ambiguities, sense and non-sense of speech, without trying to master it on the basis of supposed existing knowledge. Lacan warned analysts against trying to ‘understand’ the analysand’s discourse precisely because it would involve foregrounding the analyst’s own meanings. (Miller, 2011: 1-13; Fink, 2014; Lacan, 2006: 394) This approach, in my view, helps overcome the limitations of *Verstehen*, insofar as the latter rests on the unwarranted assumption that we know enough about one another to understand the meaning attached to behaviour. Third, because the master-concept of psychoanalysis is the unconscious, because the fundamental theoretical construct is that there is a part of the self which is not experienced consciously but which exerts effects in speech, in the fact that subjects give a bad, incoherent and contradictory account of themselves, it is possible to engage in a *suspicious reading* of texts which nonetheless takes them fully at their word. There is no need to look ‘beneath the surface’ of the text; the point is to notice the holes in meaning and warps that appear, and to follow their logic. On the basis of these and similar principles, Lacanians have developed a rigorous and reflexive approach to discourse analysis. (Frosh, 2014; Parker, 2005, 2014; Pavón-Cuéllar, 2010) Using these means, I will be able to give myself the opportunity to temporarily suspend the rush to theoretically master the material, and follow the discourse of white-supremacist anticomunism *to the letter*.

## **A brief history of American anticommunism**

### *Two phases of anticommunism*

I will give a more detailed outline of the phases of anticommunism in Chapter Three, in order to identify the specific role of the international terrain in the formation of American, and particularly Southern, anticommunism. In that chapter, I will relate anticommunism to a strategy in the management of ‘uneven and combined development’ in what I will refer to as an imperialist world-system. (Trotsky, 2008; Poulantzas, 1978; Panitch & Gindin, 2003; Panitch & Gindin, 2012) Here, I simply want to briefly map the historical terrain.

The first wave of anticommunism in the US arose in response to the Russian Revolution and its effects on the international order, but also condensed a number of anxieties arising from economic turmoil amid demobilisation, strike waves, and the growing self-organisation of African Americans. Both in its international dimensions, including intervention in Russia, and in its domestic elements, the state played a leading role. New legislation, and new repressive apparatuses, targeted ‘aliens’, while the dominant ideological responses identified socialism as a foreign, ‘German’, or even ‘Jewish’ credo, and worried about subversion among African Americans. Beyond the state, a broad network of businesses, citizens groups and armed militias took the fight to actual and supposed reds. The Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) did go onto play a ‘subversive’ role in African American politics, on the basis of which it developed some degree of support among black workers who, by

1946, made up 14% of their membership. (Foglesong, 2007; Bush, 2009; Kovel, 1997: 14-22; Heale, 1990: 60-96; Solomon, 1998: 219-21; Woods, 2004: 19-21)

The second wave of anticommunism, which I refer to as the ‘classical phase’, took place as the US assumed global dominance, and amid an upsurge of global anticolonial struggles in which communists often played a leading role. This entailed the internationalisation of the American state (Poulantzas, 1978; Panitch & Gindin, 2012) and also to an extent the internationalisation of its cultural and social forms. Civil rights became a global issue, particularly as the US sought to build support in the Third World for a front against communism. In this struggle, Southern industry and politicians often played a leading role as the most militaristic component of a Cold War power bloc. They were able to legitimise their role in the American nation partly on the basis of their militant anticommunism, and partly on the basis of national ideological traditions sustaining ‘states rights’. To the extent that Cold War liberals sought to change the racial order, they did so against stubborn resistance from Southern politicians who were otherwise a key component of the anticommunist alliance. Moreover, in launching a national anticommunist crackdown, with loyalty oaths and political investigations, they provided segregationists with the means to suppress civil rights movements. They also broke up political alliances, such as the ‘Popular Front’ Left, in which the CPUSA had played a variable but often constructive role, which could advance civil rights. Finally, when the Supreme Court outlawed school segregation in *Brown v the Board of Education*, the anticommunist practices developed nationally could be replicated in Southern states and deployed

against the NAACP and other civil rights bodies. (Borstelmann, 2001; Schmitz, 1999, 2006; Woodward, 1966: 131-2; Dudziak, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Smith, 2010; Gesselbracht, 2007; Horne, 1985, 1988, 1991, 2004)

*The defeat of the ‘Popular Front’ and the construction of a hegemonic anticommunist bloc*

The defeat of the ‘Popular Front’ Left was the necessary condition for the success of classical anticommunism. 1948 was a nodal year in this respect, during which a number of tendencies crystallised, a number of decisive battles were settled, and a new order came into view. By that point, the Cold War liberal front, Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) had been formed. Kennan’s ‘Long Telegram’ and Winston Churchill’s ‘iron curtain’ speech had dictated the broad lineaments of Cold War doctrine. Truman’s loyalty programmes had begun, HUAC had become a standing committee, and there were investigations underway into Hollywood communism. The anti-union Taft-Hartley bill had been enacted over the objections of organised labour, and of Truman himself. The ultimately doomed attempts to unionise the south – the CIO’s effort, known as ‘Operation Dixie’ was the more energetic of these – had been launched.

Internationally, the anti-colonial movement had scored a painful victory with independence for India. The Republic of Korea was founded amid conditions of

intense social struggle tending toward civil war. The ‘Berlin Blockade’ was underway, and Russian control of the Eastern Bloc was consolidated. The US was headed toward conflict with the USSR. The CPUSA, the most dynamic sector of the ‘Popular Front’ Left, attempted to galvanise opposition to US policy. However, it had been compromised by its support for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and its uncritical support for the USSR despite its territorial aggrandisements. If communists campaigned for ‘peace’ and the cessation of Cold War hostilities, the counterpoint of the US was that it waged war for ‘freedom’. (Lieberman, 2010: 32)

The 1948 presidential election is worth examining, as it was to be the last test of the ‘Popular Front’ Left, and it condensed many of the previously mentioned features. The Progressive Party’s candidate, Henry Wallace, enjoyed the backing of those shades of the Left and labour movement which had not been co-opted into the anti-communist front. Wallace, dyspeptic about the rush toward hostility with Russia, decried it as a “position of ruthless imperialism”, and promised peaceful co-existence with communism at a time when most Americans believed that the Soviet Union posed a serious threat to American security, and thus to freedom. Democratic strategists attacked Wallace using the prevailing wisdom, even promoted by more sophisticated liberals such as George Kennan, that the Soviet Union was engaged in a conspiracy to subvert the ‘free world’. In the formative years of the Cold War, such beliefs were expressed in Congressional and Justice Department investigations into ‘foreign agents’ and espionage, which was alleged to have taken place at the highest levels of government. As such, the Wallace campaign was susceptible to charges of

treason and disloyalty if it could be depicted as a communist front. Democratic strategy, outlined in the ‘Clifford memorandum’ duly sought to “identify him in the public mind with the Communists” (Yarnell, 1974: 32-3, 90; Kovel, 1997: 43-9; Schrecker, 1998: 159-67).

This was an effective strategy, compelling liberals and moderate socialists to make clear their objections to Wallace’s ‘appeasement’. Norman Thomas accused Wallace of condoning “human slavery under Stalin”. But it was the ADA which landed the most damaging blows. Its cardinal conviction was that it was impossible to cooperate with communists in a progressive cause; that ‘united fronts’ inevitably became communist fronts. This issue was the key one that divided the ADA liberals from the Progressives supporting Wallace. With the founding support of the *grande dame* of New Deal liberals, Eleanor Roosevelt, the ADA was well-placed to exploit the Progressives’ weakness. Nor was it only the liberals who belaboured Wallace. The radical pacifist A J Muste described him as “the instrument and captive” of the CPUSA, while Dwight MacDonald argued that whether or not Wallace was an agent of Moscow, he “behaves like one”. (Yarnell, 1974: 87; Lieberman, 2010: 52)

This by itself may not have been a sufficient strategy had not Truman incorporated elements of popular discontent into his campaign, belabouring ‘big business’ and Wall Street, championing certain labour interests, and also articulating some African American grievances. The Progressives were defeated, gaining just over 1.1m votes, 2.4% of the national total. (Goldzwig, 2008: 61-70; Mayers, 2007: 297)

Truman's victory can be argued to have played a decisive role in consolidating the Cold War 'historical bloc'. An alliance of Fordist producers, integrated with a national security state, now exercised hegemony, providing the nation with a global, historic mission, asserting American global dominance to protect freedom and democracy against its Soviet opponents, and this was one which could attract the support of potentially oppositional elements.

### *Hegemony: ideology and coercion*

The extraordinary breadth of the classical anticomunist front, ranging from labour unions, leftists such as Norman Thomas and Dwight MacDonald, anti-racist organisations such as the NAACP, the 'Vital Center' liberals convoked in the ADA, to business lobbies and the white despotisms in Southern states, demands some explanation. I shall say, briefly, that classical anticomunism comprises a set of political, legal and ideological practices articulated in a hegemonic project, aimed at producing a new popular 'common sense' favourable to 'free enterprise' and American global hegemony. I will suggest, drawing from Gramsci's analysis of 'Americanism and Fordism', that anticomunism and the southern racial caste system intersected with Fordist production methods and America's informal empire to co-produce an 'Americanist' 'historical bloc'. (Gramsci, 1971: 277-320) Cold War anticomunism had to plausibly incorporate within itself elements of popular aspirations, and anxieties. In one mode, it offered material measures to secure popular consent, and in another it operated on fears of global communist expansionism and domestic subversion that, though exaggerated, were not wholly unrealistic.

(Schrecker, 1998: 161) In so doing, it successfully condensed and articulated what Hall (1985) referred to in a different context as “highly contradictory subject-positions”. This was possible because “common nuclei of meaning” were “connotatively linked to diverse ideological-articulatory domains”. This enabled a process of ‘transformism’, the “partial absorption and neutralisation of those ideological contents” through which resistance to class domination was expressed. (Laclau, 1977: 160-1) Further, as Thomas (2009: 161-7) points out, the Gramscian concept of hegemony includes coercive direction, and coercion was absolutely central to breaking up the ‘Popular Front’ Left and absorbing elements of the shattered coalition, through the vector of ‘Vital Center’ liberalism (Schlesinger, 1998), into a new articulation polarised to the right.

The South was central to the anticommunist coalition, with Southern politicians in local and federal state bodies promulgating securitarian and ideological responses to leftist and anti-racist movements, and providing a template of ‘Americanism’ that was powerful in the classical phase of Cold War anticommunism. (Lewis, 2004: 10-29) Southern business alliances such as the Southern States Industrial Conference engaged in political activism in defence of the ‘free enterprise’ system against perceived challenges from socialism, welfarism, and civil rights. (Jewell, 2010) Anticommunism in the South was bound up with a politics of racial populism, the latter being a form of popular-democratic interpellation of white citizens in support of a project of racial self-defence against an ‘elite’ integrated into the Federal government. (On this use of ‘populism’, see Laclau, 1977)

To understand the efficacy of racial populist interpellation, we can avail ourselves of Gramsci's writing on 'The Southern Question', wherein he discusses the uses of regional variations and locally embedded cultural patterns, as well as northern quasi-colonial chauvinism toward southerners, in dividing subaltern classes and frustrating the formation of counter-hegemonic movement. (Gramsci & Verdicchio, 2005; see also Hall, 1996) To give this its specific relevance, though, it is necessary to appraise the manner in which 'race' is constitutive of class relations in the US. Historically, class consciousness among white American workers has taken the form of a 'white labour republicanism' (Roediger, 2007), in which white workers were bound to the racial system through fear of being reduced to the level of the 'slave'. Their aspirations for self-determination and dignity in labour were thus incorporated into the ruling ideology. This, alongside the paternalistic relationship between workers and bosses that often accompanied whiteness, accounts significantly for the failure of unionisation drives such as 'Operation Dixie', which was also the subject of red-baiting. It was, in particular, "the racialism of communism" that alienated Southern white workers. (Boswell, Brown, Brueggemann & Peters Jr., 2006: 155)

The state, as noted by Schrecker (2002: 25), was central to classical anticommunism. Following Poulantzas (1978), we can conceptualise this role in terms of the presence of the state in the reproduction of the relations of production, and thus in the constitution of social classes. The political, legal and ideological relations which constituted classical anticommunism were logically condensed in the

state, because the state is the material condensation of class relations, and affords a strategic base for an overall direction in the development of productive relations. (Therborn, 2008: 151) The role of the state in this constitution has to be differentiated, however, between local and national state forms, as many of the effects of racial politics are expressed in a highly regionalised pattern. (James, 1998) In addition, as the above indicates, the relationship between the national state's inward directed behaviour, and its outward directed behaviour demands attention. If anticomunism connected domestic and global hegemonic projects, so racist and colonial assumptions were formative of responses to communism both domestically and internationally. (Borstelmann, 2001; Schmitz 1999, 2006)

### **The Southern social formation**

“If the Negro is permitted to engage in politics, his usefulness as a labourer is at an end.” – A Mississippian comments on the introduction of Jim Crow laws to the state. Quoted, Wood, 1986: 118

“We can view the urban region as a kind of competitive collective unit within the global dynamics of capitalism. Like individual entrepreneurs, each urban region has the autonomy to pursue whatever course it will, but in the end each is disciplined by the external coercive laws of competition. Its industry has to compete within an international division of labour, and its competitive strength depends on the qualities of labour power; the efficiency and depth of social and physical infrastructures; the

‘rationality’ of lifestyles, cultures, and political processes; the state of class struggle and social tension; and geographical position and natural resources endowments.” – David Harvey. Quoted in Wilson, 2000: 108

### *The capitalist mode of production and race in the South*

David Harvey offers a strategic view of space in the field of capital accumulation and the division of labour. If we infer that the “external coercive laws of competition” have constantly buffeted the southern United States as they have every other region, what implications does this have for the development of the Deep South as a regional formation? In what way and to what extent did capitalist imperatives mould the emergence of southern markets in chattel and chattel-produced goods? Did capitalism underdevelop the South? Or, did capitalism underdevelop black America?

Manning Marable’s argument that capitalism did underdevelop black America suggests that the system was able to develop “not in spite of the exclusion of Blacks, but because of the brutal exploitation of Blacks as workers and consumers”. The paradox of American history, in this view, is that each advance of white freedom, affluence and state power was accomplished alongside black unfreedom, poverty and powerlessness. Development, meaning “the institutionalization of the hegemony of capitalism as a world system,” relied on a non-white periphery characterised by “chattel slavery, sharecropping, peonage, industrial labour at low wages, and culture chaos” for black people. This allowed the accumulation of surplus value from black workers to take place at an escalated rate compared to the equivalent for white

workers. It was insured by systems of white supremacy which commanded the dependency of black populations – notably, a majoritarian political system that ensured that black minorities could only successfully advance agendas acceptable to either of the two main white capitalist parties. “The constant expropriation of surplus value created by Black labour is the heart and soul of underdevelopment”. (Marable, 2000, p. 2 & 7) This analysis, drawing from dependency theory, but above all from the work of W E B Du Bois, suggests that the global ‘colour line’ is a precondition for capitalist development, and the knot in which the antagonisms of the capitalist mode of production – the exploitation of labour and colonial subjection, as much as the oppression of women – are condensed.

David Roediger, also informed by Du Bois, takes a substantially similar position, rebuking those Marxists who have classified antebellum slavery as a form of agrarian feudalism. While in the abstract, he maintains, capitalism is structured around the dual freedom of labour (from the means of production; to sell one’s labour power as property), unfree labour is historically perfectly compatible with capitalism provided slavers exist and compete within a world market based on free labour. Further, while capitalism has certain homogenising tendencies, it should not be expected to be ‘colour blind’ or to eventually level all national, religious and racial distinctions. The process of ‘race-making’ in capitalism is continuous, as profits are maximised through the social production of difference. (Roediger & Esch, 2009; Roediger, 2008: 64-69; Lowe, 1999: 28-29)

How one addresses this issue depends in part on how one understands the capitalist mode of production (CMP), and its relationship to precapitalist modes of production (PCMPs). In general, my position is that a mode of production consists of a specific conjunction of relations and forces of production. In this conjunction, productive relations have explanatory priority, as these determine the boundaries of productive forces (the form of surplus extraction determining the labour process). The capitalist mode of production is thus defined principally by the productive relations that are specific to it (the particular relationship of labour power to the means of production, the relations of effective possession of each, the form of surplus extraction), and secondly by the productive forces (the labour process and the relative quantity of surplus extracted). (Callinicos, 2004; 2014)

In this light, it would seem to be difficult to sustain the thesis that antebellum slavery itself was a CMP. For, the defining condition of antebellum slavery is the extra-economic bondage of the labourer to some means of production as a condition of her existence. This is quite at odds with the ‘dual freedom’ of the proletarian under capitalism; the worker who has been completely ‘freed’ from the means of production, but is also ‘free’ to sell her labour power. Charles Post thus argues that antebellum slavery was a decidedly non-capitalist form, and that the forging of American capitalism arose from the combined modes of production (slavery, petty commodity production, mercantile capital) in which capitalist imperatives exerted overall dominance. From this perspective, the dominant farmer republican ideology, as well as the political form of slaver dominance (Democratic Party hegemony), were

pre-capitalist. This structure of articulated modes of production motivated regional (north-south) competition and expansionism, which was eventually resolved by the Civil War and the victory of capitalism. (Post, 2011; Davidson, 2011; Ashworth, 1995; Ashworth, 2007)

Post's argument focuses more on the productive forces (the labour process, the instruments of production) than on productive relations. And it is on the ground of productive relations, and specifically the position of the labourer with respect to the means of production, that Sidney Mintz broached the question of whether the plantation slave was a proletarian. Through an examination of Caribbean sugar plantations and the forms of labour relation (slave, indentured, free, etc.) prevalent in them, he discloses the co-existence and co-dependence of these forms in the same labour systems. Mintz shows: that slavery rarely exists in a pure form; that it is possible for elements of the slave labour form to overlap with the free labour form in concrete labour processes (the separation of the worker from the means of production); that elements of both were historically articulated within a capitalist labour process; that slaves themselves could adopt 'free labour' roles, for example in the production of food; and that it would be an error to become stuck in an ideal-typical abstraction in which the slave is the eternal other of the proletarian. (Mintz, 1978) Post allows for the articulation of different modes of production within distinct economies and regions, but Mintz's argument suggests that in the concrete social formation, different modes of production may be articulated in the same labour process.

Indeed, Post appears to have no difficulty with the argument that ‘free labour’ needn’t exist in a pure form in capitalism. It is his argument, for example, that following the Civil War non-capitalist forms persisted in the South in the form of household-based sharecropping, until the Jim Crow era. The imposition of segregation was coextensive with the planters’ transition to capitalist ‘labour tenancy’ as the dominant mode of extraction – indeed, in this view, segregation was a necessity for its effective reproduction given the inability of planters to subsume the labour process under their control. The disenfranchisement of blacks and many poor whites was necessary for agrarian capitalism due to a specific feature of its production cycle and the disjunction with labour-time. (There is a ‘slack season’ between planting and harvesting and, as a result, agrarian capital often requires the legal-juridical coercion of labour-power.) In this sense, Jim Crow was a pathology of racialised capitalism that, while functional in various ways, was no longer necessary for its successful reproduction once technological advances allowed for the effective subsumption of the labour process by the 1940s. (Mann, 1990; Post, 2011; Hahn, 2003)

This specification of the relationship between CMP and PCMP has consequences for how we situate the South within the US and the global division of labour during the classical phase of anticomunism. In Chapter Four, I will argue that the juridical, extra-economic coercion of labour in Jim Crow, like the ‘paternalism’ of Southern mill owners, in part reflects the formative influence of a PCMP, a feudal remnant on

the development of Southern capitalism. (Kayatekin, 2001) This left the South in a certain place relative to the development of capitalism, predominantly in its industrial form, in the US as a whole. The South was, in effect, underdeveloped by capitalism, precisely because the dominant capitalist imperatives drove the extraction of surplus value in the slave South by means of regional competition, and then impelled the imposition of a segregated polity as part of the indispensable means through which the South would converge with the nation.

### *The place of the South in American nationhood*

“Even its children know that the South is in trouble”. – Lillian Smith.

During the classical period of anticommunism, the South was beginning to make a transition to Fordist production methods: it was en route to ‘Americanisation’, in a sense that will be discussed later. Its largest economic sector, the textile industry, was concentrated in a cluster of small production units, in small towns, across four states. By far the major producer was North Carolina, followed by South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. North Carolina’s productive advantage derived from the fact that it enjoyed access to an army of cheap surplus labour that was poorly organised, lacked political clout and lacked the protection of the law from the most intensive forms of exploitation. (Minchin, 1997: 2; Wood, 1986: 68)

Industrialisation was taking place slowly, and industrial unionism fared poorly. Worse still, the civil unrest arising from the struggle to end segregation, deterred

investors. The business advocates of the ‘new south’ were not as invested in white supremacy as the planters’ regime, and began to voice unease as the civil rights movement grew. This did not mean that they had a principled objection to Jim Crow; their objections were phrased purely in terms of ‘law and order’, and the dire consequences for any city or state that could not protect property from lawless mobs. Jim Crow, if no longer necessary for the reproduction of capitalist relations in the South, was certainly an economic advantage for business, not only maintaining pay differentials that undermined the bargaining power of labour – the strong empirical and historical evidence is that racism increases inequality in white income distribution – but also maintaining a folkish, cross-class solidarity among whites, which unions found it very difficult to break through. However, a segregated South, shaken by anti-racist struggles, would have difficulties restructuring its operations to become competitive on a national level. At the same time, however, the business sell for the South was still predicated, as it had been throughout the Depression, on the promise of a low-wage labour market guaranteed by a near union-free environment. Southern Democratic politicians forced through right-to-work laws, and collaborated with Republicans in Washington on labour issues, such as Taft-Hartley. The textile drive by the CIO and Textile Workers’ Organising Committee in the latter half of the 1930s had made some inroads into the industry, but these gains were least impressive in the South – by 1939, the union had managed to organise only 7% of the region’s mill hands. A subsequent drive by the Textile Workers’ Union of America, between 1945 and 1955, was an even more dismal failure, and pragmatic efforts to work around the failure by forging cooperative relationships with anti-union politicians

ended up reinforcing the grip of forces that had defeated them: the Democratic Party and white supremacism. (Bernstein, 2010: 616-623; Brattan, 1997; Wilson, 2000: 25 & 108-109; Reich, 1981) The South was thus in a strange place. Southern capital enjoyed political power disproportionate to its economic power. It strategically dominated a region that had a good claim to represent the historical core of the United States. (Macleod, 1974; Blumrosen & Blumrosen, 2007) Yet it also seemed to be in a spotlit enclave where its racial practices were the occasion for global censure (and thus reluctant intervention from Washington, Dudziak, 2000), and where its social problems and seeming underdevelopment relative to the national norm seemed to undermine the grandiose notions that the region's defenders.

It is a commonplace of the American turn to overseas colonies in 1898 that it was coterminous with an extensive nationalisation of sentiment, an anti-sectional impulse that saw north and south re-united. This displacement of domestic tensions in overseas expansion was anticipated and welcomed by statesmen. Woodrow Wilson, for example, held that sectionalism arose primarily over the matter of commercial interests, while the collective commitment to the higher purpose of colonialism would relieve the focus on “the money question” – a classic articulation of what Losurdo calls *KriegsideoLOGIE*. (Thorsen, 1988; Losurdo, 2001) What was nationalised, arguably, was the renascence of white supremacy in the South, so that both press and politicians of the North would express support for the emerging forms of segregation known as Jim Crow, and lament the egalitarian impulses of Reconstruction and the Fifteenth Amendment. (Weston, 1972: 1-15) Yet even at this

moment, the fact is that in the geography of US imperialism, the South was assigned the status of a ‘tropic’ – in Nancy Leys Stephan’s words, “a place of radical otherness to the temperate world”. Its relative backwardness in terms of capitalist development, and its attendant forms of racialised capitalism, fuelled this perception. So while north and south were ostensibly reconciled on the axis of racial nationalism, the regionalisation of the United States, the otherness of the South and its urgent need of reform, was reinforced on the very same ground. (Ring, 2009)

Southern politicians, organic intellectuals and business lobbies responded to this denigration on the plane of culture, arguing for tolerance of their native customs and their rare and delicate cultural ecology. They linked the defence of free markets and cosmopolitanism to the southern ‘way of life’. This was, for example, the tactic of Anthony Hart Harrigan, the first executive director of the Southern States Industrial Council, writing in the National Review. More generally, for racial conservatives the South was a citadel of ordered liberty, of civilization and “aristocratic” virtue. (MacLean, 2010; Lowndes, 2008) Such declarations naturally arouse suspicion. The feudal order to which such categories adverted had long since been subsumed in the South, and they read like nothing so much as the signposted theatics of Dixieland.

If the South’s still rural economy, and supposed cultural staidness and traditionalism, contrasted it with the cultural celerity of the North, this trope adverted only to already racialised (and embourgeoised) assumptions about culture. It colludes with what W T Lahmon described as those “polite external forces” struggling to

maintain sovereignty over insubordinate subaltern forms. (Lahmon, 1998: 152) Of course, the much vaunted traditionalism of the South, culturally enacted in a certain Hellenic formalism in architecture, design and music, was a style peculiar to Ulster Scot and English settlers, and was even there less evident in the working classes than among the Southern gentry. Certainly, such Hellenism was a polite external force relative to the open-ended, experimental and improvised character of much African American culture. (Bronner, 2009; Burrison, 2007: 103) The area in which the South was and remains most distinctive is language, with numerous surviving (or only recently extinct) colonial English dialects alongside Cajun French, Isleño Spanish, and indigenous languages. Southern English itself is a creolised product of “multiple lines of descent”, with a dominant English ‘core’, as well as Scotch-Irish and African grammar, syntax and phonology fusing into a single “speechway”. (Algeo, 2003)

This form of southern cultural particularism can be read through the homogenizing processes of capitalism, not merely as a defensive reaction but as a willing process of commodification. “Dixification”, in which the cultural specificities of the south are absorbed into a spectacular fable of diversity (Dixieland), was already inscribed into the defence of Jim Crow. (Romine, 2008: 1-2) This Dixification-by-speech-act meant that at the precise moment when the apologists of white supremacy were flaunting their feudal sensibilities, they were bidding for incorporation in the American national imaginary on the terms of globalizing industrial capitalism. Anticommunism furnished the means to make this transition

effective. A case, perhaps, where “the royalists are the true pillars of the constitutional republic”.

### **Fordism, the ‘historical bloc’ and languages of hegemony**

#### *Americanism and Fordism: the ‘historical bloc’*

I have suggested that the US was ruled by a Fordist ‘historical bloc’ in the period of classical anticommunism. According to Gramsci, an ‘historical bloc’ consists of an articulation of “structures and superstructures ... That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production.” Within the historical bloc, “material forces are the content and ideologies are the form”, though this distinction is “merely didactic”, because “material forces could not possibly be historically conceived without form, and ideologies would be individual whims without material forces”. (Gramsci, 1971: 471) Gramsci here specified both a formal, conceptual relationship between “two areas of abstract reality”, and a concrete description of the relationship between these two areas in a social formation. The concrete relation is between different social forces, and perhaps different modes of production articulated in a single national economy (as in the Risorgimento). Within this historical bloc, it is possible to have numerous combinations of political alliances and differing distributions of power among dominant classes and fractions, without the basic unity of the bloc being disturbed. For a new historical bloc to come into existence requires a “political initiative” on the part of emerging class forces to shift “the dead weight of

traditional policies". (Sassoon, 1981: 121; Gramsci, 1971: 263) The historical bloc is above all, then, a conjunctural fact.

What is the relation between the 'historical bloc' and hegemony? Gramsci's analysis of 'Americanism and Fordism' centred on the rationalisation of production techniques involved, suggesting that Fordism represented an historically progressive transition away from individualism and competition toward collectivism and planning, albeit one taking place within capitalist logic. It was a transition that was easier to accomplish in the United States owing to the psycho-physical acculturation of workers to industrial life, as well as to the rationalisation of America's demographic composition, so that it lacked the "vast army of parasites", the classes with no economic function, the unproductive landed gentry, clerics and middle classes who still predominated in parts of Europe. Thus, the reactionary forms of resistance to Fordism in Europe, extolling idyllic patriarchy, ruralism, Catholicism and the artisanal life, were largely absent in the United States. (Gramsci, 1971) Just as central to Fordism according to Gramsci was its moral and religious dimension, and particularly the regulation of the sexual instinct. While Gramsci saw a potentially progressive, rational development in this, it was dealt with in a despotic way by Henry Ford, reflecting his need to ensure that workers would be able to reproduce their labour power in its normal state, his wider concern with the sensualisation of culture (epitomised by 'Jewish' jazz), and his support for Prohibition. The living conditions imposed in 'Fordlandia', Ford's failed attempt to create an enclave of Fordist America in Brazil producing rubber, included the regulation of workers' diet

and the export of Prohibition. These represent the most consistent attempt by Ford to impose these norms. For Ford, the corporation was a prototype of the nation, and the habits of its workforce should reflect those of a healthy, Christian society. Fordism was not, then, simply a method of production. It was also a productivist ideology tied to a narrative of civilizational advance, Americanism, and a Christian ethic of labour. (Rupert, 1995; Gramsci, 1971; Grandin, 2010; Beynon, 1984, pp. 40-41)

Yet, it would be erroneous to treat Fordism in itself as the means of labour's incorporation into the post-war system. While Gramsci focuses on the famous 'high wages' of workers under the Fordist pattern, these production methods had consequences that Gramsci's analysis did not envisage. A mainstay of industrial sociology on the subject — particularly from the 'labour process' perspective — is the claim that corporate planning tends to remove skills and initiative from the 'shop floor'. (Braverman, 1974; Pfeffer, 1979; Beynon & Nichols, 1977; Sennett, 1972) In the words of Ford's ghost-writer, the "net result" of these methods was "the reduction of the necessity for thought on the part of the worker". (Rupert, 1995: 63) This gave rise to a zombie-like existence for workers. Resistance to this tendency could take various forms. It could be passive. Workers, Garson (1994), explains, could develop games and objectives to make the work more interesting, or simply refuse to do a bad job by sticking strictly to procedure. Or it could take the form of industrial struggles over the control of the labour process, where it has been a central doctrine of Ford that this is one thing that is not up for negotiation. (Beynon, 1984) There was therefore no necessary reason, if the left in the labour movement was not cannibalised

by anticomunism, why ‘high wages’ alone should deliver industrial peace, or why productivity agreements, often the cause of the intensification of labour and the risks attached to it, and a further shift in control over labour processes to managers, should be the basis for class compromise rather than class struggle.

Importantly, American labour was not merely incorporated into a domestic Fordist bloc, but also its globalization under the rubric of ‘free trade unionism’ and anticomunism. This was possible in part because US planners embraced ‘New Deal’ thinking in their construction of the global financial and economic architecture, repudiating the laissez-faire economic liberalism that, for example, Southern industrialists and policymakers still favoured. (Callinicos, 2009: 165-187; Smith, 2003; Smith, 2005: 82-121) Thus, a liberal world economic order, reinforced by reciprocal trade agreements and Marshall Plan aid, was one which labour could perceive that it had a stake in. It would allow America’s production machine to thrive, create jobs and growth within the US, improve the bargaining power of labour, and constitute the best response to “Soviet Communist imperialism”. (Rupert, 1995: 44-46) While interwar Europe displayed forms of reactionary resistance to ‘Americanisation’, the Fordist model is what was successfully transfused into European productive centres under Washington’s post-WWII hegemony, with the guidance of sympathetic social democratic or Christian Democratic leaderships. (Van der Pijl, 1984) Thus, in the post-war United States, at home and abroad, hegemony flowed from the factory.

## *Hegemonic languages and political identities*

“Italy is a fact, now we need to make Italians.” – Massimo D’Azeglio on Italian unification.

Hegemony is political class leadership, in two senses: 1) leadership within a class alliance, either bourgeois or proletarian; 2) dominance over other classes. Leadership within the “system of class alliances” entails the hegemonic class or fraction assimilating the interests and perspectives of allied classes and providing a moral and intellectual framework that accommodates them. Stuart Hall reminds us that hegemony is neither a normal nor a fixed state, but a condition of rule that must constantly be constructed: “‘hegemony’ is a very particular, historically specific, and temporary ‘moment’, in the life of a society. It is rare for this degree of unity to be achieved, enabling a society to set itself a quite new historical agenda, under the leadership of a specific formation or constellation of social forces. Such periods of ‘settlement’ are unlikely to persist forever. There is nothing automatic about them. They have to be actively constructed and positively maintained.” (Hall, 1986)

Hegemony is that “homogeneous politico-economic historical bloc, without internal contradictions” — an overstatement — which must be consolidated through “conscious, planned struggle”. (Gramsci, 1971: 263)

In what manner is hegemony constructed? Coercion plays an important role, particularly with regard to those excluded from the hegemonic bloc. But while force “can be employed against enemies”, it is ineffective “against a part of one’s own side

which one wishes rapidly to assimilate, and whose ‘good will’ and enthusiasm one needs”. (Gramsci, 1971: 263) In a hegemonic moment, the dominant mode of rule is through ideology. The dominant ideology cements an array of contradictory subject-positions. In this respect, the dominant ideology must incorporate within its body elements of popular ideology, which are then represented as a set of differences, with their specifically antagonistic aspect neutralised. (Mouzelis, 1978) A hegemonic project must transform the terms of political discourse in this manner, creating a new definition of reality.

In this sense, then, we are speaking of hegemonic languages. The dominant register of US anticomunism in the classical period was that of liberal nationalism, in which the United States was extolled as a unique bulwark of democratic freedoms, civil rights and individualism, against the collectivist, undemocratic tyranny of the USSR. While I have maintained that the ‘line of political demarcation’ in anticomunism is the defence of the capitalist social formation, the symbolic field of anticomunism was organised, quilted around the master-signifier of ‘freedom’. The master-signifier of ‘freedom’ organised a chain of cognate signifiers – ‘democracy’, ‘human rights’, ‘choice’, ‘free markets’, ‘diversity’, ‘individualism’, and their negations – in a contested discursive field, in which the Southern white power bloc conducted its hegemonic practices.

This has important resonances in American politics, particularly when contrasted with ‘slavery’. Communists and their allies in the United States were frequently

baited as agents, or at best apologists, of (in Norman Thomas' phrase) "human slavery under Stalin". (Yarnell, 1974: 87) The vernacular of abolitionism is being accessed here, but not only of abolitionism. The institutions of slavery in American history could be reproved as an abridgment of human rights, as in the radical tradition of Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Lydia Marie Child, Benjamin Lundy or the Grimké sisters. But it was as likely to be reviled as a lowly social status that properly belonged only to the raced, as in the tradition of 'white labour republicanism'. (Roediger, 2007)

More broadly, depending on one's sociolect, freedom could mean the freedom to sell one's labour power as one's own property; the freedom to purchase that labour power and put it into circulation with means of production; the freedom to organise a union; the freedom from unionism; the freedom of African Americans as equal citizens in a capitalist democracy; the freedom of a racial caste to enjoy the privileges of segregation; etc. The ability of 'freedom' to occupy this role, then, unifying diverse subject-positions, arises because it is a "tendentially empty signifier", one of several such, enabling "common nuclei of meaning" to be "connotatively linked to diverse ideological-articulatory domains". (Laclau, 1977)

The idioms of 'antitotalitarianism' played a similar role. Cold War 'antitotalitarianism' effectively merged all non-liberal sources of politics into the (curiously ductile, indefinite, polysemous) category of 'totalitarianism'. (Losurdo, 2004) This was not merely a contrivance of Cold War political science, but reflected

concrete experiences. In the workers' movement, the locution 'Red Fascism' began to emerge as the Popular Front Left was strained by revelations concerning the scale of repression in the USSR and the sudden 'anti-imperialist' lurch of the CPUSA in response to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. In effect, what Koestler rendered in fiction, and what Brzezinski et al formalised as an anticommunist orthodoxy, had been anticipated in the organised labour movement. (Rupert, 1995: 156-7) The uses of 'antitotalitarianism' were as diverse as those for 'freedom'. If for the Southern States Industrial Council, civil rights legislation was a "blueprint for totalitarianism", for a liberal Southern woman like Lillian Smith, it was the Southern white supremacist system that was 'totalitarian'. (Sensing, 1964; Smith, 1993: 120). I will now turn to a different aspect of the unity of these subject-positions.

### *Racial populism and southern identity*

For Gramsci, the 'Southern Question' was one of revolutionary praxis: how a revolutionary working class in the north of Italy could unite with southern peasants in a possible hegemonic formation capable of challenging capitalism. The northern bourgeoisie had united Italy's territories in a formation dominated by capitalism, but where feudal relations remained prevalent in the south. Northern attitudes to the south reflected the quasi-colonial relationship between the two: southerners were lazy, backward and feckless. By an obverse logic, northern workers were seen in the south as privileged, overpaid 'lords' involved in a dissolute urban lifestyle whose values were at variance with those obtaining in the south. The problem, then, was that the unity of the popular classes could not be taken for granted, but had to be constructed.

The disaggregation of the peasantry meant that there it could not provide the unifying instance, so the task fell to a centralised and collectivised proletariat. The northern working class, to become hegemonic within a ‘system of alliances’ capable of challenging capitalism, had to incorporate the interests and perspectives of other subaltern classes and fractions. It was no mere task of co-optation: the working class had to offer a programme that would be of real benefit to its potential class allies. It was also necessary to wage cultural struggles to overcome the prejudices that disorganise the popular classes to the advantage of the hegemonic bloc. (Gramsci & Verdicchio, 2005; Santucci, 2010: 101-108)

However, the question that Gramsci studied, though it produced answers that resonated beyond its own subject, was historically determinate, concerned with historically produced systems of difference thrown up in the Italian social formation in the conjuncture following unification. In studying the Southern US, and its role in the anticommunist coalition, my problem is different. The issue raised is how the combatants of anticommunism successfully disorganise popular class opposition and incorporate elements of the popular classes. The traditions of Southern populism must be considered carefully. I have suggested that racial populism in the South worked as a similar factor in the incorporation of white workers as class compromise did in the North. In fact, Southern populism possessed almost the opposite valence before its defeat to capitalist class forces in the late 19th Century. Although the movement emerged over the defence of customary rights and traditions that were under attack from capitalist forces, it swiftly gave a new cultural and political form to

the intensifying class antagonisms in the rural South, and also attempted to connect these to similar experiences in the North and West. The cooperation between the Southern Farmers' Alliance and the Knights of Labor eventually produced a platform for a populist class alliance, a common political and economic endeavour in the short-lived People's Party. The movement foundered on its own segregated structures, and on the unresolved tensions between the conservative and radical wings which expressed class divisions between propertied farmers and tenant farmers. It ran up against the limits of its political vision, rooted in the defence of small producers which had been central to Southern politics since the American Revolution, and finally it suffered from the co-optation of significant aspects of its agenda by the Democratic Party. (Hahn, 2006)

Southern 'racial populism' is, by contrast, that form of political practice elaborated by the Democratic Party through the defeat of Southern populism and the development of Jim Crow. In interpreting this, I find Laclau's concept of populism as a form of popular-democratic interpellation, working on the antagonism between the 'people' and the 'power bloc', useful – with some caveats. For Laclau, populism is a discursive, ideological phenomenon, since the 'people' do not exist in productive relations. Whereas class antagonisms operate at all levels of the mode of production, and relate to the fundamental conflict between the working class and the ruling class, populist interpellations work on the antagonism between the people and the power bloc. 'Populism' is a 'tendentiously empty signifier', with no class connotations and thus a raw material in the waging of class struggles. In the hands of dominant classes

and fractions, this permits “the presentation of popular-democratic interpellations as a synthetic-antagonistic complex with respect to the dominant ideology”. This is to say, there is oppositional content to popular-democratic articulations which can be absorbed and neutralised, or the dominant classes and fractions can, when hegemony breaks down, organise the oppositional content in an antagonistic thrust to re-organise the power bloc rather than depose it. (One can think here of the New Right’s articulation of certain popular ideas in a reactionary discourse aimed at re-organising the Fordist-Keynesian bloc as a neoliberal bloc.) (Laclau, 1977; Mouzelis, 1978)

Racial populism involves, for these purposes, the signifier of ‘race’ acting as a tendentially empty signifier in which class connotations have been displaced onto the terrain of race. But this does not merely mean the absorption of oppositional content: rather, in the Deep South, it was articulated in a “synthetic-antagonistic complex” regarding the dominant ideology of liberal nationalism. It set up white, Christian, Southern folk in counterposition to Jews, ‘Papists’, African Americans, the Federal government (at least, the institutions of the New Deal), and of course communists, whose insidious work could be located behind each of the former.

Racial populist interpellations thus produced a folkish, Southern political identity, one of the multiple identities articulated within the anticomunist carapace. Gramsci’s insight was to see in bourgeois hegemonic practices the elaboration of a unity in division: that is, Italian unity on capitalist terms meant the division of popular classes along cultural, ethnic lines. But identities do are not stable factors in

politicisation. If identity is indeed a ‘politics of location,’ then the political uses of a given identity are partially contingent on the location it inhabits. If the process of identification begins with the necessarily fictive narrativization of the self, this very fact that this process is fictive, that it is semi-arbitrarily sutured, means that an identity never has the unified, settled character that (some of) the advocates of ‘identity politics’ tend to claim for it, and is thus susceptible to contestation. (Hall, 2003)

The susceptibility of such identification to more or less universal, or particular, articulations has to do with its location in the social structure and the calculable interests of its bearers. Identification, after all, proceeds through the identification of others with similar values and interests. The closure of identity is, moreover, only semi-arbitrary, as it can take place along lines of real antagonism. As fields of politicisation, some identities are more potentially universal than others, to the extent that their relationship to the dominant relations of exploitation and oppression can open them to communist interpellation. The dominant liberal nationalist register of Cold War anticommunism offers, of course, only that parochial form of universalism peculiar to empires, one which has limited appeal for the oppressed or most exploited, but which successfully interpellated the relatively better off sections of the working class. In the South, we find folkishness and particularism rather than universality on the anticommunist side. These identities, though perhaps inadequate for a would-be world hegemon, also made their claim on Americanism. Indeed, they claimed to represent the only true Americanism, the white, Christian, patriarchal

America of free enterprise and Anglo-Saxon democracy which alone could withstand the solvent effects of communism. And the South was the sector of US society that favoured American expansionism more than any other, despite reservations about the incorporation of multiracial states like Hawaii into the union (which was as much anticommunist as racist, given employers' express fears that the ILWU ran the island-state like a socialist dictatorship). (Gaughan, 1999; Ziker, 2007) The seeming paradox of Cold War hegemonic politics is that the unity and dominance of the US ruling class in the classical period of anticommunism rested on cleavages in the social formation in which it reproduced itself, while its universalism depended on its perpetuation of oppressive particularisms.

### *Social movements: overcoming reification.*

In the last analysis, the defence and breakdown of Southern segregation, the 'way of life' to which everyone from Faubus to Wallace was committed, hinged on the formation of coalitions in movement. The efficacy of anticommunism in cohering segregationists and disorganising civil rights activists was ultimately tested in a struggle between two social movements: Massive Resistance, and Civil Rights. I deal with these two movements in some detail, in Chapters Seven and Eight, but analysing things in this way poses a problem: in what conditions is it intelligible to call 'Massive Resistance' a social movement?

There is certainly a tendency for social movement theorists to write as if, in Paul Byrne's words, social movement supporters were "clearly located on the left of the

spectrum". (Byrne, 1997: 74) Such a view is at least questionable: mass movements of the right are as much part of the historical landscape as those of the left. (Davidson, 2013) Aside from this, there is a tendency to speak of an emergent "social movement society" (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998), part of a a "global civil society" in opposition to public authorities<sup>1</sup> (Colas, 2001; James & Van Seters, 2014; Purdue, 2007), which exists in "a field of autonomy or of independence vis-a-vis the system" (Melucci, 1980: 220), and attempts to "emancipate" civil society "from the state" (Offe, 1980). The African American civil rights movement which reached its peak between the years of 1954 and 1968 is considered an archetypal example of the emerging 'new social movement' format which since became the dominant form of collective action by organised publics. (Giugni, 1999: xiii-xiv) Where might Massive Resistance fit into this schema?

Massive Resistance seems to pose a problem for this conception in a number of ways. It certainly involved collective agencies and actions "in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities". (Tarrow, quoted in Giugni, 1999: xxi-xxii.) Likewise, it entailed "sustained, organised public effort making collective claims on target authorities", using a "repertoire" of contentious tactics, performances and "representations of WUNC: worthiness, united, numbers and commitment". (Tilly, 2004: 3-4) And yet, at the same time, it was also a rightist *counter-movement*, an attempt to suppress social change, waged against a civil society movement and

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<sup>1</sup> This may be related to the view of social movements as a format particular to leftist politics. Tilly, acknowledging that this has not always been the case, nonetheless refers to a "right-wing appropriation of social movement forms", implying that the format has a genetic belonging to the left. (2004: 89-90) Robin (2011: 41-60) provides a wider context for this view, in which the Right historically adopts its modes of organising and ideological strategies from the Left.

supported by elites and several public authorities. Its action, at various points, transcended the state-civil society dichotomy implied in so much social movement literature, whether embedded in the ‘resource mobilization theory’ (RMT) problematic, or that of ‘New Social Movement’ (NSM) theory. (There is, perhaps, more than an element of truth in Castells’s criticism of social movement theories for reducing the heteroclite elements of social movements “into a single category, ‘The Poor’ fighting back at ‘The Establishment’”. (Castells, 1983: 49)) One strategy for resolving this problem would be to loosen the definition, adopting even more abstract descriptive criteria. Thus, Snow, Soule & Kriesi refer only to “some extra- or non-institutional collective action”, which allows for movements with some types of ‘institutional’ action in their repertoire. Offe (1985) refers to “a space of noninstitutional politics” which cuts across the divide, in liberal political theory, between public and private. In a similar way, Diani and Della Porta define social movements as collective engagements “involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents” meant to “promote or oppose social change”, engaged in episodes of collective action which “are perceived as components of a longer-lasting action”, “linked by dense informal networks”, and sharing “a distinct collective identity.” (Della Porta & Diani, 2006: 20) This too would be consistent with the patterns of Massive Resistance.

Yet, what is striking about these definitions is that they operate at a purely empirical and descriptive level, and as such the theoretical generalisations are pointedly indeterminate: “in sustained interaction”; “sustained, organised”; “some ...

action”; “perceived as components of a longer-lasting action”. Quite what constitutes sustained, or longer-lasting, action is necessarily unclear. What is the difference between a campaign and a social movement in this context? How much non- or extra-institutional action relative to institutional action constitutes a social movement? What organisations count as institutions? For example, a social movement against the institution of segregation might involve the institutions of organised labour, liberal lobbies, the civil rights infrastructure, and elements of the Democratic and Republican parties. What exactly is extra- or non-institutional about this? Another criteria we might apply is to say that a social movement is broader than a particular protest event, or even an individual campaign. How much protest activity is sufficient to make the difference? How does a campaign acquire enough mass and momentum to become a social movement? It seems that the category of the ‘social movement’, having been taken for granted, is impossible to pin down by reference to any determinate characteristics.

I would suggest that the fundamental problem here is a reification of the category. That is, it takes a classification – the ‘social movement’, as the label for a series of apparent social *outcomes* – as a given, and sets about trying to define its characteristics and relate them functionally to one another. The classification, and then subsequently the theory, begins to function as knowledge, and the glaring aporiae in the theory no longer noticed. Melucci (1996: 5) attests to his “dismay” as the category of “new social movements” which he coined “has been progressively reified” such that “contemporary collective phenomena” are taken to “constitute

unitary empirical objects". It becomes arguably worse when various concepts referring to certain social movement dynamics, such as 'ethnic-competition' (Cunningham, 2012), are reified and treated as if they explain phenomena rather than demanding explanation.

In order to find a route out of this deadlock, it is necessary to ask: what is the underlying problematic here, and what is its *yield*? What dilemmas is it trying to avoid, and what dynamics is it trying to explain? Answering this concisely necessarily involves a degree of reduction and glides over certain complexities, but in broad historical terms it can be said that social movement studies emerged in response to an emergent form of political organisation and activity in which: i) radicalised middle class elements played a leadership role, rather than the labour movement; ii) the extant political Left was problematised as out-datedly authoritarian; and iii) the mode of action tended to involve 'direct actions' such as sit-ins, roadblocks, or occupations, rather than the emphasis being on traditional strikes, marches or lobbying. (Davidson, 2013: 279) That is, there is a comparative aspect of social movement theory: these movements are in the first instance being measured against the benchmark of traditional left-wing labour movements. Against these standards, the emerging social movements are found to be oriented toward symbolic, cultural and social gains which are distinct from traditional economic-class gains. They do not 'interpellate' their subjects as members of a class so much as of members of an identity-based group. These changes are then said to be related to the institutionalisation and perpetuation of the social movement format as the main mode

of democratic participation, as a result of changes to the structures of work, consumption, urban living, and communication in post-industrial societies.<sup>2</sup> (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Snow, Soule & Kriesi, 2004; Touraine, 1971; Offe, 1985) The yield, then, is that the analysis of social movements appears to provide a complexification of theory to match the complexification of social structure. It stresses the autonomy of the symbolic and cultural dimensions of action, against the (actual and perceived) economic-reductionism or class-reductionism of traditional marxist analyses. In place of misleading conceptions of a totalised, centred social structure, it produces new concepts, such as ‘the network’, or the ‘social milieu’, and the analysis of technological and communicative structures in the formation of such. (Touraine, 1971: 28-29; Castells, 2009; Melucci, 1996)

There is, however, another compelling basis for the reification. In his *Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Gaston Bachelard (1964: 59) anatomised the “epistemological obstacles” posed to the understanding of the phenomenon of fire by the intuitions which had developed around fire as an apparent object. Bachelard refers to the “substantialistic obstacle” and the “animistic obstacle” which arise in attempting to understand the phenomenon. (Bachelard, 1964: 62-63). These are not mere delusions. There are qualities of the experience of fire, Bachelard suggests, which give rise to the possibility of viewing fire in this way, as either a substance or subject. However, while these qualities can be situated at the level of the Lacanian

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<sup>2</sup> These observations are most applicable to ‘New Social Movement’ (NSM) theories, and less so to ‘resource-mobilisation’ theories (RMT), whether of the “entrepreneurial” or “political process” declination. The latter offer a different type of yield, in that they are concerned with the political and economic rationalities of social movements, above all the opportunities and resources available to different actors. (See McCarthy & Zald, 2001)

‘real’, it is at the level of the symbolic order that their meaning is fixed. That is, it is the fire ‘idea’ which gives rise to the palpable experience of fire as an ‘object’. (Bratsis, 2002: 260-264) The reification of social movements occurs in part because the idea is itself formative of the experience of them. In this light, social movements can appear as an essence through which the various contradictory manifestations can be related to one another functionally, or as the emergency of a type of historical subjectivity in which the same contradictory phenomena are likewise given a spurious coherence.

In Chapter Seven, I develop an approach to social movements based on the social processes from which they emerge, pivoted above all on the problem of social reproduction, while at the same time proposing some interpretive principles which help account for tendencies in right-wing social movements.

### **Conclusion: the aims of this research**

This research sets out to achieve a number of related objectives. It aims to demonstrate that Cold War anticommunism played a critical role in the prolongation of the Southern white-supremacist system, which had entered into crisis by the post-war period. Approaching this problem from a number of starting points, it seeks to provide an integrated account of the intersection of anticommunism and racism on the international level, the national and local state level, the economic (or geoeconomic level), and the level of discourse. I argue that anticommunism provided

a means of managing several transitional problems: the restructuring of the world-system under US dominance; the restructuring of the American state to meet the demands of its new international role; the realignment of national and Southern politics in order to marginalise labour militants and leftists and enable a period of political stability and profitable accumulation to ensue; the temporary deflection of crisis tendencies in the Jim Crow system by means of their political management through reorganised state apparatuses and the emergence of new coalitions secured by anticomunism. Meanwhile, at the level of discourse, I identify a distinct fantasmatic kernel which I claim structures the ideology of white-supremacist anticomunism, while helping to account for some of its dysfunctionality.

These different levels of analysis are then brought to bear in the assessment of Massive Resistance and Civil Rights as social movements, wherein I aim to demonstrate: i) that Cold War anticomunism disrupted and deflected the emergence of a precious civil rights movement rooted in leftist and labour movements; ii) that in the initial phase of Massive Resistance, anticomunism both cohered and mobilised a new right-wing coalition, and helped disrupt and suppress an emerging civil rights coalition; iii) that, however, the thawing of international pressures, the declining efficacy of anticomunism at a national level and the repudiation of anticomunist laws by the Supreme Court, ensured that the strategy began to fall apart, while creating a political opportunity for Civil Rights. In the conclusion, I will qualify this argument in a number of ways, suggesting that there were a number of ways in which anticomunism could have been counterproductive to the defence of white-

supremacy. Yet, the overall point will stand that the main effect of anticomunism was to prolong the life of segregation, and to delay the coming of its civil rights nemesis.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY: Up to my neck in it.

The questions raised in this research concern the relationship of the Cold War, and particularly the ensemble of anticommunist practices deployed under its rubric, to the preservation or destruction of segregation in the southern United States.

The thesis is that anticommunism promulgated by and through the national state during the Cold War was centrally a *hegemonic project* which had the effect of prolonging the life of segregation, managing and delaying a life-threatening crisis by: empowering Southern politicians to limit the advance of civil rights goals within the state; augmenting the repressive capacities of the state so as to ensure social stability and, as a result, weakening pro-civil rights organisation; disrupting and disintegrating an emerging pro-civil rights coalition until the emergence of a neonate alliance in Montgomery, Alabama; cohering a segregationist coalition offering maximum resistance to civil rights, particularly in the half-decade following *Brown vs Board of Education*; supplying that coalition with the political techniques, repressive repertoires, and intelligence to assail the civil rights movement; and providing an important ideological resource which could help explain, rationalise and motivate resistance to civil rights. However, while temporarily deflecting the crises of Jim Crow (1945-1954), anticommunism suffered declining efficacy at the national level from the mid-1950s onward, as international conflicts thawed, HUAC and SISS declined in power, and the Supreme Court struck down anticommunist decisions.

This provided a political opportunity for Civil Rights, while undermining the efficacy of white-supremacist anticommunism beyond the South. However much I nuance this claim, this is the argument I sustain throughout the work.

This account also depends upon a series of subsidiary, supporting arguments, in that it implies a number of claims about: i. the nature of the Cold War itself as a series of determinant processes working across different domains (international, national, regional; and economic, political and ideological); ii. the relationship of Southern segregation to US capitalism, its class formations, and its political systems; iii. the nature of ‘race’ as an organising idea in a social formation the relative roles of ideology and coercion in the maintenance of political authority and leadership; iv. the nature of state power and its relationship to social classes and their constitution; and v. the role of ideology as a formative factor in daily life as well as in political and social contest.

It also mobilises a particular conceptual apparatus which defines in advance some of what I think is taking place. To the usual marxist system of concepts such as mode of production, relations/forces of production, mode of extraction, surplus value/exploitation, base/superstructure, and class struggle, I add the Gramscian lexis of hegemony, historic bloc consent/coercion, moral direction, transformism, passive revolution, geoeconomy, and systems of alliances. This is further augmented and leavened by concepts drawn from other marxists and a wide range of non-marxist thinkers (with a particular role for Lacanian psychoanalysis, to which I will return).

The appropriateness of this theoretical approach has already been described in Chapter One, but in brief it can be stated as follows. While core marxist concepts connect different levels of social practice and reproduction by reference to underlying structural-relational mechanisms and without the need for a detailed account of subjectivity and agency, Gramsci's marxism seeks to develop, from the core of historical materialist concepts, a rich explanatory repertoire for dealing with political agency and ideological subjectivity, and the connections between these and political dominance. This approach allows one to relate political and ideological processes to productive and economic processes (for example, by treating ideology as formative of productive relations), without collapsing the former into the later. It respects the specific effectiveness of the different 'instances' of a social formation. This is fruitful for an analysis of both race and anticomunism, since both operate primarily at a political and ideological register, but can also have a formative, organising role in the organisation of work, extraction and the constitution of classes. It also helps to develop an account of the complementary/contesting roles of anticomunism as both violence and moral persuasion in securing segregation. And it helps explain how ideologies of race and anticomunism might play a role in cohering alliances (of classes and class fractions) at a certain time and place, and fragmenting them at another time and place.

The knowledge claims which I advance in this research are therefore of a particular type. They are not, in the first instance, value-neutral, but proceed on the premise that any description of the social world is necessarily value-laden. They

imply in their conceptual foundations a political commitment which must be taken into account. They also do not rest on the deduction of laws from empirical data, in the positivist fashion. Causal inferences are not made on the basis of 'constant conjunctions' (which are vanishingly rare in the social world), but on the basis of generative mechanisms and relations proposed by theory (historical materialism). The theoretical relations and processes described here are offered as plausible explanations for the observed phenomena, rather than as 'real' entities in themselves. These explanations are supported by certain empirical controls and contrasts established in the historical analysis, archival research, discourse analysis and case studies, which are intended to exclude or diminish the persuasive power of contrasting explanations. Empirical controls are established, for example, by comparing and contrasting distinct eras (what happened in 1954-1954, as compared to 1955-1965), distinct situations (Civil Rights and Massive Resistance campaigns in Arkansas and Alabama), and actual with possible outcomes (the conditions existing for the emergence of an effective civil rights movement in the immediate post-war period, as compared to its failure to materialise). In sum, while the work proceeds on the basis of an historical materialist ontology (already described in Chapter One), the epistemological framework is most consistent with that of 'critical realism'. (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 2013; Collier, 1994)

## **Structure of the Research & Exposition**

The nature of the research subject indicated a requirement for primarily qualitative methods of analysis, and an epistemology and theoretical stance concordant with

such methods. This is, of course, not as straightforward an assertion as it may appear since increasingly the emphasis in social sciences is on ‘mixed methods research,’ wherein research is considered best positioned on a continuum between quantitative and qualitative. (Cresswell, 2003) The research questions concern complex patterns of behaviour and events, and the equally complex meanings behind them. This certainly necessitated detailed, ‘thick’ description and analysis of what I have framed as ‘the conjuncture’. But it did not preclude quantitative methods, such as the creation or statistical analysis of datasets. Nonetheless, such methods simply proved unnecessary to make my argument, and arguably would have involved an inefficient use of limited time and resources.<sup>3</sup> And because the research question pertained to historical events most of whose participants can be presumed deceased, there was no possibility of accumulating this qualitative data through direct interview or ethnographic observation. Instead, the qualitative methods I used included: the analysis of historical materials using critical theory, document and discourse analysis, case studies, and ‘constant comparative’ methods.

Because the theoretical object of the research was ‘the conjuncture’ (1945-1965) and what I have argued was a hegemonic project developing, rising and falling within it, I found it useful to analyse the distinct ‘levels’ or ‘instances’ (economic, political

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<sup>3</sup> Arguably, at any rate, “the differences between the quantitative and qualitative traditions are only stylistic and are methodologically and substantively unimportant”. (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994: 5)

and ideological) on which hegemony operates.<sup>4</sup> The way in which I analysed these 'instances' was largely determined by the nature of the Cold War conjuncture and the questions the research posed about it. In particular, the analyses of two social movements, Massive Resistance and Civil Rights, which form the apex of this research, proceed on the basis of an original account of social movements which resists the reification of the category, 'social movement,' and instead seeks to explain them as a series of outcomes of economic, political, and ideological processes wherein a given set of social relations is put in question. The explanations and inferences used in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight are inductively dependent on the inferences developed in the preceding chapters, which are structured in such a way as to isolate distinct forms of transitional crisis and the role of anticomunism in the management of each. So:

- i. 'the political' is divided up into the international system of competing national states, the national state, and the local 'sites of power' which organise the distribution of state power (Poulantzas, 2014) because the political context of the Cold War was determined at all three distinctive levels of political power. In the first instance, the meaning and use of Cold War anticomunism was determined by the structure of international competition between rival national states with formal commitments to, respectively, communism and capitalist democracy. It

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<sup>4</sup> My theoretical gamble is that these 'instances' correspond to real differences in the social field, predicated on distinct types of practice producing different types of social relationship. Here, though I use an Althusserian concept, I am not referring to Althusser's 'regional' theory of the capitalist mode of production (Jessop, 1982), wherein it is conceived of as a structure of three distinct structures (economy, politics and ideology). Rather, I am relying on a 'relational' theory in which the economic, political and ideological are always-already mutually articulated and only separable for analytical purposes.

was determined in the second place by political struggles at the level of the national state, over the balance of political forces that would decide the direction of policy and social organisation in the post-war United States. And thirdly, it was determined by a struggle over the future of white-supremacist political organisation in the Southern states. Understanding the role of anticomunism at these three levels of political practice is necessary, and their interaction, is essential in order to identify the degrees to which Cold War anticomunism facilitated and impeded Civil Rights and Massive Resistance. For example, as will be seen in Chapter Eight, if Cold War anticomunism is understood primarily as an international struggle for democracy as opposed to communist totalitarianism, then one could make a strong case for saying that it offered a unique political opportunity structure for African Americans in their struggle for democracy. If, contrarily, it is understood to embrace a multifarious set of struggles for the international strategic dominance of powerful sectors of US capital linked to the management of colonial breakdown and the re-ordering of the global ‘colour line’ (Du Bois, 2007), for the domestic dominance and relative cohesion of a coalition of capitalist fractions organised as a ‘power bloc’ (whose fissiparousness, given inter-capitalist competition and fractionalisation, can be considered a constant difficulty of political rule), and for the preservation of white-supremacy, above all in the Southern states, then one could make a powerful case for saying that Cold War anticomunism closed down opportunity-structures for African Americans pursuing democratisation.

ii. the economic is analysed primarily in relation to the Southern 'geoeconomy' (Hoare & Smith, 1971) and its evolution and political management, because this is the level at which economic developments made the greatest impact on the course of Civil Rights and Massive Resistance struggles, as well as the availability of Southern populations for anticommunist practices. In particular, if the crisis of Jim Crow was driven in part by industrialisation and urbanisation and its demographic effects, the breakdown of relations of personal authority which secured white-supremacy in rural economies, and the development of new labour processes and production systems, then one might anticipate that the conditions in those states which were least equipped to adapt to these changes would be most conducive to Massive Resistance campaigns, irrespective of the role of anticommunism. The analysis of this geoeconomic crisis in Chapter Four focuses on North Carolina, a comparatively affluent and centralised Southern state where these transitional tendencies were most advanced, and in particular on textiles, the culturally, politically and economically dominant industry in the South. However, the later discussion of Massive Resistance and Civil Rights in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight finds these tendencies operating throughout the South, and a number of case studies are chosen to control for the extent of their operation; and

iii. the ideological is dealt with using a Lacanian analysis of the discourses of anticommunism and white-supremacy, in order to address the question of whether there is a 'fit' between these discourses, and what the subjective investments in their combination might be. There would be room, as the

conclusion suggests, for a wider discussion of the cultural and ideological forms of the post-war United States and the Southern states, or for an analysis of ideological-state apparatuses (churches, families, and schools for example) and their role in the transitional crises of Jim Crow. Nonetheless, with limited time and space, I have prioritised the goal of determining where and how the ideologies of race and anticomunism are subjectively articulated. I decided to approach ideology in this register, using Lacanian analysis, partially for strategic reasons - that is, to counteract any tendencies toward excessively *rationalising* the uses of anticomunism in segregationist practice and thereby *flattening* it as either simply a lucid instrumentalisation or as a delusion. Another reason to opt for a discourse analysis was to push against the limits of interpretive sociology, or *Verstehen*. To some extent, understanding in this sense is essential in this type of qualitative research, since I am setting out to comprehend motives, and place actions in an “intelligible … context of meaning”. (Weber, 1978: 8) Nevertheless, I work on the premise that motives may not always be accessible to this kind of understanding, and that actions may at times neither speak for themselves nor be spoken for by their context. We may, for example, infer from the fact that a crowd of white Southerners bear placards describing “Race Mixing” as “Communism” that they regard racial integration as inimical to America’s economic and political systems, as being driven by communist actors and interests, and as being informed by communist ideology. But we could equally draw other conclusions: for example, that they regard it as useful to link integration to communism in this way, in order to undermine the legitimacy of the former, or that linking the two is

a helpful mobilising tool, or that it solves certain cognitive difficulties, or that it is what God decrees. Given that it is not possible for the researcher to know better than actors themselves what motivated them, I have chosen a discourse analysis method in order to study what they themselves say. But since those actors often do not give a good account of their own motives and preferences, I have chosen a Lacanian approach to analysing their text which provides me with a series of conceptual tools by which to anatomise and interpret the symptomatic gaps and contradictions in how actors explain themselves.

The relations thus identified between the variables of analysis through the study of these ‘instances’ are then brought to bear in the study of two social movements, Civil Rights and Massive Resistance, wherein the economic, political and ideological determinants of their success or failure are anatomised.

This research is, finally, in large part a study of social movements as potentially hegemonic or counter-hegemonic formations, and the conditions for their emergence, and subsequent success or failure. The analysis of social movements was not the only way in which this subject could have been approached. Since a hegemonic project is first and foremost a project for *class leadership*, the research focus should help explain how classes are composed and formed for political leadership. It would be quite logical, for example, to pivot the research on labour processes and their management and examine how anticomunism and segregationism intersected to disorganise the working class (cf Korstad, 2003). The decision to identify social

movements as the focus for research, as the ‘Research Narrative’ explains, was driven by the preliminary findings of the empirical research, which indicated that white-supremacist anticommunism was most relevant to the political and ideological determinants of class formation.

## **Case Studies**

In order to drill deeper into the historical strata and develop further evidence to support the research arguments, I decided to identify and investigate a number of case studies using a combination of scholarship and archived documents such as newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets, interview transcripts, leaflets, membership cards and correspondence. In choosing the case studies, I aspired to meet three conditions. First, the cases should all pertain directly to an example where the reproduction of Jim Crow is challenged. Second, they should present detailed evidence capable of testing the causal inferences developed in the research. Third, the cases should be sufficiently different from one another in their characteristics to enable ‘maximal’ comparison, thus controlling for the influence of certain variables such as the degree of urbanisation and industrialisation, demographic composition, the centralisation or decentralisation of the local state formation, and the traditions of political accommodation with or hostility to civil rights demands. Thus, in the penultimate three chapters, I study three cases:

- i. the Massive Resistance campaign to close Georgia schools and the white liberal campaign to keep them open (1958-1961);

- ii. the Arkansas Civil Rights movement, and the Massive Resistance campaign that developed in opposition to it (1955-1961); and
- iii. the Alabama Civil Rights movement and Massive Resistance opposition (1955-1965).

Example i. concerns a moment of profound crisis for the state of Georgia, wherein the future of the state's arguably underdeveloped economic base and its educated labour force is put at risk in the attempt to defend a segregated school system that is in great danger. It is, as such, exactly where one should expect to find some of the dynamics and causal mechanisms described throughout the research. If white-supremacist anticomunism has a particular role in conserving white-supremacy, one should expect to find it here. The example also provides a wealth of discursive data which I was able to analyse in order to test the inferences established in Chapter Six, on white-supremacist anticomunist discourse.

Example ii. deals with the sharp and seemingly unpredictable lurch of Arkansas political elites from a posture of accommodation with civil rights to one of truculent hostility leading to a series of humiliating showdowns with the Federal government. Here, a border state with 'moderate' political traditions, an advanced industrial infrastructure and a rapidly urbanising population, which seemed well-equipped to handle the demands of transitioning away from segregation, suddenly proved remarkably brittle. Here again, the reproduction of traditional systems of authority

and social control were in peril, and if white-supremacist anticomunism played a role in shoring up tradition, it would do so in Arkansas.

Example iii. addresses the emergence and subsequent trajectory of the Civil Rights movement in Alabama, beginning in Montgomery and culminating in Selma. There, local political elites had traditions of relative racial ‘moderation,’ combined with class-populism. Indeed, politicians of this ilk tended to do well in the immediate aftermath of Brown. But as the Civil Rights movement developed, so too did powerful mechanisms of repression, emergency legal measures and well-connected segregationist campaigns linked to repressive apparatuses, to stop it. Almost to a unique degree, Alabama political elites — with considerable white support — maintained resistance to the bitter end. This represents another opportunity to test for the salient presence of anticomunist politics and ideology.

Just as important as their similarities is where these examples differ. Arkansas was a traditionally accommodationist border state with a left-tinged Governor and a policy of ‘minimum compliance’ when its struggles began. It had a well-developed industrial infrastructure, an effective, centralised state, and a public opinion that was by no means diehard segregationist. Yet, it rapidly became one of the leading outposts of Massive Resistance. Georgia was an overwhelmingly segregationist, Deep South state with a strongly segregationist political leadership, and an underdeveloped and still largely rural economy, when the Massive Resistance school closures campaign began. Yet, within three years, the state’s political leadership had effectively ceased

all Resistance policies and began to engineer a policy of minimum compliance. Alabama was the least economically developed of any of these states, the least politically centralised and least equipped to reorganise its traditional forms of political authority. Even though its initial response to Brown vs the Board of Education had not been to support hardline segregationism, it became notorious for precisely this. The differences in geoeconomic development, demographic patterns, state capacity, and political tradition and trajectories, allow for these factors to be controlled and either excluded as significant causal factors, or taken into account. Ultimately, if white-supremacist anticomunism plays a similar political and ideological role in all three cases, one can infer that it relates to what they have in common - the transitional crises of Jim Crow - rather than what distinguishes them.

## **Choosing Archives**

This is a work primarily of historical and political sociology and, as indicated, it is qualitative rather than quantitative in its approach. It is based on i) a case study methodology; ii) archival research; iii) document analysis, bringing psychoanalytic, discourse analysis and methods of historical interpretation to bear; iv) a dialogic engagement with the texts and other materials discovered in the archives.

The research disposes of four types of data. The first is documentary archives (business records, letters, newspaper clippings); the second is oral history records (discussions with civil rights activists, textile workers, housekeepers, etc); the third is secondary texts; and the fourth is interview material with subjects bearing relevant

experience or expertise. Since the period I am looking at covers a period some 50-70 years ago, and involves generations that have largely passed on, my access to the period overwhelmingly consists of recorded oral transcripts and documentary sources. While the majority of the information which allows me to develop the historical and political context of this subject takes the form of secondary sources, books written by historians, anthropologists, sociologists and geographers at some spatial and temporal remove from the events described, several archives have been approached for primary resources.

The archives of primary materials accessed include:

- The Southern Regional Council papers, 1944-1968. Library of Congress, Washington DC
- The Frank Porter Graham Papers, 1908-1990. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill NC
- The Glencoe Mills Records, 1837-1978. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill NC
- Civil Rights Greensboro project, University of North Carolina. Greensboro NC
- The Southern Oral History Program Collection, 1973-2013. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill NC
- ‘Broadsides Collection’. Digital archive. University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, AL.

- The Citizens' Council newspaper. Digital archive. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Ku Klux Klan newspaper clippings. Digital archive. Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL.
- The King Center. Digital archive. Atlanta, GA.

These archives cover a wide range of materials, from individual correspondence to institutional records; from newsletters and trade publications to bus schedules; from political campaign literature to oral recollections. They cover events pertinent to Massive Resistance and Civil Rights in Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi and North Carolina, but they also cover the wider arc of Southern history. The kinds of information they yield are overwhelmingly discursive, and thus appropriate to the development of 'thick,' detailed narrative, and the interpretation of meaningful action. These are by no means the *only* archives I could have used in light of my research problematic. They are the archives which were referenced in key texts, and which I was able to gain access to digitally or in person. The fact that other salient archives are not included in this list is simply an indication of the limits of time and resources, particularly given the late reorganisation of the research (see 'Research Narrative' later in this chapter). But the omission of an enormous amount of potentially relevant data has to be taken as read and factored in as a limitation of the research.

The advantages that these types of source material seem to offer are that: i) they appear to offer an immediate glimpse into an historical period that has passed; ii) they are authoritative in the sense that the documents have been through a process of verification, selection and cataloguing by reputable knowledge-producing institutions; iii) they are comprehensive in that the documents appear to cover an exceptionally broad range of individual and institutional activities; and iv) at least insofar as they are documents, they appear to ‘speak for themselves’ and impose their own meaning that is independent of the researcher’s will.

However, no archive speaks for itself. To begin with, the archives consist of already selected, arranged and thematically sorted materials, the integrity of which depends upon a great many factors. The types of materials compiled can include: i) systematic records of correspondence, meeting minutes, memoranda, legal notices and transcripts of public talks, according to the practices of the original archival source, be it a corporation, an academic, or a civil society body; ii) more or less random collections of the newspaper clippings, collected brochures, letters, receipts and memorabilia assembled over a period of time by an individual or the head office of an organisation. The archive viewer is then left to contend with the question of what sort of biases informed the original production of the materials, their being kept as a record by individuals or institutions, their being selected as important by a library or other institution, their being catalogued in particular ways. One must also take into account the historical conjuncture in which these documents were originally produced, with its complex of economic, political and ideological formations.

In the case of the Glencoe Mills records, for instance, it is clear that two types of documents were retained: official company documents and the private and personal documents of Walter Green, the last manager of Glencoe Mills. These may reflect the priorities of the firm, in that matters pertaining to production, turnover and accounts would be more likely to be discussed than the concerns of the population of the mill village and the workers on the plant at Burlington. They may also reflect the career and concerns of Walter Green. The fact that these documents were recovered and donated as a gift to the University of North Carolina by Preservation North Carolina would also reflect the importance given to official documentary resources. The archivists then had to select a form of cataloguing by theme and period which reflected extant historical concerns, which arguably acted against the discovery of new patterns and types of knowledge. And, of course, the researcher's discovery of the archives depends to a large extent upon information available in the existing literature, known to historians and sociologists, and otherwise available through online search facilities. This again has a tendency to lead one to already well-traversed archives. There is no ready solution to these problems. One way of counteracting the dominance of official data is recourse to oral histories involving detailed interviews with workers and other citizens whose concerns are often overlooked in the archives. I have chosen to deal with the tendency toward the reproduction of existing knowledge by applying critical and reflexive theory of the kind discussed in the literature review. And the biases of an individual, an institution

or a conjecture can only be acknowledged as an inevitable aspect of the records and discounted for in the presentation of findings.

Perhaps one of the biggest problems facing a researcher is the sheer volume of material in many of the archives, and the difficulty of selecting rational criteria for choosing where to look and how much time to spend on each area. I have had to select procedures and criteria for each particular archive – adjusted to its structure, the material basis of the record (boxes of papers or microform, for example), the extent of digitisation of the catalogue – for selecting which portions of the archives to study and how to record my findings. In the case of The Glencoe Mills Records, for example, there were 59 boxes, each including up to dozens of thematically labelled folders. The contents and their arrangement are carefully catalogued on the University of North Carolina Library website, with associated keywords indicating the themes of the documents contained in each folder. These are only accessible in person on advance request at the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. I used a range of criteria from catalogue ‘keywords’ to date-ranges to identify promising boxes. To cover as much material as possible, I took dozens of photographs per box of all potentially relevant documents with my smartphone, saving the images to an Evernote folder. This meant that even while taking great care to check and scrutinise the documents, I could move relatively swiftly through the material.

In the case of the Southern Regional Council records, microforms were catalogued in a detailed book-length manuscript titled Guide 131, which had to be requested and read in the Library of Congress. The relatively detailed cataloguing made it possible to narrow the search down to several hundred microform reels. This was far too much material to look at, and so inevitably I had to be even stricter in selecting the material. I began with ten reels per day. Since the microform viewer allowed images of slides to be saved onto a memory stick, it was in principle possible to simply adopt a strategy of saving as many images as possible and reviewing them later. However, each reel had hundreds of slides, so by itself this would not permit much of the archive to be covered. Given this problem, the only way forward was to skim through the slides as rapidly as realistically possible and pause on slides which looked as though they contained interesting data. The resulting recovery of data, though containing a great deal of information, is a mere fraction of the total archive that it is drawn from.

The oral sources are principally those released as part of The Southern Oral History Program Collection, 1973-2013, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill NC. These are interviews with mill hands, home makers, business owners, civil rights activists, communists, and others, conducted by a number of historians over several decades for diverse purposes, and deposited with the University of North Carolina. They are now available digitally as part of the SOHP. Some of the interviews are available as audio files, some only as pdf transcripts, and some in both formats. Oral resources provide qualitative accounts of concrete events in the history that I'm

describing, and have the advantage of being primary documents. Moreover, they constitute examples of discourse which are susceptible to discourse analysis. They reach individual experiences otherwise inaccessible to me, and provide a counter to official knowledge production. The issues that arise with such sources are that, i) the recall of the interviewees may be wrong, or incomplete; ii) the interviews, though relatively unstructured, do include prompts from the interviewer for certain types of memory, and thus a degree of selection on the part of the historian is built in to this type of source; iii) the sources are not random, but dependent upon the availability of interviewees which may be limited by willingness to participate, incapacity or death, as well as by the attention of the historian; and iv) of course, the perspective of interviewees is as subject to the pressures of the conjuncture forming their experiences as that of any other source. Throughout all of this, I am aware that in a sense I am making the documents speak. Taking statements, claims, references and images from their context, I am shaping them into a particular narrative as well as a literary form and ‘mode of emplotment’. (White, 1975) However, the possibility of truth emerging from this type of research has been well-defended by Evans (2001, 2002), and it is upon this possibility that I stake my research. With that said, it remains for me to explain the methodological advantages of the distinctive Lacanian method of discourse analysis applied to one of the document caches used in the research.

## **Discourse analysis**

Chapter Six develops an argument about the fantasmatic kernel structuring the discourse of white-supremacist anticommunism. Beginning with a general Lacanian argument about ‘whiteness’ and ideological fantasy, it applies this to an analysis of some salient examples of anticommunist discourse. The relations and inferences then established are subsequently applied to the work of the white liberal campaign, HOPE, Inc. to prevent the closure of Georgia schools threatened by the state's Massive Resistance campaigners in order to prevent desegregation. The analysis is applied to primary materials - campaigning literature and correspondence - gathered in the archives at the Library of Congress.

It was possible, if necessary, to conduct a quantitative analysis of this information. One such approach would be to select in advance a number of key words and phrases representing the themes that I was looking for, for example: Communist, Communism, Communist Party, Anticommunism, Militant, Socialist, Socialism, Left, African American, Black, Colored, Negro, White, Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian, Integration, Segregation, Color Bar, and Racial. Recurrent terms could then be located relative to certain contexts and determine whether or not there was a persistent set of associations, images, meanings and gaps or silences. Another approach might have been to search for concordances in the text, and subject these to the same type of analysis. The rationale for accumulating numeric, quantitative data would be to test hypotheses concerning the possibly causal relations between the variables, and then develop explanations based on proposed generative mechanisms behind these causes. However, while such data could be useful if handled sensitively,

such a rationale would fall into a number of obvious traps. First of all, the implied model of verification (or non-falsification) is based in part on the idea that generative causal mechanisms should produce constant conjunctions. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this is not a realistic expectation in the social sciences. This can be explained in the following way:

"Things possess powers in virtue of their intrinsic structures, powers that may or may not be exercised. If they are triggered they can be in play as mechanisms, whose effects may or may not be actualised, depending on the play of countervailing mechanisms." (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998: 9)

Given this, social scientists need to be open to other ways of testing hypotheses. It is also useful to register the fact that numbers are not necessarily more objective than other types of data. The determination of search parameters, of what constitutes a useful datum, is researcher-led, and reflects the preoccupations and preconceptions held by the researcher. Any determination as to the meaning of any patterns discovered likewise reflects the concerns of the researcher. Furthermore, translating discourse into data in *this* way implies a model of language in which there is a self-evident relation of meaning to word, operating as the 'manifest content' of the text, which is simply not compatible with post-Saussurean linguistic theory. And, given that the research aimed to work out the psychic investments in race and anticomunism, which may or may not be explicit (or 'conscious'), a different mode of analysis was required.

This is where discourse analysis enters. The core assumption of any discourse analysis is that the meaning of a text is organised in a particular way by the materiality of language and discourse, that language itself is a material fact which actively shapes knowledge rather than merely a transparent medium (cf ‘clear writing’) through which knowledge is accessed and conveyed. Language actively constitutes the social reality that it describes. Thus, a discourse analysis looks for meaning in the materiality of the text. If I had been seeking to understand a discourse as a mode of power, to find the discursive regime, the rules governing what can be said and what is intelligible within a particular set of statements, then a Foucauldian (2002) discourse analysis would probably have been most apt. If the research sought to understand the formative role of language in the organisation of coercion/consent, and the establishment of moral authority, it would also have been possible to continue the analysis in a Gramscian vein using the work of Hall et al (1978, 1980), Laclau (1977), Volosinov (1986), and Fairclough (2001). However, to reiterate, the research operates on the premise that agents have subjective investments in the discourses they partake of, that not all of these are necessarily explicit or conscious, and that they will play an important role in explaining political behaviour.

This is where a psychoanalytical approach, and specifically a Lacanian psychoanalytical approach, is useful. (Lacan, 2006; Fink, 1997) For while Lacanian analysis comes with its implied metapsychology, its own model of subject-formation, and a host of other assumptions, it is the mode of analysis which most permits an

open-ended scrutiny of a text. Because of its emphasis upon the letter of discourse, what is literally said rather than what is supposedly 'meant', it pushes against the rush to understanding wherein discourse analysts may be tempted to give too much credence to their own prejudices and intuitions. Yet even while giving the fullest attention to the letter of what a discourse says, and while taking it very seriously, Lacanian analysis still makes it possible to take a critical approach by virtue of the attention it gives to the non-coherence and non-sense of a text. There are some methodological difficulties in this which have been dealt with in Chapter One. These include the fact that what one analysing is a piece of text, not the speech of an analysand. The discourse analyst is in no position apply most of the usual repertoire of Lacanian techniques of probing the meaning of a given statement, nor are interpretations verifiable against a subjective response. The text can give no response and generate no further material. Nonetheless, in following the logic of a text closely, while registering the regularities and variances, the gaps and silences, the slips, deletions, confusions, ambiguous formulations and other points at which the subject seems to be saying more than intended, it is possible to limit the extent to which the analyst must impose a judgment on the text while at the same time opening up layers of meaning and associations which would not be disclosed in a quantitative analysis.

In some ways, the analysis conducted in Chapter Six is pivotal to the findings of the research, because beyond the 'how' is the 'why'. That is, beyond showing that the defence of Southern segregation during the Cold War made extensive use of anticommunist theatics and apparatuses, and beyond illustrating the ways in which

this was effective in cohering segregationist blocs and disorganising anti-segregationists, the research aims to work out why anticomunism was so ubiquitously accepted as an appropriate framework for interpreting Civil Rights, why it summoned so much loyalty and galvanised political realignments capable of structuring political prospects long after Massive Resistance was concluded, what subjective needs it might have served, and how this might have been both conducive to, or counterproductive with regard to, the ends of Massive Resistance.

## **Research Narrative and Shortcomings**

In the interests of reflexivity, I will conclude this chapter by situating the structure and methods of this research in the context of my overall intellectual project, and the limitations this imposed. The initial spark for this research was produced during my research for a book which I began composing in 2006 (Seymour, 2008). In the course of conducting a genealogical excavation of the archives of liberal and left ideological justifications for empire, I had encountered an intriguing problem. In the mid-twentieth-century, traditional colonial and white-supremacist discourses were displaced by a new language. The old languages of empire and of segregation gradually, over time, gave way to a new language. Just as colonialism yielded to America's 'free trade' empire (Panitch & Gindin, 2003), *de jure* segregation gave way to *de facto* segregation on a new geographical and political basis (Massey & Denton, 1993), and the old gold and silver payrolls typical of Jim Crow production processes gave way to new wage systems and seniority structures that essentially preserved a racialised system (Vitalis, 2000, 2002), so the language justifying empire

and racial inequality shifted. The new language was often market-based, implying that racial inequalities were meritocratic. (Jewell, 2010) Alternatively, biological racism gave way to a culturalist discourse, thus suggesting that racial inequalities had arisen from cultural differences. In each case, I noticed that anticomunism appeared to play an important mediating role, from Southern Africa to the Southern United States.

The historical relationship between Cold War anticomunism and the defence of white-supremacy, particularly segregation in the U.S. South, is sufficiently well-established to be subject to tense historiographical debates. (Berg, 2007; Arnesen, 2010; Marable, 2007; Woods, 2004; Lewis, 2000) Yet the conclusions one reaches in these debates are manifestly underdetermined by the data. And they point to a series of questions which must be posed on a different terrain. First, how could anticomunism possibly be of use to the defence of white supremacy? What is the affinity there? How could segregationists have believed, with apparently so little reason, that their opponents were — indeed, had to be — communists? What, to put it another way, was so disturbing about the spectre of communism to white-supremacists? What role did anticomunism have in organising the strategic responses of white-supremacists to challengers? These were questions demanding a sociology and not just a history. So, in the curve of my own work, I tried to enact the necessary shift, from a historical investigation to a sociological analysis.

Actually implementing this shift was a far bigger challenge than I expected. The creative process of bringing the work into being required that I develop a theoretical background that I had hitherto lacked. Given the marxist, anti-racist political commitments informing the research, I sought in the first instance to find a way of carrying out the work in a way that would build upon and enrich the historical materialist perspectives that I was already grounded in, while allowing me to cope with and do justice to the full complexity of the material. Fortunately, whatever the limitations of marxism, it has produced a rich body of social theory dealing with ideology, the state, social classes and race, the themes through which I decided to explore the subject, from the Marx of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* (1967) to Gramsci (Hoare & Smith, 1971), Poulantzas (1978, 2014), Althusser (2014) and Hall et al (1978). In particular, I decided that the Gramscian idea of 'hegemony' offered an extremely productive way of structuring my research questions. In looking at the intersections, or interdependence, of race and anticomunism at a given historical moment, I would look for the possibilities that this fusion offered in securing a form of class leadership through a combination of incentives, ideology and coercion. Related to this was the concept of the 'historical bloc,' in which a 'complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble' of superstructures is articulated in a specific conjunction with 'the ensemble of the social relations of production'. This concept allowed me to comprehending how class forces might be related to one another in a given situation, organised within a certain complex 'geo-economic unity,' and embodied in a particular set of 'apparatuses' and 'philosophies'. (Sassoon, 1987: 121)

The second challenge was to locate an appropriate area for empirical research. Given that segregation was to a large extent a mode of labour control and surplus-extraction, and given my particular interest in class formations, I decided I wanted to look at how race and anticommunism might be brought together in the organisation of labour processes, in order to test Gramsci's observation that, "hegemony begins in the factory". Condensed in the workplaces of the South were a multitude of laws, political alliances, cultural practices and methods of surplus-extraction which were critical to the changing modes of class domination. I therefore estimated that in the course of poring over secondary literature and finding appropriate archives, I would alight on one or two 'chronotopes' (Bakhtin, 1981), concrete situations in which would be concentrated many of the general tendencies at work in the South throughout the period. In fact, an historical work of this kind had already been carried out in relation to tobacco workers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. (Korstad, 2004) I decided that the logical first site of investigation would be the North Carolina textile industry, the single largest industry in the period, the core segregated industry, employing black workers only for menial occupations, and practising paternalism toward white workers. It was also politically influential: the mill owner Roger Milliken was Nixon's finance chairman in 1968, a strong supporter of Pat Buchanan, and a funder of Strom Thurmond. Southern politicians worked hard to reach out to the 'mill vote'. The textile industry was also culturally significant, a source of resonant mythologies. Billy Graham, for example, appealed to the old 'mill hands'; and it was a prominent target of unionisation efforts by CIO as the Cold War began,

and later the subject of federal de-segregation campaigns. (Minchin, 1999: 8-12; Boswell, Brown, Brueggemann & Peters Jr., 2006: 155-88)

In fact, neither the primary nor secondary materials which I researched provided sufficient material to justify continuing with the case study focus on textiles. I found a great deal of interesting material pertaining to the historical period. I located letters to and from key public figures, important newspaper articles, campaigning documents, union records, company data, and speech transcripts. What I did not find was significant evidence of either communism or anticomunism being a major consideration in the organisation of labour processes in the textile industry in the period covered. I did not find my ‘chronotopes’. My initial response to this was to consider changing focus and looking at another industry, such as tobacco, and this resulted in a further period of secondary research. I might alternatively have looked at the CIO’s ‘Operation Dixie’. However, in my theoretical single-mindedness, and lack of flexibility, I had not considered that my early research decisions – to focus on labour processes and took for a case study in the textile industry – were themselves faulty. They were faulty because the secondary research told me that the major bouts of anticomunism in the textile industry was during the strike waves of the 1930s. And they were faulty because, while I might find instances where anticomunism had played a role in beating back union organisation in the immediate post-war period, that wouldn’t help me to illustrate or explain the period that I was most interested in, the years between 1954 and 1965, during which communism was relatively weak and yet anticomunism flourished in the Southern states. Rather like

the canary in the cage, I evinced much activity, but little progress; expending more energy on frantically not getting anywhere than on actually completing the work. To be absolutely frank, with the mounting theoretical deadlocks and empirical absences and the seemingly impossible problems, I grew to *hate* this work. It took far too long to simply unlock the cage door.

The only way forward was to treat the apparent obstacles as stepping stones. For, the evidence that I had accumulated in my archival research was in fact significant, even if not in the way that I had hoped for. I had accumulated a mass of primary evidence about the HOPE, Inc. campaign against school closures in Georgia, an important ‘moderate’ white-led struggle against Massive Resistance. In the course of ongoing researching Massive Resistance as a social movement, the full importance of the campaign began to become clear to me. And ironically, it was the experience of a severe personal crisis that proved to be the most productive moment, even though it prevented progress for some time, in that it resulted in an experience with a Lacanian analysis which was intense, profoundly moving, and creative. I had already considered using Lacanian ideas, but they were no longer dry, academic concepts. In deploying them, I have kept in mind two problems: first, Lacanian psychoanalysis is emphatically not devised with social criticism in mind; and second, my personal investment in these ideas, while a productive force in the work, was also a limitation to be worked around if I was to maintain the necessary rigour. Even so, they did allow me to pose questions in a slightly different way. Rather than immediately looking for ‘rational kernel’ in segregationist behaviour, I was forcibly reminded of

the inescapable centrality of the irrational in social behaviour, the limits of knowledge, and the futility of theoretical mastery. Chapter Six, applying Lacanian discourse analysis to the HOPE campaign, is an immediate product of this working through, and thus contains a performative, evocative substratum. It is where, for the first time, I discover myself in the middle of the work, immersed it in it right up to my neck.

Within the theoretical framework thus established, albeit loosened and modified through the years of developing the research, with the case study, with an analysis of both primary and secondary literature from a range of sources and online and offline archives (including biographies, letters, newspapers, company files, leaflets, membership cards, histories, sociologies and economic works), and with the political and personal investments registered above, I was able to answer the research question. And I present the argument through a series of historical studies of different aspects of hegemony in the conjuncture in question, looking at the particular effects of Jim Crow and anticommunism in different registers. Given the experience of producing this work, I would suggest three key ways in which a project of this kind could be embarked upon differently, and better. First, the research design should have been led by the evidence of the secondary material. That is to say, with a considered reflection on the patterns disclosed in the extant literature, and with a degree of flexibility as to my theoretical concerns, I would have been able to select a more promising case study and appropriate archives to research. Second, were I reviewing this material now, my first emphasis would not be in rationalising this problematic

compound of white-supremacist anticomunism. Certainly, such an approach can be useful in that it resists the temptation to dismiss the problem (as merely a form of delusion); but rationalising a problem is only slightly better than dismissing it. Concretely, this means that the historical materialist problematic, while I think it is appropriate, would have been supplemented by a psychoanalytic approach in a much more sustained way throughout the work. Third, it seems to me that, in some ways, I have tried to do too many things, to theorise a complex set of relations from the international to the discursive, and within too broad a time-frame. I now consider that a narrower spatial and temporal focus would, ironically, have allowed me to think through a more complex range of topics. Finally, my preference for a certain level of abstraction over concrete investigation was a problem and a resistance that had to be overcome.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **The Strategic Pertinence of Race and Anticommunism in the Cold War: The Southern United States in the Imperialist Context**

*This chapter situates the South, the anticommunist struggle, and the defence of white-supremacy, in a global context. This is partially necessitated by the fact that anticommunism was in the first instance structured by international events, viz. the Russian Revolution, the post-war expansion of the USSR and the proliferation of Communist states. Such events, linked to a communist movement that was in principle internationalist and opposed to the entire system of national states, had ramifications for the global order that Washington sought to build. It is also important because of the arguments that will be addressed later in the thesis, concerning the extent to which the Cold War presented an unprecedented political opportunity structure for civil rights, and hastened the end of Jim Crow. Using two key concepts, ‘uneven and combined development’ (Trotsky) and ‘hegemony’ (Gramsci), and employing insights from the discipline of International Relations, I develop a framework for understanding the structural logic of the global intersection of anticommunism and white-supremacy. I suggest, first, that as the US assumed global dominance, it faced a range of problems posed by the tendencies theorised as ‘uneven and combined development’: above all, the struggle of the colonised against the colonisers. The political management of these problems was not purely coercive, but contained*

*elements of what can be characterised as a ‘hegemonic’ strategy. Cold War anticomunism, I maintain, supplied part of that hegemonic strategy, helping the US to lead, maintain and reform an imperialist international system, and allowing it to maintain a *de facto* alliance with colonialism and a confraternal relationship with white-supremacist regimes for as long as it was effective. It allowed the effects of white-supremacy to be perpetuated on a new basis, while helping to overwrite race and empire as the major axes of global geopolitical arrangements. It also integrated the segregationist South into a Cold War “historical bloc” in which Southern state leaders played a critical role, as anticomunist enforcers and as militarists.*

## **Prologue: The Cold War and the Colour Line in the Southern US, Australia and South Africa**

This is a study of race and anticomunism in the U.S. South. The dimensions and relations which I am attempting to draw out are particular to a conjuncture and a social formation, a localised set of social relations particular in time and place. And yet, throughout its existence, race has been – as W E B Du Bois argued – a global “color-line”. If “the problem of the twentieth century” was “the problem of the color-line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea” (Du Bois, 2007: 15), how did it impact upon, and how was it impacted upon by, that other perennial twentieth century problem, that of capitalism and the communist challenge? Dudziak (1988; 2000) argues that Cold War imperatives propelled the changes that swept the American southlands in the post-war

era, as America sought to reconcile its global democratic mission with its internal politics. (See also Krenn, 1998) Whatever the merits of that argument – discussed further in Chapter Eight – the fate of the South, from the slave trade to the 1898 war to the Cold War, is inescapably bound up with the international order. Therefore I begin by situating the South in its geopolitical context, in a global white-supremacist system in which the poles of power were shifting and the leadership of the dominant capitalist states passing from Europe to the United States.

In 1950, three racial states embarked upon legislative and legal processes intended to contain<sup>5</sup> communism. On 17<sup>th</sup> July, the Suppression of Communist Act (Union of South Africa, 1950) came into effect in South Africa. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, the Australian government introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill “to provide for the Dissolution of the Australian Communist Party and of other Communist Organizations, to disqualify Communists from holding certain Offices, and for purposes connected therewith”. And on 4<sup>th</sup> December, the US Supreme Court began to hear the case of *Dennis v United States* three months after the U.S. Government had passed the Internal Security Act (ISA), requiring that communist organisations register with the Attorney General, and establishing the Subversive Activities Control Board.

The legislation in each case demonstrated marked differences. The US government never attempted to outlaw the Communist Party, much as it targeted the

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<sup>5</sup> This is in part the story of anticomunism in the British Empire. For a detailed account of that phenomenon, see Smith, 2015.

party for repression. In the case of *Dennis v United States*, the Supreme Court upheld a Party leader Eugene Dennis's conviction for conspiracy, but it was the alleged activity and not the membership that was outlawed. The Australian legislation was focused specifically on the Communist Party of Australia, being premised on much hyped 'revelations' about the party and its supposed fifth-columnism and influence in high level positions. The South African laws not only outlawed the Communist Party of South Africa, but also defined "communistic activities" broadly so as to include organisations, publications and periodicals promoting "Marxian socialism" of any hue, and awarded broad powers to the Governor General to outlaw any organisation deemed communist. Moreover, there are differences in the legal responses in each state. In the US, the Supreme Court reinforced anticommunism, while in Australia, the High Court did not. (Wiecek, 2006: 535-578; Waghorne & Macintyre, 2011: 85-87; Cain, 1994: 149; Morris, 1988: 100-101)

The context in which anticommunism unfolded in each state was also profoundly different in many respects. The most important difference in the period in question is that the United States was the globally dominant capitalist state for most of the twentieth century, while Australia and South Africa were medium-sized economies historically dependent on investment from British capitalism. The US was a mass exporter of consumer goods, and a net exporter of capital, while South Africa and Australia were only modest exporters of consumer goods and net importers of

capital.<sup>6</sup> In the US, Wall Street was politically dominant, while in Australia and South Africa, financial capital supporting the manufacturing and mining industries came largely via the City of London. Politically, the traditions and trajectories of white-supremacy in each state were quite diverse, with settler-colonialism being differently articulated to ‘blackbirding’, slavery, segregation and genocide. And while all three states had strains of white labourism emerging from colonial white-supremacism, which could sustain an anticommunist politics in the workers’ movement, only in Australia had the beginnings of a white labourist regime begun to coagulate by 1911. In South Africa, white labourism was subsumed into Afrikaaner nationalism, while in the United States it was incorporated into New Deal liberalism. (Lloyd, 2002; Dilley, 2012; Maddison, 2006: 101 & 358-359; Yudelman, 1984; Marx, 1998)

Nevertheless, there are certain conditions that they have in common. In all three cases, a colonial pattern of capitalist development predominated, with the “frontier” being the chief metaphor through which primitive accumulation was organised, while white supremacy formed the basis of state formation. In each case, anticommunism was linked to contiguous or prior radicalisations, anxieties about the capacity of states to cope with conflict and dysfunction and a drive toward the centralisation and concentration of political power. In these states, anticommunism was peculiarly intense and was imbricated with the defence of racial systems in remarkably similar ways as part of a wider conservative political strategy. For example, in Australia,

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<sup>6</sup> Thus, already by 1913, the US exported \$2.38bn worth of merchandise (at current prices), compared to \$382m in Australia, and \$342m in South Africa. Whereas the United States was a major gross exporter of capital (\$3.514bn in 1914 at current prices), the Australian and South African economies were heavily dependent on foreign investment (\$1.8bn and \$1.65bn respectively in 1913).

intelligence services were particularly concerned with communist activism among Aboriginals and Torres Strait islanders, and the agitation against the White Australia policy. Southern US politicians held that US civil rights organisations represented the cusplte end of a communist conspiracy intent on global dominion. In South Africa, the protection of the racial order was inscribed in anticommunist legislation, which defined communism so as to include “any doctrine or scheme … which aims at the encouragement of feelings of hostility between the European and non-European races” of South Africa. This would partially explain why the major opponents of anticommunist legislation included not just the South African Communist Party, but also the African National Congress. It would also explain how South Africa’s white rulers regarded the ANC as the local auxiliary of a Moscow design to take over the region’s South African mineral treasures. Anticommunism, enforced through “physical violence, civil ordinance laws, incarceration, sackings and injunctions against strike action”, took aim at a “vague conglomerate of hostile causes”. To be depicted as a “Red” was to be externalised and “Othered”; while the rebellion of the racially oppressed was construed as an outcome of “Red” plotting. Finally, anticommunism was entangled with an imperialist “civilising mission”, including in the Cold War era when a new international orientation of power was emerging with a powerful and territorially vast ‘Communist’ state one of its two major powers. (Marx 1999; Kwon 2010, 37-38; Lewis, 2004; Fischer, 2002; Fischer, 2005; Fischer, 2006; Clark, 2008; Kiernan, 2002; Broughton, 2001; Foley, 2012; Clohesy, 2010; Macintyre, 1998: 4; Borstelmann, 1993: 138, 149-150 & 155; Onslow, 2009; Woods, 2004; Lewis, 2000; Lewis, 2004; Borstelmann, 2001)

This is the context in which the parallels in the legislation can be understood. The formal rationale for such legislation as was adopted was in each case quite similar.<sup>7</sup> The goal of communism was to establish “a despotic system of government” (SoCA), a “totalitarian dictatorship” (ISA), a “dictatorship of the proletariat” (CPDA). Communist Parties were part of a “world-wide revolutionary movement” (ISA), a “world communist revolutionary movement” (CPDA), using “the promotion of disturbance or disorder” (SoCA), “force, violence, intimidation or fraudulent practices” (CPDA), and “treachery, deceit, infiltration into other groups (governmental and otherwise), espionage, sabotage, terrorism, and any other means deemed necessary” (ISA) to achieve their goals. Most similar were the South African and Australian laws which went to the extent of declaring “the Communist Party of South Africa to be an unlawful organization”, outlawing “other organizations promoting communistic activities” while “prohibiting certain periodical or other publications” and “certain communistic activities” (SoCA), and providing for “the Dissolution of the Australian Communist Party and of other Communist Organizations, to disqualify Communists from holding certain Offices, and for purposes connected therewith” (CPDA), respectively. The overlaps between these cases are not merely happenstance. There is evidence that the respective governments collaborated in their anticommunist policies. As Smith (2014) writes, “Letters from

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth stressing that even the existence of an anticommunist culture and the pervasive nature of Cold War paranoia in racialised contexts were not by themselves sufficient to push governments into adopting such legislation. Rhodesia, despite having a strongly anticommunist culture since the 1920s (Lowry, 2009; Deventer & Nel, 1990), did not introduce such legislation. According to the UK Foreign Office’s Rhodesian Political Department, “the Rhodesians decided that they had sufficient powers under the Unlawful Organisations Act and the Law & Order Maintenance Act to make a Suppression of Communism Act unnecessary.” (Quoted in Smith, 2015)

the Australian High Commission in Cape Town show that the Malan government [of South Africa] passed on the draft legislation to the Menzies government before the Dissolution Bill was introduced in Australian Parliament". A letter from the Commission to the Australian government dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1950 passed on details of legislation under consideration made available by the "Union Government ... for your strictly confidential information" and requested "particulars of any Australian Government measures directed to the same object". (Stirling, 1950)

Most fundamentally, I maintain, the overlaps described here are structured by the international. Even where anticommunism is directed at domestic class opponents, these latter are situated within a texture of international relations wherein they are understood be potential agents of a competitor state – indeed, of a 'world' revolutionary movement. For example, in Australia the Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies insisted that the bill he was attempting to pass was not an industrial bill but one specifically aimed at "treason and fifth-columnism". The axis upon which he proposed to defend the bill was the "defence of democracies", which communist "peace" agitation obstructed as part of an "international conspiracy against the democracies". Banning the Communist Party was about ensuring that they could not occupy key positions in order to sabotage the country in the event of conflict with the USSR which for all intents and purposes was deemed to be already under way. (Menzies, 2004: 249-253; Cain & Farrell, 1986; Sheridan, 1986). This rationale was consistent with the general thrust of state-led anticommunism in the United States and South Africa, linking the supposed conspiratorial nature of communism to an

external threat, by means of the figure of the ‘fifth column’. ‘World communism’, integrally linked to if not directed from the USSR, necessitated organisation at the international level.

That is why the struggles over white-supremacy in which communists and anticommunists partook, should not be understood in domestic isolation, but rather should be interpreted as part of the fabric of the international system at the time. While the Cold War superpower struggle entailed the deployment of a liberal-democratic discourse on the part of the United States and its allies which conflicted with the white-supremacist norm, challenges to white-supremacy also threatened to undermine the integrity of Cold War strategic alliances particularly where they were linked to the emerging series of anti-colonial struggles. This chapter will therefore begin the research by looking at the international level, and situating the Southern United States within it. I will argue that the relationship between the Cold War and the ‘color line’ was not purely incidental, but rather followed a structural logic embedded in the international order of the time. Deploying an historical sociology building on insights from the discipline of International Relations, I will:

- i.) identify what I argue is the strategic logic of the intersection of race and anticomunism in the Cold War in relation to the management of crises produced by ‘uneven and combined development’<sup>8</sup>;
- ii.) relate the international dimension to national and regional levels of spatial management (to be more thoroughly examined in Chapter Four);
- iii.) query the conceptual integrity of the Cold War, challenging its ‘spurious unity’ so that the complex and contradictory effects of this struggle on the politics of the Southern states can be more adequately accounted for.

Taking these steps will not only help situate Southern anticomunism in its necessarily global context; it will also explain something important about the forms that anticomunism took in that context, and its changing efficacy as the Cold War narrative was displaced by anticolonial success.

### **Introduction: One, Two, Three, Many Cold Wars.**

In the traditional histories of the Cold War (eg Gaddis, 2007), race was largely expunged as a factor. Du Bois had argued that despite its absence from dominant explanations, the racial order, as manifested in colonialism and other forms of

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<sup>8</sup> The classic formulation of this historical ‘law’ is to be found – in full-blooded, gung-ho, teleological form – in Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution*: “The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity, their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of combined development—by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.” (Trotsky, 2008: 5)

expansionism, was the infrastructure of the world system behind the crisis of the European state system culminating in World War I. In a similar fashion, the world system after 1945 must be interpreted in view of the tectonic shifts in its racial order. The absence of race from explanations of the Cold War must therefore be rectified. This chapter will demonstrate that one of the ways in which race has been simultaneously repressed and its effects sustained in the international order is through the deployment of anticomunism in the Cold War.

The history of anticomunism is enfolded within a history of race. In two great waves of US anticomunism, the first immediately following the Russian Revolution, and the second following the defeat of the Third Reich, race figured centrally in the understanding of communism and in the organisation of its suppression. The rise and breakdown of the anticomunist consensus was, when it came, intricated with the overthrow of the colonial world system and the concomitant upsurge of civil rights activism. The modes of repression, and the techniques of ascriptive denigration deployed in each case were contiguous. As Heonik Kwon put it, “[b]eing a white person or person of color was a major determining factor for an individual's life career for a significant part of the past century, but so was the relatively novel color classification of being 'Red' or 'not Red' in many corners of the world, including the United States and South Africa” (Kwon 2010, 37).

Anticomunism did not, however, abut white supremacy in an uncomplicated manner. Brewing conflicts over race were effectively suppressed by Cold War

anticommunism for a period of approximately a decade following World War II (WWII). However, in the global conflicts over communism, the US needed to project a beneficent liberal and egalitarian image in order to secure a multi-racial alliance in favour of US-led liberal capitalism. As a result of these pressures, which increased as national liberation movements acquired momentum, US administrations felt compelled to adopt racial reforms, however gradually ('with all deliberate speed') (Dudziak 2000; Borstelmann 2001; Marable 2007).

To make full sense of this question, however, it is necessary to query the integrity of the concept of anticomunism, as revisionist historians of the Cold War have done. While most Cold War histories focus on the contest over Europe, a growing number of scholars challenge this emphasis, drawing attention to the hot wars around colonialism and race. They unpick the spurious unity of the category of "the Cold War", and in doing so draw attention to the diverse logics unfolding in Indonesia, Vietnam, the Congo, Italy and Greece, and so on (see, for example, Horne 2007; Horne 1985; Eschen 1996; Westad 2007; Kwon 2010) There are a variety of distinct processes subsumed under "the Cold War" and "anticommunism", even when the focus is limited to the American variety of anticomunism: the geopolitical contest with the USSR; the organisation of a coalition of anti-socialist states under an American-led alliance; the engagement with, and often war against, emerging popular and anticolonial forces in the "Third World"; and the suppression of domestic radicalism.

## **Hegemony, and Uneven and Combined Development**

To interpret these various manifestations, this chapter will at points deploy the Gramscian concept of hegemony. This must be applied with care. The concept of hegemony is arguably one specifically crafted for the national terrain, where a particular relationship between “state” and “civil society” obtains. Nonetheless, there is sufficient philological evidence to suggest that Gramsci himself envisioned hegemony having some international applications. And the internationalisation of production, commerce, “civil society” and states themselves, strongly suggests that it can have relevance beyond the level of the national. Indeed, international relations are necessarily imbricated with the national. They, as Gramsci put it,

intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations. A particular ideology, for instance, born in a highly developed country, is disseminated in less developed countries, impinging on the local interplay of combinations. This relation between international forces and national forces is further complicated by the existence within every State of several structurally diverse territorial sectors, with diverse relations of force at all levels (Gramsci 1971, 182).

Gramsci further argued that the relationship between a dominant nation and an oppressed nation cannot be purely military in character, since it relies on “the state of

social disintegration of the oppressed people, and the passivity of the majority of them”.

The consolidation of hegemony in one state, particularly the leading imperialist state, could not but produce certain effects not only in the international order but in the internal organisation of other states. The practices – ideologies, apparatuses, production methods – through which hegemony is achieved in dominant states can be swiftly disseminated within other states, albeit producing different effects. This insight can be grounded in Leon Trotsky’s concept of “uneven and combined development”. Insofar as the existence of many states is grounded in a tendency toward uneven development (of ecological systems, social forms, and productive resources), they also exhibit the pattern of combined development, wherein distinct social formations interpenetrate – a tendency sharpened once the capitalist mode of production, with its universalising tendencies, takes root. Imperialist states have indeed actively taken up the mission of spreading and developing capitalist property relations in the regions they dominate, a mission that during the Cold War went under the rubric of liberal internationalism buttressed by “modernisation theory”. This is precisely the “geopolitical management” of uneven and combined development of which Justin Rosenberg speaks. (Ives & Short 2013; Allinson and Anievas 2009; Gilman 2003; Schmitz 2006, 12-13; Rosenberg 1996 as quoted in Anievas 2014)

It is important, however, to distinguish between hegemony as a *state of affairs*, and hegemony as a *strategy*. As Stuart Hall points out, hegemony in the former sense

is “a very particular, historically specific, and temporary ‘moment’ in the life of a society. It is rare for this degree of unity to be achieved” (Hall, 1986). Nonetheless, hegemonic strategies are constantly deployed and are arguably the “normal” mode of political domination in capitalist democracies (Poulantzas, 1978). Further, hegemonic practices should not be reduced to those which secure ideological consensus. Consent and coercion are usually different moments in a unitary hegemonic project, such that consent is permanently structured by violence (Thomas, 2009; Poulantzas, 2014: 69).

Conceiving of hegemony in this way permits us to understand that hegemonic practices can – within limits determined by the conjuncture – be organised across borders so that, for example, a dominant imperialist power can seek to organise popular consent for its “historic mission” across a range of allied states by means of ideology, material incentives and strategic repression. And such was the position of the United States of America as it assumed global dominance. US planners, informed by the work of the geographer Isaiah Bowman, sought to organise US power on the basis of a hierarchy of national states open to capitalist investment, gradually displacing direct colonial authority as the mode of domination (Smith 2004). However, the risk of a too-rapid displacement was either that national development of postcolonial states would take a form that was directly hostile to US capitalist penetration, or – more ominously for the US – that the very class systems through which they would be able to organise their imperialist dominance would be overthrown.

Managing this dilemma required hegemonic struggle in the following ways: 1) US state planners had to secure a consensus among elites for significant military and other imperialist investments in order to contain anticolonial independence movements and expand US strategic power into former colonial territories; 2) this power bloc then needed to organise the consent of diverse class strata within the US for this same strategy, while simultaneously disorganising and repressing opposition; 3) internationally, the American state had to penetrate the national states of allied ruling classes and to win the support of particularly European ruling classes but also subaltern populations for the same agenda; 4) the violent suppression of anticolonial rebellions was usually accompanied by attempts, to varying degrees, to achieve consent from certain constituencies.

The dominant idiom through which hegemonic practices were secured at key points in the twentieth century was anticomunism. The signifier, ‘Communism’, came to stand for many complex problems and dysfunctions, globally and domestically, at the level of politics, economics and ideology. It stood for what didn’t work, what was antithetical. In Chapter Six, I will develop a theory of the fantasmatic kernel of this ideology, and the way in which it relates to white-supremacy. Here it is sufficient to note the *overdetermined* nature of this signifier: it stood in this context for something much more than the particular historical experiences which had been named by the term. The obverse of ‘Communism’ in the dominant ideology was ‘Freedom’, a “tendentiously empty signifier” which was able, precisely on account of this emptiness, to unify “contradictory subject-positions”, so that “common nuclei of

meaning” were “connotatively linked to diverse ideological-articulatory domains”. Domestically, this enabled a process of “transformism”: the “partial absorption and neutralisation of those ideological contents” through which resistance to class domination were expressed (Hall 1983; Laclau 1977). It provided a language in which, in global terms, the defence of racial hierarchy was commensurable with the legal norm of national self-determination. It undergirded a missionary American nationalism which connotatively linked Americanism to democracy, against what Mary Dudziak calls the “negative ideograph” of “totalitarianism”. The opponents of white supremacy were belaboured as bearers of the “totalitarian” bacillus, both in the United States itself, and in its imperial zones of intervention (Fousek 2000; Foglesong 2007; Dudziak 2000; Borstelmann 2001; Lewis 2004; Woods 2004).

### **First Wave: Anticommunism as an American Racial Practice**

The first wave of anticommunism in the United States, 1917-1919, arose in response to the Russian Revolution but swiftly became a struggle over much more than that specific “ruptural unity”. (Althusser, 2005: 99) ‘Communism’ became the name for a host of enemies, and troubles, while anticommunist practices extended from the local to the national to the international.

In the first instance, the Russian revolution posed a potential threat both to an extant colonial world order, and to an emerging world order of national states. It was in the context of facing this challenge that the doctrine of Wilsonian “liberal

internationalism” was developed. Wilson was a conventional white-supremacist, pro-Klan, Democrat politician for the duration of his career until that crisis. He had supported the American colonisation of the Philippines on the basis of racial doctrines, and had routinely intervened in Latin American states. He did not believe that non-whites were capable of self-government, viewing this as essentially a cultural state achieved through millennia of breeding. And while his administration’s propaganda arm was to exhort colonised peoples to support the Entente Powers in World War I on the basis of hinted promises of independence, Wilson had no intention of allowing such goals to be realised. Hence, his pointed rejection of Japan’s “racial equality” resolution at Versailles. The world order of nation-states depended upon a colonial periphery. At this point, the truth of Wilson’s “self-determination of nations” was self-determination for whites. This situation inevitably framed the comprehension of the ‘communist threat’ on the part US state personnel and the administration’s organic intellectuals. The American attempt to manage the ‘contradictions’ arising from the uneven and combined development of capitalist relations, contradictions whose fusion had produced the Russian *jacqueries*, logically relied upon the traditional imperialist and racist means of such management. The encircling of Russia at Versailles, the intervention on behalf of the reactionary White Army in Siberia – the first but not last violation of the principle of “self-determination” – and the policy of non-recognition of the Soviet government were all embedded in just this discourse. (Vitalis, 2000; Manela, 2007; Curry, 1954; Pestritto, 2005: 32-5; Thorsen, 1988; O'Reilly, 1997; Smith, 2004: 115-155)

One of the Wilson administration's key anticommunist intellectuals was John Spargo, a former Marxist from Britain and neoconservative *avant la lettre*, who supported the US intervention in WWI. Spargo joined the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, a pro-war labour organisation affiliated with the government, and was sent on speaking tours by the administration's Committee for Public Information. He authored much of the administration's propaganda, and drafted its policy of non-recognition of Soviet Russia. He was if anything utterly disappointed by what he saw as the government's lack of commitment in its military engagements in Siberia. Spargo's chief argument about the Bolshevik revolution was that Russia was a backward civilisation, unable to handle the problems of radical self-government. The result was that a weakened "Slavonic" race, otherwise a natural ally of the "West", would find itself in a global racial nexus between "Teutons" and the "semi-Oriental" Japanese monarchy – an orientation "full of peril" for democracy. Spargo was far from seeing communism as being a simple racial conspiracy, in the sense imagined by Lothrop Stoddard, but as one of the most progressive Wilsonian intellectuals he could not help but interpret its effects in the context of a global racial order in which white domination was co-extensive with the development of democracy. To this extent, he anticipated one of the mandarins of Cold War discourse, George F Kennan. (Ruotsila 2006; Seymour 2008, 105-6; Seymour 2009)

Domestically, the Wilson administration pursued a path of countersubversive terror. This should not be opposed to the consensual, ideological strategies of the administration, such as George Creel's 'conscripting' and 'goose-stepping' of public

opinion behind America's war effort. (Pfannestiel, 2003: 2) As Poulantzas (2014: 66-71) argues, terror is an important element in the construction of consent., while we might add that terror is most effective when part of a repressive, authoritarian ideological climate. Countersubversion has a particular historical role in the formation of American nation, as the presumed conspiracies of Freemasons, Catholics, Mormons, African Americans, the “yellow peril”, and of course “Reds”, have serially aroused movements in defence of “Americanism”. (Melle 2002; Slotkin 1973; Davis 1960). The anticommunist moment drew on these traditions. Just as radical Reconstruction was resisted and segregation imposed in the South by Klans allied to the dominant planter class and linked to the formerly dominant Democratic Party, so America's first bout of anticommunist repression in the period from 1917-1919 involved the deployment of parapolitical “civil society” organisations in alliance with business groups organised around the nexus of state power. In the latter case, the rise of militant imperialist sentiment in the US under Woodrow Wilson was linked first to hysteria about treacherous African Americans in sympathy with Germans, then subsequently about “Reds” stirring up domestic disorder. (Gaughan, 1999; Ellis 2001) In the context of war, the administration had sought to incite nationalist and chauvinist fury against the ‘Hun’, and construct a notion of ‘Americanism’ worthy of irrational devotion. Groups such as the International Workers of the World or the Socialist Party, who opposed the war and the patriotic frenzy, were deemed by conservative Americans to be the worst subversive enemy since the final military defeat of the Native Americans, who needed to be exterminated. Communism was thus not merely an overseas unpleasantness, but the

most recent incarnation of a series of subversive, anti-national conspiracies. It was not uncommon for civil leaders to argue that antiwar views should be suppressed, if necessary by firing squad, while the national press squealed for investigations, and agents of the repressive apparatuses such as the Bureau of Investigation denounced socialism as a German import. (Pfannestiel, 2003: 3-12)

The dominant key of the ensuing anticomunist offensive was nativist and racist. American race theorist Lothrop Stoddard saw in Bolshevism the death of “white-world supremacy”. Robert Lansing, George Simons, and military intelligence credited the fraudulent thesis of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to explain the success of the Bolsheviks. The Sedition Act (1918) was used pointedly against “aliens”, while J Edgar Hoover used his position in the Bureau of Investigation to raise alarm over the alleged propensity of African American leaders toward communism. Communists had “done a vast amount of evil damage by carrying doctrines of race revolt and the poison of Bolshevism to the Negroes”. The Lusk Commission established in 1919 to look into radicalism “argued that there was ‘not a single system of Anglo-Saxon socialism, nor a single system of Latin race socialism’. The only scientific system of socialism was ‘of German-Jewish origin’”. This was a particularly portentous accusation after the feverish anti-German propaganda that shadowed US entry into the First World War. Civil society and vigilante organisations such as the American League, the Daughters of the American Revolution, war veterans groups, and bodies of Minute Men, often funded by business blocs led by local Chambers of Commerce, were organised around nativist theatics. (Stoddard,

1920; Wood, 2004: 86; Gaughan, 1999; Foglesong, 2007: 58; Heale, 1990: 60-96; Kovel, 1997: 14-22)

In this, the first phase of anticommunism, the national and the international were articulated in a single, complex, multifaceted process of countersubversive struggle. The struggle was prosecuted multifariously on the axes of class, nation, empire and race, but the signifier ‘Communism’ gave a name to the diverse problems and obstacles faced by American state planners and ideologues, and lent them a coherence they would not otherwise have had.

### **Second Wave: The Cold War, American Nationalism and the South**

After 1945, the relationship between anticommunism and the racial order became more complex. The old world order, dominated by European powers with their industries, their military strength and their colonies, had been obliterated in two world wars. It gave way to a new bipolar world divided between the leadership of the US and USSR, in which the US was by far the more powerful state. Both states, having sustained military attacks, had an interest in military expansion – overland in the case of the USSR and overseas in the case of the US. (McMahon, 2003: 2-15) But expansion meant something quite different in each case. The USSR was certainly keen to maintain a cordial relationship developed with the ‘great powers’ during the war, largely because it aspired to be one, and its goals were relatively conservative. The US aspired to something more like global dominance, although it sought to

achieve this as much through hegemonic practices, in the Gramscian rather than traditional IR sense, as through sheer violence.

In declaring a Cold War against the USSR, premised on the need for ‘containment’ of the latter’s totalitarian drive to the West, the US declared itself to be not just another imperialist power, but precisely an alternative to the old imperialisms as well as to the ‘evil empire’ in the East: the leader of the ‘Free World’. This meant that the rise of anticolonial struggles, often influenced or led by communist parties, demanded that the US engage in a complex series of operations. While its global interventions were often in defence of racial hierarchies that were perceived to be efficiently anticomunist (Borstelmann 2001; Schmitz 1999; 2006), the logic of defending worldwide “freedom” against its negative “totalitarian” ideograph placed limits on this and also penetrated the domestic sphere. Just as American capitalism was internationalised and penetrated rival and allied states, restructuring their productive and political systems (Panitch & Gindin, 2012; Rupert, 1995), so America’s domestic social relations became an international issue, and segregation “became international in scope” – a fact that its opponents were able to exploit. (Woodward, 1966: 131-132)

According to Dudziak (2000), this meant that the world on which America wished to operate became a panopticon of sorts. Egregious abuses would be witnessed by world opinion, which the US would be unwise to ignore if it wished to assemble a multinational – and necessarily multiracial – alliance against communism. The need

to fortify the American model as an attractive one for decolonising populations thus pressured the US into reluctantly adopting civil rights legislation. And there is evidence that US state personnel regretted the image that its domestic racism projected to the wider world. As Richard Nixon put it, following a visit to the newly independent state of Ghana in 1957, “We cannot talk equality to the peoples of Africa and Asia and practice inequality in the United States” (Borstelmann, 2001: 54-55, 75 & 109).

However, this is only part of the truth. Southern industry and politicians were also by far the most committed and militarily aggressive component of the Cold War anticommunist bloc in the United States. Although the South possessed its own traditions of militarism, Southern support for American militarism abroad had not always been as robust as it came to be during the Cold War. The overcoming of sectional divisions following the colonial turn of 1898 and particularly the aggressively expansionist administration of Wilson, a Southern Democrat, had helped consolidated the South’s commitment on this front. Another factor was the growing dependency of the Southern economy upon military investments during the Cold War, consolidating transformations beginning with the New Deal. If the New Deal’s programmes intended to reduce farm acreage and mechanise production kick-started those changes, World War II itself had utterly transformed the South, shrinking its rural economy and demographic and expanding its urban and industrial base. (Gaughan, 1999; Andrew Jr., 2001; Sosna, 1997: xiv-xv; Cobb, 1997)

In the period following World War II, military spending was much higher than it had ever been in peacetime. In 1948, US defence spending as a percentage of GDP was less than 5%. By 1952, the height of the Korean War, it had soared to 13%, after which it slowly dipped, but never fell below 5% again, and remained well above pre-war levels. Defence contracts became a crucial mode of economic intervention and political management, helping to soften the blow of recessions, stimulate local economies and attract credit to legislators involved with them.<sup>9</sup> The twelve Southern states accumulated a vastly disproportionate share of military contracts, so that by the early 1970s, the South provided the Pentagon with 52% of its ships, 46% of its airframes, 42% of its petroleum, and 27% of its ammunition. One of the effects of this was to modernise the region's class structure, producing a new layer of middle class professionals and technicians who gravitated toward what became Goldwater Republicanism, and industrialise its economic base. This transformation had complex effects, in that it both stimulated staunch, anticommunist militarism in the areas enjoying these investments and simultaneously, where it contributed to modernisation, tended to undercut the social basis for Massive Resistance when it came – although less because of any tolerance for integration than because of an unwillingness to embrace 'extreme' measures to defend segregation. The Federal government was resented by these layers when it invested in welfare as much as when it intervened against segregation, but gratefully received when it invested in the military. As Strom Thurmond put it, "Defense business means better employment,

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<sup>9</sup> In the early 1990s, it was estimated that every \$1bn in defence expenditures created between 25,000 and 55,000 jobs, alongside a range of indirect economic benefits. (Mintz, 1992: 17)

bigger payrolls, and general economic improvement". In the coming years, belliforous resistance to any form of reduction in military investment would become a speciality of Southern congresspersons. For example, the Limited Test Ban Treaty was nothing but a means to enhance the Kremlin "design for" and "supreme objective" of "world domination". (Clayton, 1976; Krell, 1981; Markusen et al, 1991; Mintz, 1992: 105; Frederickson, 2010; Frederickson, 2013; Brenes, 2012: 187-190)

Another reason for the Southern enthusiasm for Cold War militancy was the extraordinary usefulness of anticommunist ideology for baiting liberal politicians whose commitment to segregation was weak. Even as early as 1950, a young Jesse Helms, working on the senatorial campaign of Willis Smith in North Carolina, baited his liberal opponent, Frank Portner Graham, as a Communist shill, and a proponent of race-mixing. Smith won. It would later, as discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven, provide a repressive repertoire of counter-subversive practices which were replicated in the South – notably in the form of 'mini-HUACs' – and helped obstruct the emerging civil rights movement. This, the all-round Cold War pugnacity of Southern segregationist politicians, carried a particular weight in US politics because, in the post-war period Southerners had disproportionate power. Senator Richard Russell, the hardline anticommunist and segregationist, was "the most powerful man in the Senate" according to the Christian Science Monitor, and the power of the South was felt in its obstruction of civil rights and anti-lynching legislation. In fact, as will become clearer in Chapter Five and Chapter Eight, these uses of McCarthyism to crush the Communist and 'fellow traveling' left aligned with the interests of the

South, insofar as Communists were among the most radical elements of an emerging civil rights movement. Meanwhile, the Southern attack on black left-wing activists, through organisations such as the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS), targeted those who were likely to align with the anticolonial movement, and to oppose American-led wars as an expression of imperialism. (Borstelmann, 2001: 52-53, 65-66; Gentry, 2003; Rupert, 1995; Schrecker, 1999: 161; Smith, 2010: 33-39; Sensing 1964; Lewis, 2004: 10-29; Braden, 1980; Marable, 2007: 17; Munro, 2015)

This does not mean that Southern politicians were necessarily the most available for the “liberal internationalist” project of remaking the world in the image of American capitalism. Southern politicians often expressed scepticism of Washington’s specific interventions. (Fry, 2002; Fry, 2015). Nonetheless, the Cold War, legitimised by anticomunism, permitted the assembly of an ‘historic bloc’, which was broad, and incorporated the segregated, one-party South into its core. This was the material infrastructure of that form of missionary American nationalism which went under the rubric of “liberal internationalism”. It was because such diverse constituencies could be cohered around a shared mission, because the repressive teeth of the state needed only to be applied to a select minority of opponents, that the US ruling class could successfully project such power overseas. By using anticomunism to defend white supremacy inside US borders, it could also use anticomunism to seize control of white supremacy abroad.

## **Second Wave: Anticommunism and Decolonisation**

The post-WWII world system was one overwhelmingly dominated by the United States. The US pioneered a global architecture of international legal institutions, and trade institutions informed by New Deal thinking. (Rupert, 1995; Gowan, 2003a) The US was in a position to extend a new system of dominance based on a “protectorate system” in the capitalist core extending to Western Europe and an arc of power in south-east Asia, while gradually attaining strategic control of the colonial territories. Within the protectorate system, consent to US domination was achieved partially on the basis of its demonstrated military supremacy, above all its occupations of West Germany and Japan, and partially on the basis of material incentives (Marshall Plan) and anticommunist ideology. American war planners, with the assistance of the geographer Isaiah Bowman, elaborated a strategy of carefully shaking loose some of the colonial possessions of Old Europe and opening them to US capital. Control of productive resources, Bowman suggested, was far more important than territorial control (Gowan, 2003b; Smith, 2004).

However, the handling of colonial breakdown was necessarily delicate so far as US planners were concerned. Initially, the US had hoped that the United Nations which it had played such a crucial role in organising would be able to take control of the “dependencies”. However, citing the exigencies of anticommunist struggle, the US increasingly sought to conserve the colonial authorities. Here, it was the ruling class intellectual George Kennan who crystallised the emerging strategic thinking.

Just as Spargo had supplied much of the rational for Wilson's anticomunist stance some decades before, so George Kennan's "Long Telegram" provided the crucial ideological lynchpin for America's anticomunist foreign policy. Kennan's intransigent hostility to the USSR was inescapably bound up with his sense of the global racial hierarchy, and the US role in it. He distrusted African Americans and Jews, and was repelled by "most Third World Peoples – Asians, Arabs, Latinos and Africans – whom he tended to lump together as impulsive, fanatical, ignorant, lazy, unhappy, and prone to mental disorders and other biological deficiencies", and had written in 1938 that the US should be turned into a "benevolent despotism" of upper class white males, excluding women, immigrants and blacks from the franchise (Kovel, 1997: 53; Borstelmann, 1993: 40).

In his early Cold War writings, particularly his "Long Telegram" and his more famous article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Kennan argued that the Russian Revolution had overthrown "the Westernized upper crust" of the Tsarist elite, and revealed a population Orientalised by a century of contact with "Asiatic hordes". Russia had thus become "a typical Oriental despotism", engaged in a remarkable conspiracy against "Western civilization" and the colonial system. He anticipated that Russia's strategy would be to violently weaken or overthrow or subvert Western influence "over colonial, backward, or dependent peoples". The only answer was for Americans to accept the "moral and political leadership" that, at any rate, history had plainly intended for them (Kovel, 1997: 39-63; Roark, 1971; Borstelmann, 2001: 50).

Were Kennan's mandarin musings merely indicative of his own prejudices, they might be unremarkable. However, what they in fact demonstrate is that the anticommunist discourse of American elites was already linked to the preservation of white-world supremacy. As David F Schmitz (2006) has shown, the underlying assumptions of white superiority were an important component of policymaking in the Cold War, even under the much-admired liberal Kennedy administration. Their most urgent fear regarding the colonial world was "premature independence". This was linked to the belief that those insufficiently tutored in the art of self-government by their white masters – those "immature and unsophisticated" people, as the National Security Council described Africans in 1957 – would be easy meat for communist takeover. Thus, the vital strategic concepts for US planners were "eventual self-determination," "evolutionary development" and so on. In practice, this turned out to be a rationale for supporting the colonial powers. (Schmitz, 2006: 13; Krenn, 2006: 79-80) As a result, the US acted as a vital prop for European colonial allies, above all the British Empire. As William Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson write:

Marshall Plan aid and eventually the Mutual Security programme met the otherwise prohibitive charge on the balance of payments of sustaining British power overseas up to 1952 and at need thereafter ... From 1949 onwards, the Pentagon joined the War Office in the traditional imperial Great Game of securing the Indian sub-continent's frontiers from Kabul and Herat to Rangoon and Singapore (Louis and Robinson, 2004: 154).

The strategic rationale for this was to assist allies in the struggle against communism, and to forestall its triumph in the colonial states. The intellectual framework for this approach was supplied by “modernisation theory”, an attempt to rival Marxism as a theory of historical development and to demonstrate that communism was a “disease of the transition to modernity”. As Schmitz writes:

one of the leading modernization theorists, member of Kennedy’s national security staff, and national security advisor to President Johnson, Walt Whitman Rostow, argued, the revolutionary process of modernization in the Third World was when these nations were most in danger of falling to communism. The ‘weak transitional governments that one is likely to find during this modernization process are highly vulnerable to subversion’. The communists were the ‘scavengers of the modernization process’ who knew that once the ‘momentum takes hold in an underdeveloped area – and the fundamental social problems inherited from the traditional society are solved – their chances to seize power decline’. ... Dictatorships, therefore, were necessary in the Third World until the modernization process had developed enough to allow ‘these societies [to] choose their own version of what we would recognize as a democratic, open society’ (Schmitz, 2006: 12).

Aside from those arenas where the US chose to embark on direct, violent repression, and those where it used repression by proxy, the institutions of

international civil society formed a critical terrain of anticomunist struggle for the US government. Through Marshall Plan aid and the export of Fordist production methods linked to a “productivist” ideology, the American state successfully mobilised US labour, as represented by the AFL-CIO, into helping organise its hegemony within Europe. Its illicit intervention in the affairs of European Left and labour movements is well documented, as is the wider attempt to orchestrate a cultural and ideological consensus in favour of an orientation toward “the free world” (Rupert, 1995; Wilford, 2003; Carew, 1987: 69; Saunders, 2000).

Beyond Europe, the attention of US planners to developing hegemonic strategies was limited. For example, the continent of Africa had barely featured except as an appendage of Europe in US discussions during the early years of the Cold War. “Security” interests on the part of the US were minimal, although American capital salivated over the potential market (Metz, 1984). As anticolonial nationalism matured, however, the US increasingly came to the conclusion that it would have to intervene in order to forestall communist influence, and that organised labour could be a key vector for building US hegemony in the colonial world. Nixon’s report following his 1957 tour of Africa urged the Eisenhower administration to focus on building trade union relations. British trade unions were drafted into the official attempts to quarantine the emerging African labour movements against a rising Pan-Africanism, giving the AFL-CIO the opportunity, working through the anticomunist International Congress of Free Trade Unions, to expand US influence. They increasingly called for a policy of national independence, partially in competition

with British unions for influence, whom they felt were too soft on communists, and partially because they feared that without such a pro-active policy “communist” and Pan-African sentiment would prevent the US from assuming the dominant role (Carew, 1996; Zeleza, 1984).

### **Crisis and Breakdown: The ‘Geopolitical Management’ of South-east Asia**

The region of south-east Asia had long been a source of fascination for American race thinking, and a testing bed for its imperial projects. From the annexation of Pacific islands to the anti-immigration laws and purges, to the colonisation of the Philippines, the US attempted to subordinate parts of “the East” on the basis of its extant racial ideologies and techniques, and open it up for investment. Japan’s state-led “modernization,” a classic instance of uneven and combined development and its political management (Allinson and Anievas 2010), was understood by Americans as simply the application of “white man methods” by people who remained “savages” and “barbarians” as WWII propaganda had it. (Quoted in Krenn 2006, 67) In America’s post-war flush of success, it organised its domination of south-east Asia by reconstructing the Japanese state along “American” lines in part, it seems, to bring the “martial” spirit of the Japanese “race” under control – and by supporting a network of clients and colonial allies (Jacobson 2001; Dower 1987; Seymour 2008, 80-90, 111-117 and 130-142).

The Cold War was bracketed at either end by two major anticommunist wars, both in south-east Asia, and both “race wars” in the sense of being strategically bound up with the management of crises in white-world supremacy, and in the sense of being ideologically permeated by a racist “common sense”. The first major anticommunist war that in Korea was at least in part a race war in this tradition. It was a constant theme of Soviet propaganda during this war that the US war was driven by the same racism as that by which African Americans were oppressed – but, unfortunately, this was not just propaganda. For President Truman, the Koreans were “the inheritors of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, the greatest murderers in the history of world”. General MacArthur bristled with stereotypes about “the Oriental” and his natural propensity to “follow a winner”. General Willoughby lamented that civilised Americans were being killed by “simple coolies”, “half-men with blank faces”. To another official, North Koreans were “half-crazed automatons”. (Deane, 1999: 29-30) Such views formed part of the “common sense” of imperialist statecraft.

However, such views were not a major part of the justification for war. The case for intervention was based upon the need to defend a Southern anticommunist dictatorship against the North Korean forces allied to the USSR. This was essentially a war about how Korea would modernise. The country was undergoing a social revolution of sorts, and many Koreans admired the USSR as a model of how to, as Milovan Djilas put it, “skip over centuries of slavery and backwardness”. (Westad, 2007: 21; Armstrong, 2003; Cummings, 1981) That was plainly not the path that the United States intended and, by deploying anticommunism as the main legitimising

argument for intervention, the US successfully organised a hegemonic coalition within the United States, and elaborated the most extensive deployment of hegemonic operations beyond. It secured a consensus among elites, bypassed the potential obstruction of a Dixiecrat-Republican congressional coalition which otherwise would have opposed the state-building powers assumed in the context of the war<sup>10</sup>, won a broad coalition of popular support, galvanised an alliance of states, and obtained a legal basis through the United Nations. (Bell 2004; Sandler 1999; Mayers 2007; Casey 2008). The US thus intervened to divert Korea's "modernization" process away from the communist route. It was not able to entirely extirpate the revolutionary movement which had taken power in the north of Korea. However, in defending its southern regime, its strategy of supporting authoritarian client regimes in those states it deemed not yet ready for full self-government was consolidated (Armstrong, 2003; Cummings, 1981; Deane, 1999).

Insofar as there was opposition within the US to the Korean War when it was launched, it was marginal. Beyond the hard Left, incorporating both Communists and Trotskyists, some pacifists and women's groups, and the isolationist Right, "the vast majority of Americans simply accepted the war ... as one further consequence of global leadership in the fight against Communist aggression." Even much of the progressive and socialist Left, from Henry Wallace to Norman Thomas, supported the war, while the Trotskyist Max Shachtman took the idiosyncratic position of opposing

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<sup>10</sup> Dixiecrats tended to restrict their criticism of Truman to his handling of the war rather than the decision to execute it. Senator Richard Russell's investigation of the firing of General MacArthur is characteristic in this respect.

the war, while supporting British involvement because it had a Labour government. The Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party berated Stalinism in North Korea, but nonetheless held that the war was one of "aggression by US imperialism against a colonial people". The Communist-led opposition was weakened and isolated by its loyalty to the USSR at just the point that Stalin's idea of 'peace' looked very much like imperialism. Indeed, the sharp U-turn made by Communist Party USA (CPUSA) from its wartime 'patriotism' toward a reconstituted 'Marxist-Leninism' in struggle against US imperialism was visibly determined by Soviet foreign policy interests. As such, and with a febrile anticommunist culture at work, Soviet-aligned international efforts to oppose the US intervention through the World Peace Council, though enjoying significant international support, made little impact in the US. Fellow travellers on the African American Left such as W E B Du Bois, were relatively isolated in taking an antiwar stance – the NAACP, on whose board Du Bois still sat, voted to support US efforts to "halt Communist aggression in Korea". They also came under attack from the government. Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote to rebuke the Peace Information Center for hosting Du Bois, while HUAC issued an attack on the peace campaign, claiming that it existed to "confuse and divide the American people" in the interests of the enemy. Ultimately, when popular discontent with the war did emerge, it was channelled not into support for a popular movement, but into Eisenhower's presidential campaign. Further, the ideological shape of the opposition was often an even harder anticommunism than that of the administration: Truman either hadn't gone far enough, or had failed to prevent the initial Communist aggression. (Sandler, 1999: 9; Mayers, 2007: 298; Seymour, 2008: 134-5; Shephard,

2005: 18-19; Casey, 2008: 75, 139, 205-206, 292-293 & 334-335; Starobin, 1972: 205-211; Isserman, 1995: 3-31; Wittner, 1993: 184-185; Stueck, 1997: 124; Hall, 2005: 94; Carew, 2008: 56-57; Horne, 1985: 128-132)

The second major anticommunist war, in Vietnam, was likewise part of a racist praxis, linked to the maintenance of white-world supremacy. The war began as a complex manoeuvre in defence of French colonialism (with the ultimate goal of supplanting it). The US sent a total of \$3.6bn in aid to the French client Bao Dai until 1954. This was linked to the official perception of Vietnam as a “medieval country”, which colonialism was dragging into modernity. However, as before, the racial dynamic was at an ideological level commuted through the discourse of anticommunism. Accordingly, the Vietnamese revolution was interpreted as a manifestation of a desire to be modern – essentially, to be American – expressed in a pathological form as “communism”. The job of the US was to help Vietnam – by crushing its revolution – back onto the right track (Krenn 2006, 89-93).

As the French withdrew, the US reverted to its pattern of supporting an anticommunist client dictator, and shifted its weight behind Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem was encouraged to build up a repressive apparatus, killing thousands and jailing over 150,000 people. The Kennedy administration, belligerent and operating on the assumptions of still regnant Cold War orthodoxy, dedicated itself to the development of an effective counterinsurgency program. One expression of this was the “Strategic Hamlet Program”, similar to the American use of concentration camps for civilians in

the Philippines. In under two years, 16,000 such “hamlets” appeared across South Vietnam. This was eventually accompanied by aerial attacks and a build-up of troops eventually reaching half a million. The escalation was justified in part by racism in both the mandarin and demotic registers, with “modernisation theory” providing the former, and the “mere gook rule” supplying the latter (Gettleman, Franklin, Young & Franklin, 1995: 295; Kolko, 1994: 80-2; Gerson, 2007: 130-166).

In this war, Southern, segregationist politicians played an important role in supporting the White House’s policy on militantly anticommunist grounds than during the Korean War. This was in spite of opposition that these same politicians expressed in its early stages, partially on pragmatic grounds and partially on the basis of Southern isolationism. However, the anticommunist consensus was already brittle by the time the US was seriously engaged in Vietnam, precisely because the success of the anticolonial movements and the rise of the civil rights struggle in the southern US combined to disrupt the binary of communism vs anticommunism. Certainly, a consensus initially held among policymaking elites and allied intellectuals regarding the nefarious reach of communism. Labour was broadly in favour of war, and such popular criticisms as did emerge were initially muted (Fry, 2015; Small 2002; Tomes 1998; Levy 1994, 47-51). Even so, the broad, integral unity of diverse classes and class sectors that had been successfully organised around anticommunism was weakened.

As ever, race did not stop at the water's edge. The civil rights movement, when it did emerge, was intimately tied to anticolonial struggles, and its radicalisation in the early Sixties would owe much to their success. The example of India's independence struggles had exerted a profound effect on African American struggles. In the case of Martin Luther King, it was Gandhi's doctrine of non-violent resistance that he adopted for the US civil rights movement. "We have found them to be effective and sustaining – they work!" (King, King Jr., Carson, Holloran, Luker & Russell, 2005: 5; Horne 2008). In 1960, the same year that sit-ins and freedom rides began, a host of independent African states came into being: Congo, Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Somalia, Niger, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Chad, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Senegal, and Mali. The emerging "New Left" paid attention. The famous Port Huron declaration of Students for a Democratic Society in 1962 celebrated the "revolutionary feelings of many Asian, African and Latin American Peoples" and the "social sense of organicism characteristic of these upsurges" against which American apathy stood in "embarrassing contrast" (Westad, 2007: 106).

By 1963, the Organization of African Unity had been formed to represent the interests of the newly independent states, a move which would inspire Malcolm X to co-found the Organization of Afro-American Unity the following year (X, 1964). The 'solid South' crumbled under this pressure. Segments of the US ruling class, including business leaders of the "New South", viewed segregation as a burden. Local state leaders such as Ben West of Nashville were persuaded to oppose segregation; others – "pragmatic segregationists" – began to adopt a strategy of

implementing racially laden family, crime and welfare policies rather than open segregation (Marable, 2007: 67; Woods, 2004: 218-24; Eyes on the Prize 3: Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961); Crespino, 2007).

The successes of the civil rights movement provided an infrastructural basis for the emerging antiwar movement in the US: a tactical repertoire (civil disobedience), a layer of leaders (many antiwar activists having been educated in CORE, or the SNCC), and a body of intellectual experience in the realities of white supremacy and its centrality to the American system. And when civil rights activists began to challenge the US war in Vietnam, they regarded it not as an anticommunist issue, but as a race issue. The growth of the antiwar movement, linked to a wider search for racial justice, dis-embedded significant popular layers from the anticommunist coalition, and began to assemble them into a new, radical coalition which ultimately embraced 6 million participants and 25 million sympathisers. In this context, and in view of the effective military resistance of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, even the consensus among elites and state-aligned intellectuals did not hold (Gettleman, Franklin, Young & Franklin, 1995: 296-304; Zaroulis and Sullivan, 1984: 27-32; Small, 2002: 5-6). As social struggles escalated, anticommunism could no longer link diverse constituencies in a single bloc. The old anticommunist bloc disintegrated, some of its elements shaken loose and redistributed into new civil rights and antiwar coalitions. The Cold War 'historic bloc' was finished, consumed in the overthrow of white-world supremacy.

## Conclusion

The Cold War represented a particular transitional moment in the geopolitical management of the uneven and combined development of capitalism, in which an emerging norm of national self-determination embodied in the legal superstructure of the United Nations conflicted with the established norm of white-world supremacy. The US ruling class was strategically committed in the long run to replacing formal colonial control of non-white states with a hierarchy of self-determining states with the US at its apex. Further, it was invested in hegemonic practices designed to win its global allies in the struggle against communism, including its claim to oppose empires and its insistence that Russia was the most menacing imperialist power. This also raised questions about its domestic racial system, which was a significant impediment to its ability to win allies in the Third World. However, the domestic class system relied upon the maintenance of white supremacy. Further, the US state leaders did not merely doubt the capacity of non-whites for self-government: they had an interested opposition to national self-determination if it was claimed by forces that might be hostile to American capitalist penetration. Finally, their key global allies and accomplices in power were themselves the colonial powers.

Cold War anticommunism did not resolve all of these conflicts, but it provided a framework within which they could be managed for a period of time. It ensured the hegemony of the US ruling class domestically. It consolidated a “historic bloc”, a broad alliances of classes and groups organised around an ideologically defining

mission, that of resisting communism. This suppressed brewing domestic conflicts over segregation for a period of time, and provided an infrastructure of consent for US geopolitical management, necessary for extensive military investments and deployments. It further provided the bedrock upon which the US could then cultivate allies, and seek to deploy hegemonic strategies within allied states. Ultimately, anticommunism supplied the narrative ballast for the deployment of outright violence where US strategists deemed it necessary.

However, the Cold War “historic bloc” had always been predicated on an unstable unity, its global reach dependent in part upon the tacit, or explicit, acceptance that white supremacy was preferable to the perceived threat of communist rule. The bargain was that apartheid, colonialism and Jim Crow would be tolerated so long as it meant defending the institutions of democracy elsewhere. The accelerating break-up of the colonial system was ruinous to this logic, and hastened the fall of the “solid South”. It broke the chain of equivalents linking anticommunism and democracy, and that associating democracy with whiteness. The ability of anticommunism to cement hegemonic alliances in defence of racial hierarchy had been lost. As a strategy for managing the problems of uneven and combined development, it was viable only so long as it could defend white supremacy in the United States by interpreting and organising social antagonism along the axis of communism vs anticommunism. Once this binary was disrupted by anticolonial and civil rights struggles, the result of mobilising anticommunism in defence of white supremacy was no longer the sanctification of the latter, but the clear discrediting of the former.

In this chapter, I began by identifying an ‘overlap’ between three social formations, three racial states, wherein structurally quite similar practices of anticommunism were deployed at the zenith of the Cold War, and deployed in similar ways to red-hunt in anti-racist movements as part of a wider conservative political strategy. I linked this overlap to, among other things, a *structural logic*, that of an international system undergoing serial transitions: transition from pre-capitalist structures to either capitalist or possibly socialist modernity in many states; transition from colonialism to a legal norm of national self-determination; transition European to American dominance. Anticommunism, made possible at the international level by the appearance of a powerful state describing itself as communist, enabled the management of these transitions, the political control of decolonising societies, the suppression and disorganisation of opponents, and the centralisation and augmentation of political power both in the US and among its allies. This was the context in which the South both acted and was acted upon in the Cold War.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **The Geo-Economic Unity of ‘Jim Crow’ Country**

*This chapter outlines the transformations and transitions taking place in the South, during the period following World War II. It deals with this on two levels; the spatial-economic matrix of production, and the territoriality of state power. Jim Crow was a particular way of territorialising state power in the management of production, and this chapter argues that the crisis of the spatial-economic matrix in which Jim Crow was formed, while it had been developing for some time, was accelerated in the Cold War period. The social basis of Jim Crow had been eroded by the crisis in cotton, New Deal programmes and the industrialisation accelerated by war. One means of adapting to this was to accept gradual, piecemeal reforms of the Jim Crow structure, and this did happen to an extent before Brown v the Board of Education. It was also reflected in the conservative-adaptive strategies of ‘practical segregationists’ in the years after that decision. Another means was countersubversion, which also necessitated the redeployment of state apparatuses in relation to a new, emerging right-wing coalition, and ultimately brought the Southern states into conflict not only with civil rights actors, but also with the courts and the Federal government. Anticommunism thus appears here both as a means of managing and suppressing the effects of transitional processes, and as a means of*

*cohering a new social basis for the operation of state power and the pioneering of new representational strategies. Out of these struggles emerged a new ‘spatio-temporal fix’ for Southern capitalism.*

### Introduction: the violent birth of Jim Crow.

In 1898, a notorious putsch in Wilmington, North Carolina, asserted white supremacy with compulsory effect. The Tar Heel state had been built upon African American slave labour, overwhelmingly concentrated in tobacco plantations. Within fifteen years of the end of the Civil War, and the fall of slavery, a new economic paradigm was emerging, centred on industrial textile production.

This corresponded to a new racial management of labour as, beginning in the same period, Southern states began to develop a form of segregation colloquially known as ‘Jim Crow’ in order to suppress black political participation and control black labour. While firms operated a strict ‘colour bar’ denying black workers access to ‘skilled’ occupations, states implemented racial ‘separation’ laws and worked to deprive African Americans of access to the vote. In North Carolina, this subordination of African Americans was helped along by paramilitary organisations called the ‘Red Shirts’, who targeted black political meetings.

The economic logic of disenfranchisement was expressed by a Mississippian of the era: “If the Negro is permitted to engage in politics, his usefulness as a laborer is at an end. He can no longer be controlled or utilised.” But it also had important political and ideological effects inasmuch as it bound white workers to white managers, the latter perceived as the racial allies of the former. To have a ‘skilled’ textile occupation was a racial ‘privilege’ in this sense: such were the ‘wages of whiteness’. (Wood, 1986: 118; Brattain, 2001: 47; Roediger, 1991) This shift was ratified at the highest level of politico-legal authority. By 1896, the Supreme Court’s decision in Plessy vs Ferguson had given a legal mandate to segregation. It was also coterminous with a new phase in race-making as, in 1898, the year of the massacre, the US had begun to build an overseas colonial empire, seizing territorial possessions from Spain.

The major challenge to the emerging system of white supremacy came from the Populist movement, based on a biracial alliance off farmers and workers, which sought to resist the growing power of the region’s capitalist class. (Hahn, 2006) North Carolina’s People’s Party was launched out of the Farmers’ Alliance in September 1892, and rapidly made significant advances so that, by the 1894 election, they had formed an electoral coalition with state Republicans known as Fusion and were able to take control of the state house. Though the white-led wing of the Populist movement was dominant, it was articulated with a well-organised African American current, and a thriving black civil society infrastructure; and though it was dominated by landowners, it mobilised a mass of landless poor. (Hahn, 2006; Ali,

2010) Wilmington was a particular stronghold of Fusion candidates as the city had an African American majority which had successfully taken positions in the state, the judiciary and the business class. However, by 1896, the movement was already beginning to subside. This was in part because of a Democratic Party strategy which in Gramscian terms could be categorised as ‘transformism’. That is, by offering their own version of Populist policies such as free silver, the party of the dominant classes shook loose elements of a subaltern coalition, neutralising their oppositional content and incorporating them into a pro-capitalist and white-supremacist politics.

Such was the context in which the Wilmington coup could take place. The occasion for it was the local elections of 1898. White Democrats fought the election explicitly on the basis of violent white supremacy. The local Democratic newspaper called for the lynching of a thousand African Americans each day, in order to deter black men from making sexual advances toward white women. (Hossfeld, 2005: 5) The dominant tone was that black people were a threat, not just to the sanctity of white women, but to the position of white workers, and to a whole civilisational edifice purportedly safeguarded by white supremacy. The threat could only be extirpated with brutal repression. Alfred Waddell, a local politician, exhorted white voters on the night before the election:

“If you find the Negro out voting, tell him to leave the polls, and if he refuses, kill him, shoot him down in his tracks. We shall win tomorrow if we have to do it with guns.” (Franklin, 1998)

The resulting collapse in turnout among African American voters provided the opening for conspiracy planned by local Democrats to overthrow the city council under the rubric of the ‘White Declaration of Independence’. Remaining Fusion representatives were driven out of office immediately, many of their supporters either shot or forced out of the city and put on trains. Additional trains were put on to facilitate the ensuing exodus of African Americans from the city. The McKinley government refused to reverse the *coup d'état*, and over the next two years a series of Jim Crow laws were implemented in the city and state-wide to keep African Americans away from the polls. (Hossfeld, 2005: 5-6) Thus was entrenched a politico-legal and economic order, in which the different ‘levels’ of the social formation were organised around white supremacy.

In this case, a number of processes were condensed in which a new ‘geo-economic’ unity in the South was established. In the gendered, racist explosion of countersubversive violence, an emerging pattern of productive relations and its relationship to territory, political authority and representation was consolidated. In this chapter, we encounter that ‘geo-economic’ unity in a state of crisis, and see where Jim Crow (as the dominant politico-legal order) and anticomunism (as the

mode of countersubversion) converge in the organisation of political authority, space and productive relations. Here, the emphasis is on representing the unity of the South as a “differentiated geo-economic organism” (Gramsci), a conjunction of matrices of production, political authority and the resistant realities of territory. This chapter proceeds through different moments of the problem of the South’s ‘geo-economic’ unity.

I begin by attempting to demystify a problem posed by the defenders of Jim Crow: that of ‘states rights’. This requires unpacking the assumptions behind ‘sovereignty’ and its relationship to territorial power, and in fact delving into the very nature of ‘the state’ itself. Assuming I explain this aright, my next step is to investigate the relationship between modes of production and the organisation of space, with specific reference to the development of the capitalist mode of production in the US South amid its particular geographical features. This discussion will focus specifically on the industrial transformation of North Carolina, as the most economically advanced, ‘progressive’ state in the South. Following this, I look at the relationship between territorial political authority and production processes in the South, especially since Jim Crow practices fulfilled a “dual function as a means of political subordination and a method of labor control and allocation”. (Korstad, 2003: 57) Finally, I look at the implications of all this for modes of political representation in southern states, and the role of anticomunism in conserving these in the post-war era.

## **The Materiality of 'States Rights'.**

Out of the vast range of human social capacities – possible ways in which social life could be lived – state activities more or less forcibly ‘encourage’ some whilst suppressing, marginalising, eroding, undermining others. Schooling for instance comes to stand for education, policing for order, voting for political participation. Fundamental social classifications, like age and gender, are enshrined in law, embedded in institutions, routinised in administrative procedures and symbolised in rituals of state. Certain forms of activity are given the official seal of approval, others are situated beyond the pale. This has cumulative, and enormous, cultural consequences; consequences for how people identify (in many cases, *have to* identify) themselves and their 'place' in the world. ... We call this *moral regulation*: a project of normalising, rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word 'obvious', what are in fact ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical form of social order. ... Centrally, state agencies attempt to give unitary and unifying expression to what are in reality multifaceted and differential historical experiences of groups within society, denying their particularity. (Corrigan & Sayer, 1985, p. 4)

"My fellow citizens, we are now an occupied territory. In the name of God, whom we all revere, in the name of liberty we hold so dear, in the name of decency, which we all cherish, what is happening in America?" Governor Orval Faubus's lament, in

response to the deployment of 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne in May 1957, to enforce school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, signalled his political reinvention. From being a ‘moderate’, baited by opponents in the Democratic right as a ‘leftist’ and even a ‘communist’, typical of a takeover of the Democratic Party by the “pinks” and “subversives” as Strom Thurmond put it, he became a southern nationalist and McCarthyite.

This volte face was conducted under sustained pressure from other Southern leaders such as the stalwart anticommunist, segregationist and millionaire plantation owner, Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, and Governor Marvin Griffin of Georgia, who demanded Southern unity in the face of what they decried as a march of power to Washington. Segregationists had long argued that an assault on ‘states’ rights’ was being supported by communists anxious to usurp the resulting power of the centralised state. Senator Eastland’s charge against Faubus, not substantially untrue, was that he was a ‘border state’ governor who compromised with the Washington elites. By contrast, Eastland boasted that he used his power in Washington, particularly on the civil rights subcommittee, to subvert the law: “Yes ... [I] became the boss of the committee that had all the civil-rights bills. And ever since then, the CIO and these organizations have been yapping and yapping that I was arrogant and high-hatted with them, and so I was; and they said I broke the law, and so I did.”

As importantly, Eastland used his position as chair of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS), and later the Senate Judiciary Committee of which SISS formed a powerful subcommittee, to investigate individuals and organisations involved in attempting to de-segregate education for communist affiliation. The goal was to persuade Congress to defend states' rights and to furnish the South with the repressive power to crush the civil rights movement. Faubus availed himself of the fruits of these investigations when he alleged that Lee and Grace Lorch, opponents of segregation who had been involved in supporting the Little Rock Nine, were communists. (Woods, 2004, pp. 72-3; Clark, 1976; Brown, 2002; Onufriu, 2007; Sieroty, 1956)

Faubus's appeal to the discourse of states' rights implied a particular conception of state power and its organisation. For, while the statement invoked the memory of Union troops stationed in the South during Reconstruction, implying that the Federal government was at war with Southern states, we can surmise that Faubus was sincere when he later said that he "had no intention of challenging the federal union". This is because the liberal-constitutionalist image of "federal union", central to the discourse of 'states rights', was of a decentralised, competitive pooling of sovereignties under a covenant. According to this juridical conceit, the states of the Union retained all sovereign powers which had not been delegated to the central state – an important aspect of the legal resistance to *Brown vs. the Board of Education* (Lewis, 2004, pp. 33-4)

So, to approach the role of Southern states in conserving Jim Crow, and particularly the position of anticommunist practices within this, we must first account for the particular political regime in the United States, through which the southern states had been able to develop as sites of power and resistance: the federal constitutional republic. It has been argued that a territory as vast and differentiated as that covered by the United States called for some form of federal regime. (Wood, 2004, p. 127) Yet, the administrative division of large and differentiated territories varies enormously, while federal structures are present in relatively small national states. The interpretation that treats federalism as a function of scale and differentiation is related to the liberal-constitutional (i.e. juridical) image of the central state being the sum of pooled sovereignties deriving from local formations.

I will reject this image. The state, as such, is an illusion, a “mythicized abstraction” attributing an artificial unity to an ensemble of institutions and techniques. (Corrigan & Sayer, 1985, p. 7; Foucault, 1994, p. 220) It is more useful, at a certain level, to speak of ‘the state effect’ or the ‘the state idea’ – that is, of our comprehension of ‘the state’ as an end-product of a series of historical processes, in the sense described by Foucault:

“The state does not have an essence. The state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power. The state is nothing else but the effect, the profile,

the mobile shape of a perpetual statification or statifications, in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making centres, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on. In short, the state has no heart, as we well know, but not just in the sense that it has no feelings, either good or bad, but it has no heart in the sense that it has no interior. The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities.” (Foucault, 2008: 77)

There is a “misplaced concreteness” (Alonso, 1994) implied by the definite article, ‘*the state*’, in which the state could be mistakenly comprehended as an organism, object or instrument. This reification of the state has etymological origins in the English Revolution, wherein the term ‘state’ developed as a negative, critical term in contrast with the ‘society’ of free individuals. (Williams, 1983, pp. 292-3) This state-society dichotomy is reinforced by the juridical conception of the state as a sovereign legal entity, which lends ‘*the state*’ its concreteness, its definite boundaries, its institutional determinacy. For in this perspective, the state is seen to be reducible to its ‘public’ core, such as a deliberative chamber, police, courts and the armed forces. However, this is a mystification. The state covers much more than its public core; its presence is felt in a wide array of relations and institutions, some of which are formally ‘private’; its ‘strategic field’ organises ‘sites of power’, some of which are apparently autonomous from politics. (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 36-7) The fact that this mystification is also that to which defenders of Jim Crow habitually turned in the

defence of white supremacy, makes the analytical imperative to see beyond it all the more urgent.

The materiality of ‘states rights’ must reside somewhere other than in the ‘sovereignty’ of local states, and I will argue that it rests in the specific relation of Southern states to the national state. Poulantzas (2014) argued that the state consists of a set of material practices and institutions in which are condensed the class relations prevalent throughout the social formation in which it emerges. This takes a number of forms. First of all, the state is situated within a social division of labour characterised by a fundamental cleavage between intellectual (executive) labour and manual (menial) labour, as ‘intellectual labour’ incarnate. That is, while capital monopolises knowledge in the organisation of production processes, the state monopolises political and administrative knowledge concerning the organisation of society as a whole. Secondly, the state’s material frame of reference reproduces the spatio-temporal order of capitalist society within itself, producing at a politico-legal level the ‘effect of isolation’ that competition between dependent producers enacts in productive relations, in a sense that is “terrifyingly real”. At the same time, it incorporates isolated subjects into a corporate body, a people/nation. (Poulantzas, 1978) Thirdly, as a form of legal organisation, it embodies axioms for what Corrigan and Sayer call the “moral regulation” of social life, its axioms materialised in the state’s simultaneous monopolisation of public violence. It thus produces the “ontological and epistemological premises” of the social order in which it has arisen.

Finally, as a territorial body it organises the space in a quite different pattern to that of the feudal state, in which the labourer is fixed to the land and the unity of the terrain is secured through the sovereign as the incarnation of the deity. In the capitalist state, the labourer is freed from the land, but is instantly enmeshed in a grid of spaces, sites of production and reproduction. The territory is thus divided into a matrix of serial, imperfectly ‘homogenous’ temporal spaces produced by the division of labour into abstract, equivalent units of labour-time. This matrix is continually marked by new closures and segmentations, fresh re-territorialisation, and is limited by a moveable frontier demarcating insides and outsides. The capitalist state is also capable of internalising those frontiers, creating spaces within itself for the management of the non- or anti-national – concentration camps within Europe being the supreme incarnation of this logic. (Bretthauer, 2011; Poulantzas, 2000; Corrigan & Sayer, 1985) These practices organise every aspect of social life, from production and exchange, to education, family and sociality, ensuring the simple reproduction and extended reproduction of capitalist productive relations. What is specific to these practices, however, is the way in which they carry out this organisation as a form of “moral regulation”, that is, as the symbolic organisation of social life and the production of forms of subjectivity and affect presupposed by the capitalist mode of production. These practices, in sum, are nothing other than “politically organized subjection,” embodied in institutional sites of power distributed through the spatio-temporal matrix. (Corrigan & Sayer, 1985)

In light of the above, the local state in a federal formation must be seen as a “site of power” within a *unified and centralised state field*, an administrative space “containing certain institutions materializing certain apparatuses”, a “specific and historically determined realization of the relations of force between the classes within the totality of the social formation designated by the [national] state.” Whereas liberal theory would posit a decentralised model of power structured around inter-state competition, the above would indicate that local state autonomy is “subordinate to central state authority”. (Legare, 1982) This is not to say that local state autonomy is therefore illusory. Rather, it represents a particular distribution of power within the field of the national state. And to the extent that this relative autonomy is substantive, a consequence is that local states materialise not only the relations of forces within the social formation as a whole, but also the balance of political and class forces pertinent to the local situation that it governs. Nor is it to say that inter-state competition has no bearing on the role of the local state. On the contrary, it is precisely through the local state’s dependence on the central state (for investment and capital allocations, but also for legal powers) that such competition is expressed. Further, the localisation of these sites of power, and their appearance as “a small-scale spatial analogue of the central state”, has an important function in the state’s organisation of hegemony. The division of the state into territorial units with local forms of representation is crucial in permitting the re-division of class antagonisms into geographical antagonisms. Nor is this re-division merely at the level of representation. The more powerful local states will tend to be those with the dominant class forces geographically clustered in them, and as a result will tend to be better

equipped to compete for resources and support within the central state. The relations of local ‘sites of power’ to one another and to the centralised state apparatus – that is, the precise organisation of their unity – will reflect spatially organised relations of class domination and subordination. Finally, the local state plays a very important role in the central state’s legitimisation function, incorporating local populations into manageable processes of governance, while also permitting the displacement of crises accumulated in the central government onto local states. (Dear & Clark, 1981)

This understanding of the state more readily explains the conduct of the Federal government and southern states in relation to segregation, and the anticommunist practices deployed in its defence. Southern states were, on the one hand, dependent on the central state for the legal, political and ideological weapons that it deployed in the defence of segregation. The anticommunist arsenal, ranging from the ideological practices of the state, including loyalty oaths, the ideology of ‘Americanism’, and the representation of communism as a clear and present danger to national security, to the HUAC structure and the committees of investigation, was primarily organised in the central state. Further, only with the indulgence of the President, Congress and Supreme Court was it possible for segregation to be imposed and perpetuated. On the other hand, the regional organisation of white supremacy created the vertical solidarity among whites that made the South such a solid component of the Cold War hegemonic bloc. Southern politicians seeking to defend their system were not reticent in reminding lawmakers in Washington of the South’s pronounced patriotism, militarism and vigilant policing of the sources of popular opposition to this bloc.

## **The territoriality of southern capitalism**

A common image in the theorisation of space and territory is that of 'two powers', capitalist and territorial. This dyad manifests itself today in theories of the 'new imperialism' developed by Harvey (2003) and Arrighi (2009). However, it also appears in sociological work on the relationship between states and economies. For Lefebvre, the relationship between the state and space has to be constituted along several axes. First, there is the production of a national space itself, a national territory that bears the marks of human generations, classes, political forces, etc. Of course, the capitalist state by no means coincides with the nation – but as we will see, this is beside the point. Capitalist states organise territory as national space. Second, the state constitutes within the territory a matrix of institutional spaces appropriate for a social division of labour, and the imperatives of political dominance. Each of these spaces, from the borough to the post office to the police station, condenses a system of social expectations and responses, which become so 'natural' and 'obvious' that they are never articulated. Third, the state composes a 'mental' or imaginary space, a set of representations through which people live their relationship to the people-nation, the state and the territory.

According to Lefebvre, the spatiality of the state constantly comes into conflict with "the pre-existent economic space that it encounters", "spontaneous poles of growth, historic towns, commercialized fragments of space that are sold in 'lots'":

"In the chaos of relations among individuals, groups, class fractions, and classes, the state tends to impose a rationality, its own, which has space as its privileged instrument. The economy is thus recast in spatial terms – flows (of energy, raw materials, labor power, finished goods, trade patterns, etc.) and stocks (of gold and capital, investments, machines, technologies, stable clusters of various jobs, etc.). The state tends to control flows and stocks by ensuring their coordination. In the course of a threefold process (growth – i.e., expansion of the productive forces – urbanisation, or the formation of massive units of production and consumption; and spatialisation), a qualitative leap occurs: the emergence of the state mode of production (SMP) (Le mode de production étatique). The articulation between the SMP and space is thus crucial. It differs from that between previous modes of production (including capitalism) and their manner of occupying natural space (including modifying it through social practice). Something new appears in civil society and in political society, in production and in state institutions. This must be given a name and conceptualized. We suggest that this rationalization and socialization of society has assumed a specific form, which can be termed: politicization, statism." (Lefebvre, 2002: 85)

This concept of the 'state mode of production' strikes me as theoretically extravagant, stretching the concept of the mode of production beyond breaking point. Nevertheless, the thrust of this is clear: there are two spatial logics of power, one spontaneous, random, commercial and capitalist, coming 'from below'; the other planned, ordered, rationalised, non-capitalist, coming 'from above'. Equally, some of the inspiration for this distinction may have to do with the work of the geographer G William Skinner, and the sociologist Charles Tilly, who extrapolated from Skinner's conclusions. Tilly wrote:

"G. William Skinner portrays the social geography of late imperial China as the intersection of two sets of central-place hierarchies ... The first, constructed largely from the bottom up, emerged from exchange; its overlapping units consisted of larger and larger market areas centered on towns and cities of increasing size. The second, imposed mainly from the top down, resulted from imperial control; its nested units comprised a hierarchy of administrative jurisdictions. Down to the level of the hsien, or county, every city had a place in both the commercial and the administrative hierarchy. Below that level, even the mighty Chinese Empire ruled indirectly via its gentry. In the top-down system, we find the spatial logic of coercion. In the bottom-up system, the spatial logic of capital. We have seen two similar hierarchies at work repeatedly in the unequal encounter between European states and cities." (Tilly, 1990: 127)

Again, it seems that the spatial logic of capital is identical with the spatial logic of commerce, a spontaneous system of flows, coming from below, 'bottom-up'; while the spatial logic of the state is rationalising, ordering, coercive, 'top-down'. Two spatial logics, two types of power, each so distinct that, for Lefebvre at least, the state's type of power even rises to the level of being a mode of production.

As against this approach, and the better to conceptualise the relationship between territorial authority and production in the 'Jim Crow' South, I want to suggest that there is nothing particularly special about territory. Territory is one moment in the organisation of a social formation, one of the physical realities organised under a mode of production, or under several articulated modes of production. I will argue that the capitalist mode of production has a distinctive 'territorial logic' which found particular forms in the US South. The 'territorial logic' of a mode of production is, of course, actualised in terrains marked by the certain resistant physical realities. Geographical features such as mountain ranges, plains, and fast-flowing streams, make certain associations and certain types of power more likely than others. Thus, for example, the shift toward textile production in North Carolina was facilitated by the abundance of rapid flowing streams, hardwood forests, and inexpensive land. (Bennett & Patton, 2008: 96)

Nonetheless, capitalism doesn't merely impose a new organisation on territorial entities which otherwise remain essentially the same; it rather takes hold of and alters

their materiality. This is true of all the spatial units that occur under capitalism. Castells (1977), in his denunciation of 'urban theory' for presuming that the urban retained the same content, the same meaning, through centuries of change, pointed out that urban space meant something quite different in medieval Europe; towns and cities represented a different spatial organisation of the social division of labour.

In Marx's terms, the social division of labour is distinct from the technical division of labour, in that it arises from social functions related to class. Under the feudal mode of production, the social division of labour is organised around personalised bonds between the feudal lord and the peasant or serf. The major form of extraction was directly political – the ruling class took tribute by means of coercion – and this tended to produce both a parcellisation of political authority and disarticulation of space. The rural-urban divide, the patchwork of spaces ranging from estates and small towns to great commercial centres and ports to walled cities, condensed a particular social division of labour. In the countryside, the producer was bound to the soil working for nobles of various rank on estates of varying size with porous frontiers and no clear boundaries. Towns varied greatly in size and function; some were enclaves of relative commercial freedom, particularly port towns connected to world markets; smaller towns were usually abutments to large feudal estates. Their inhabitants did not live off the land and produce tribute, but rather lived off petty commodity manufacture, or various types of trade serving the luxury consumption of the feudal ruling class. (On the rural-urban divide in the middle ages, see Hilton, 1992). The major form of ideological dominance being religious, there

were overlapping frameworks of sacred and secular power, the church acting as landlord, tithe collector, and symbolic guarantor of the unity of the state as the body of Christ. This specific articulation of economic, political and ideological power was also the basis for the checkered system of miscellaneous polities, from communes to city-states to empires. So, the territorialisation of political power under feudalism, based on bonds to lord and land, was such that spaces tended to be irregular, reversible, turned in on themselves (though bonds to lord and land) yet simultaneously open (through extensive migration across intersecting boundaries).

Where the capitalist mode of production took root, however, producers obtained their famous dual freedom, from both lord (bondage) and land (the means of labour); they were drawn into relations of production mediated through exchange, selling their labour power to capitalists who procured it as just one element in a productive process intended to produce a profit. However, as Poulantzas (2014) pointed out, this did not entail deterritorialisation; such a schema relied on a naturalist image in which territory was assumed to have a continuous meaning, connotatively linked to 'rootedness' in determinate plots of land. Rather, the capitalist division of labour entailed a different type of territorialisation. Production, circulation and exchange now demanded a spatial matrix of imperfectly homogenised sites, segments of space each carefully delimited by clear frontier marking insides and outsides and linked to a social division of labour – factories, hubs, supply chains, shopping centres, terraces, conurbations, condominiums, and so on. So while the movements of money, capital and labour would tend to push beyond these spaces, they must cross frontiers in order

to do so. This system of boundaries is necessary to organise the labour force, the distribution and storage of goods, communications, transport, consumption, residences, and so on. It is necessary to help regularise an already anarchic system of production and minimise its dysfunctions: for example, they help impose a general sedentarisation on the labour force (Scott, 2002) that makes its supply more predictable and its constituents intelligible.

The specific combination of cooperative and competitive relations in the division of labour also has effects on the spatial matrix. Production, distribution and exchange must necessarily take place in a cooperative manner, meaning that capital units are locked in a relation of interdependence. This will produce a tendency toward clustering, as functionally associated capitals reduce their distance from one another: it makes sense, for instance, that large manufacturing enterprises would tend to cluster in industrial estates near large workforces with access to main road; or that commercial enterprises would cluster on high streets in pedestrian and motorists accessible centres where consumption can take place. (On the ‘clumpy’ distribution of capitals, see Ashman, 2006). On the other hand, this cooperative effort is structured by competitive accumulation. Some capitals will succeed better than others, and over the long-term there will be a concentration and centralisation of capitals, which themselves attract chains of supporting industries, producing spaces (towns, cities, even countries) which work as privileged centres of productive capital, and by extension other spaces that are underdeveloped and neglected.

Political authority under capitalism, rather than being directly embedded in those sites through a chain of significations linking land to labourer to lord, acquired a formal separation or relative autonomy from them. Indeed, part of its role was to help constitute this new spatial matrix by standing in a formal sense ‘outside’ it, while ‘intervening’ constantly. The scare quotes are necessary, because it is clear that in no real sense does the state have an external relationship to the spheres of production or exchange. This is where the state-derivation approach (Holloway & Picciotto, 1978) produces an important insight: breaking with the fetishised notion of the state, with the legal, constitutional image of the state as simply an external guardian of civil society, it treats the state as a social relationship, actively involved in the constitution of the totality of social relationships in part by separating off aspects of them and deeming them ‘political’ as opposed to ‘economic’. This is consistent with Corrigan and Sayer’s important argument that ‘the state’ is a ‘mythicized abstraction’; it is through the state relation itself that the social categories are produced to give it its seeming legal and institutional determinacy.

Still, despite the above, and despite the spatial metaphor deployed, this ‘standing outside’ adverts to a real political relationship which is the state’s relative autonomy from social classes. As Offe put it, this relative autonomy is necessary to capitalism because only a “fully harmonious economic system that did not trigger self-destructive processes of socialization could tolerate the complete positive

subordination of the normative-ideological and political systems to itself." (Offe, 1984: 49)

It is the fact that capitalist production is not a self-sufficient system, that it has inherent crisis tendencies, and arguably the fact that is articulated with other systems (ecological, biological, etc.), which makes it so inherently unstable and requires a state with the freedom to provide a spatio-temporal fix. (Jessop, 2008) Another relevant feature of capitalist production is the 'isolation effect' it produces in social classes. Because it is a system of competitive accumulation among many producers, and because capital is constitutively divided into fractions, the capitalist class finds it impossible to constitute its political dominance over the popular classes without the state, which cannot therefore be an 'instrument' or 'tool' for the capitalist class as such. So the apparent extrusion of political authority from the organisation of the spatial matrices of production, circulation and consumption is actually nothing other than the formal separation of the political from the economic; the state remains deeply involved in and articulated with the processes of capital accumulation, constituting the segments of space through its schools, police, armed forces, councils, parking authorities, free enterprise zones, etc. And through its action it seeks to unify and homogenise those spaces; but how?

In the capitalist mode of production, the dominant form of ideology is no longer religious but political; in normal circumstances, the capitalist state presents itself as a

popular, representative state (even if not always democratic). It does so firstly by binding itself to a nation, an ‘imagined community’, usually with a shared language. But to represent the nation as such, it must dissolve classes at an ideological level into individualised subjects, who are then cemented together through the state; the dominant ideological form this takes is legal; the law produces the ‘free and equal’ subject of the bourgeois nation-state. This is connected to the enclosure of a ‘national’ space, which is obviously by no means a natural space (though of course national expansiveness is necessarily responsive to natural resources, and the spatial matrix of production is warped around them). Just as the segments of space at the level of factories, bureaucratic offices or towns are circumscribed by a clear frontier as part of the logic of organising the social division of labour, so the state constitutes the national space by erecting a frontier around it, a system of exclusion and filtered admission (of labour, goods, etc) which is operated on behalf of the nation.

Not only that, but the state effectively operates a system of internal borders, whereby those who are deemed non-national or anti-national can be confined, brutalised, hyper-exploited, etc. – this can range from detention centres for asylum seekers to concentration camps; from Jim Crow laws restricting movement to secret prisons. This too has a certain relationship to the social division of labour, insofar as the latter is partially constituted by politics and ideology. An example would be the stratification of labour forces according to principles of race, nationality, religion, gender, ethnicity, and so on, in a way that enhances the political dominance of capital over labour and increases the rate of exploitation of all workers over the long-term.

(Allen, 2012) As Roediger and Esch's (2012) account of 'race management' demonstrates, this is not something that simply takes place at the level of the state; such strategies are implemented and experimented with directly in productive enterprises. But the state also develops strategies for the control of labour forces, for example by obstructing the mobility of some workers to discourage migration at some points or render migrant workers insecure at others, or implementing material incentives in a gendered way so as to preserve a family structure in which women perform the labour of reproducing labour (ie maintaining a household, raising children, feeding male workers etc). The system of both internal and external frontiers is part of the organisation and disciplining of the pyramid.

This directs one's attention to what the legal concept of the border, as simply an arbitrary political cleavage separating nation from non-nation, obscures: the fact that the frontier is a set of social (economic, political, ideological) relations, mediated through the state, between the contending classes bound by it; between the many capitals based within it and those beyond it; between national oppressed and dominant groups, and those beyond the nation; and between social formations unified by respective national states, whether imperialist or non-imperialist. The transgression of frontiers also represents one moment in a given social relationship, be it oppression (refugee flows), exploitation (labour migration), social resistance and class struggle (breaking out or breaking in), or imperialism (invasion, bombing).

In the study of state formations, territoriality is something that one almost takes for granted. But the spatial aspects of state formation, comprising the differentiation of the geographical terrain, the distribution of natural resources, the clustering of productive activities around advantageous nodal points, and the social, temporal and spatial divisions of labour that are possible within this space, have profound political consequences. Thus, space cannot be considered separately from the productive relations (economic, political and ideological) that produce its matrices. The capitalist mode of production imposes its own spatial logic, therefore, but the precise organisation of spaces depends critically on the balance of class and political struggles.

### **The geo-economic unity of Jim Crow country**

Based on the above, I can make some preliminary remarks about the organisation of segregation in the South, in the course of which I will indicate the general role of anticomunism in this. Segregation involves the state operating in all of its material capacities: deploying its monopoly on administrative (political, legal) knowledge to constitute productive relations along the lines of a racial bifurcation; producing the ‘effect of isolation’ and the composition of a people/nation through the conjunction of ‘property rights’ with white nationalism and ‘states’ rights’; engaging in “moral regulation”, upholding norms relating to family, education, work and sociality along strictly racial and patriarchal lines, with violence an ever-present determining force;

and constituting territorial spaces with a sharp ‘internal’ frontier separating the white national from the (black, communist) non- or anti-national. It is one aspect of the territorial activity of the state, the spatial organisation of productive relations, that I now want to elaborate on, taking my cue from Gramsci’s enjoinder of the study of “regional situations”, meaning “a differentiated geo-economic organism”. (Jessop, 2008, p. 102)

The specific pattern of Southern state formation (and re-formation) was determined by such a “geo-economic” unity of spatial and productive relations. This regional situation, which I will briefly describe below, was one in a state of crisis and re-organisation by 1945. And it is in the context not only of this conjunction of elements, but above all its crisis, that we will interpret the recourse to tightening segregation measures, as well as anticomunist repression, a process which we will see in motion in the periodisation in the next chapter. In the moment of their formation, Southern state forms (not just federal states, but municipalities) were created by these slave plantation and farm owners, initially both capitalist and non-capitalist, and were impregnated by the imperatives governing their reproduction. (James, 1988) The practice of ‘Jim Crow’ by these states acted on traditional patterns of *racial separation*, and added a new element. ‘Jim Crow’ laws, developed initially as a ruling class response to Populist political insurgency on the part of workers and poor farmers, did not merely politically disempower African Americans, but also intervened to suppress competitive market conditions in the purchase and sale of labour power, largely by controlling the movement of black labour and denying it

access to certain – usually ‘skilled’ – occupations. In implementing such restrictions, the state also produced an isolating effect on the southern labour market, depressing the average regional wage through racialised pay differentials, while at the same time producing a *material substratum* for consent among white workers through the fractionalisation of workers along racial lines, and the relative seniority and advantage that white labour would enjoy over black labour. (Roback, 1984; Post, 2011; Lee, 2008: 7-8; Legassick, 1974; Minchin, 1999; Minchin, 1997; Vitalis, 2000; Wolpe, 1980; Honey, 1993: 29 & 151)

Coterminous with this development was the emergence following the 1880s Cotton Mills Campaign of textiles as the major southern industry, superseding tobacco. This campaign involved an attempt to attract manufacturing investment to a region that was low on capital, where the capitalist mode of production had taken root late, and where the comparative advantages were the terrain and a plentiful, low-waged labour supply. Until that point, the major growth industry in the post-Civil War period was tobacco. In North Carolina, the size of the tobacco industry in 1880 was six times what it had been in 1870. Tobacco production, though based on farm labour, was rapidly urbanising: a process linked to the extinction of small producers as tobacco capital was subject to the logic of centralisation and concentration. Textile production, when it took off, was at a similar scale. (Wood, 1991; Bennett & Patton, 2008: 88)

The mills were small compared to those which had previously developed in the New England region. Mainly organised around small towns in the Piedmont area, where the terrain was ideal for textile production, they were supported by the many small power plants linked to the states rivers system, supplied with ample labour from the Piedmont farms, and connected by the development of railways in the region. These towns were, in their inception, ‘proto-industrial villages’, in which mill houses were surrounded by the features of rural life, such as chicken coops and pasture. The mill towns across the Piedmont were connected by familial, occupational and cultural ties into “an elaborate regional fabric”, producing a complex collective and regional identity. The physical and social geography of the towns was, argue Hall et al (1992: 506), a compromise between modern capitalist organisation and the traditional ‘way of life’ of the workers. The interstitial condition of the industry in this phase contributed to one of its most important features: the dominance of paternalism. Whereas the textile industry in the United Kingdom had developed on the basis of a proletariat completely separated from the means of production, in the United States it developed in relation to family farming. This created localised patterns of resistance which in most cases did not produce class-wide struggle, and which were contained through “paternalistic production apparatuses”. Feudal remnants, of the type associated with labour tenancy and sharecropping fused with the rationalising techniques of Fordist production. Until the Fifties, textile production took place overwhelmingly within small, labour-intensive, single industry ‘company’ or ‘mill’ towns. Employers did not simply regulate labour processes, but effectively were the local government of the towns, imposing their

own regulations and even their own morality (cf ‘thrift’, ‘honesty’, and ‘temperance’). They also stood as the ‘protectors’ of their workers, extending ‘favours’ and vowing to safeguard them against threats such as racially impure migrant labour.

It would be mistaken to treat this paternalism as in some sense ‘false’ or merely manipulative. Textile capitalists, such as Charles Cannon of Cannon Mills and Everett Jordan of Sellars Manufacturing and the US Senate, were often genuinely well-remembered by both colleagues and workers as ‘loved’ father figures. Jordan, for example, was characterised by a fellow textile manufacturer Edward L Gruber as “a very generous man … if he ran into somebody, whether they be black or white, and especially black—Everett, If he knew somebody was having trouble at home, or something like that he would go out of his way to see how he, or his company, could do something to be helpful.” (Bulla & Gruber, 1985) Likewise, his employee of thirty years, Thomas Ellington, recalled that “I worked for him for 35 years, and he was a fine fellow to work for … people in that mill really loved Mr. Jordan. I never heard anybody at all criticize him. … When I bought the house from him, he told Miss Alice to let me pay for it any way I wanted to—\$5 a week. And that's the way I paid for it.” His generosity could be extended to the company’s African American workforce as well: “he took all the colored people up to the store and they all sat down and ate”. (Bulla & Ellington, 1983)

These sorts of practices can be understood as part of the answer to Gramsci's riddle, "hegemony begins in the factory". The discourse of paternalism stipulates that the strong have a responsibility to care for the weak, while taking for granted the relation of dominance implied in this. This taken-for-grantedness of class and racial domination meant that capitalists who showed genuine humane concern for 'their' workers, and who could demonstrate that the bodily and social needs of labour were taken-into-account, enjoyed an enhanced political and ideological domination over the workforce. Such practices made these capitalists all the more effective opponents of trade unions, and advocates of segregation. These then were the characteristics – absent 'high wages' – of what become known as 'Fordism', and which Gramsci interpreted as a form of 'passive revolution' – a conservative-adaptive process in which elites attempt to rationalise and modernise the productive and reproductive basis of society without violent social struggles. (Buynum, 1928; Gilman, 1956; Gullickson, 1991; McLaurin, 1971: 45-49; Gramsci, 1971b; Burawoy, 1984: 36)

Because of the low wages upon which the industry depended, the ideal productive unit was the family, with children drawn into the labour force long after the 1914 child labour laws forbidding work before the age of 12. Indeed, mills employed many more women and children than adult males. The logic of this was not simply that low remuneration encouraged families to send children to work – rather, the availability of children for work as a result of labour management policy depressed the wage rate for adults. Textile firms specifically tailored their recruitment policies to select large families, generally drawn from the farms. These families were situated close to one

another in the production process, the better to foster familial authority, with tasks divided according to gender roles in which men were more fit for jobs with authority, skill and strength, and women more fit for jobs involving patience, nimble fingers and otherwise little skill. The families were housed in arrangements spatially divided according to racial and employment status: managers enjoying superior accommodation, and the small number of African American ‘menial’ labourers allotted by far the least auspicious housing. This pattern of small town development was also facilitated by the state-level focus on ‘balanced growth’ strategies in which urbanisation was off-set by the encouragement of rural development, with manufacturing developed in towns rather than large cities where possible. (Bennett & Patton, 2008: 97-99; Wood, 1986; Weinberg, 2003; McHugh, 1988; Gullickson, 1991)

The labour force was thus maintained as a predominantly white body by the state, and subject to routine familial and political intervention and surveillance by the employers, while African Americans were habitually relegated to the least advantageous segments of the geo-economic space. In effect, they were being separated not just from the means of production, but also from the resources essential to their own reproduction – not just as a labour force, but as a class force. This process of accumulation-by-dispossession was thus politically structured as the imposition of an internal frontier, similar in its territorial-organizational aspects to the creation of ‘homelands’ in apartheid South Africa. Significantly, the emergence of urbanization and the mill towns played a key role in the development of a spatially

rigid segregation. In this sense, segregation can be understood in part as a set of policies designed to cope with the problems posed by the proletarianization of the southern labour force, and the uneven process of industrialization and urbanization. (Burawoy, 1984, p. 36; Kayatekin, 2001; Carlton, 1994; Lee, 2008, pp. 7-12; Legassick, 1974; Davies, 1976; Massey, et al., 2009)

### **The crisis of the Southern geo-economy**

The elements of crisis for the southern geo-economy were always present, but as the industry attempted to modernise in the interwar period, embarking on a ‘better equipment’ campaign that was also aimed at extracting greater productivity from each worker, these became more salient. The incongruity of paternalism, in which the capitalist situated himself as the protector of a family of workers, with the methods of ‘scientific management’ needed to boost production became more obvious. Life was always hard for mill town inhabitants, the social and spiritual investments of the employers providing minimal relief, but this period saw the hardening of class divisions. The class struggles in the industry beginning at the end of the Twenties were bitter and violent, and it was in this context that the Communist Party began to build support in the industry while simultaneously campaigning against its segregated character. For example, communist involvement in the Loray strike committee in 1929 partially ensured its commitment to biracial representation, despite the relatively few black workers at the mill. The presence of communists enabled the

employers and more conservative sections of opinion to externalise the antagonism, arguing that if agitators could be arrested, tried and locked up or driven out, these communities would be restored to peace. Indeed, anti-communist workers could be organised into vigilante gangs to attack strikers.

The Depression sharpened class polarisation, as mills began a wave of aggressive lay-offs and wage cuts. Moreover, the industry's turmoil left it pleading for state intervention which, when it came in the form of the National Recovery Administration (NRA), included concessions to mill workers such as higher wages, the abolition of child labour and the establishment of the right to organise. The resulting surge in union organisation, as employers routinely flouted NRA regulations, culminated in the general textile strike of 1934, the largest in American history. The strike was marked by violence and the potential for violence. On the one hand, some workers recall that those trying to cross the picket line were "taking their life in their hands", as mill worker Eva Hopkins put it, by defying their fellow workers. (Hopkins & Tullos, 2006) On the other hand, the management encouraged scabbing workers to assault union organisers. Such was the case described by a mill worker, Geddes Elam Dodson. During the strike wave of 1934, flying pickets tried to visit the Dunean mill in Greenville:

"They had brought big boxes of new picker sticks up there and put them there in the weave room. And they had told us, "Now if them flying squad goes to sticking

their head in them windows, start cracking heads, and the company'll stand behind you." [Laughter] I was fixing looms, and one of my women weavers got to crying. I said, "Now listen, gal, don't you cry. If they start sticking heads in them windows, you help me start cracking heads like they told us to do." [Laughter] But whenever they thought the flying squad was going to break the National Guards' line, the captain or whatever he was over them told them to load their guns, and every one of them guns clicked at the same time. And he says, "Anybody crosses the line, shoot him down." That's what kept them out. They had a line of National Guards down there, all the way down the side of the mill. ... I joined a union one time, and I seen I was wrong, and so I just fell out and turned agin them whenever I seen what was coming up to me. I had a family, and I had to work for them and all that. And I knew the trouble my brother-in-law had got in over here at Mills Mill when they had that strike over there." (Dodson & Tullos, 2006)

The strike was broken, and employers embarked on the beginnings of a reorganisation of their relations with labour, the better to break unionism. Paternalistic practices went into decline, textile companies moved toward corporatisation, New Deal policies were reversed across the South, and the mill town system itself was eventually abandoned as a relic that encouraged collectivism among the workers. The mill towns were sold off, and textile manufacturers specifically cited the need to employ workers on a more individual, geographically scattered basis in order to resist the propensity of workers to organise. (Glass, 1992; Irons, 2000; Hall et al, 1992: 498-537)

By 1945, the southern geo-economy was experiencing a profound, transitional crisis. It continued to lag behind the rest of U.S. capitalism. Its ability to produce and realise surplus value, moreover, had been shattered by the effects of the cotton recession from the 1920s. The Depression, the accompanying political turn to the left in the U.S., and the workers' rights enshrined in the New Deal, had produced new forms of working class militancy such as the textile workers' general strike in 1934. Despite the success of the employers' against that offensive, and the relative lack of unionisation by the 1940s, some industrial centres of the south – including Birmingham, Alabama; Laurel, Mississippi; Memphis, Tennessee; and Atlanta, Georgia – had experienced union growth during the war. The CIO unions were therefore optimistic about the prospect of using New Deal reforms and their own enhanced political and economic clout to force Southern industry to unionise. (Irons, 2000; Roscigno & Danaher, 2004; Barlow, 2003, pp. 35-6)

Different forms of state action were deployed to remedy the crisis. Local states engaged in extensive economic intervention, such as subsidising planters. In the post-war era, they pursued a path of ostensibly broadening the region's industrial base, but within an overall policy of retaining the region's comparative advantage in low labour-costs. To this end, Southern states almost all supported the Taft-Hartley Act, and implemented right-to-work laws mandated by it. State troopers were used to protect strike breakers, and in North Carolina a strike court sentenced unionists and

their supporters to hard labour. They also tightened up the legal and spatial restrictions of Jim Crow. Employers in labour-intensive industries such as lumber, and the anti-New Deal businesses represented in the Southern States Industrial Council, lobbied for the introduction of regional differentials in the minimum wage, allowing them to reduce the cost of labour. If the development of relatively large regional and inter-regional firms and the scalar expansion of textile plants led to many employers being prepared to accept a moderately increased wage bill for the sake of productivity, the overall emphasis was on keeping wages low. Finally, the Cold War itself provided a means toward industrial modernisation, to the extent that it militarised a large sector of the Southern economy – which far surpassed the national average in the contribution that postwar military expenditures made to its employment and income – and absorbed a great mass of workers who had previously been employed in declining textile industries. (Wood, 1986: 159-61; Schulman, 1991: 79-87; Frederickson, 2010; Jewell, 2010)

There were limits to such strategies. The general appeal of Southern elites to northern investors and managers was the offer of cheap labour and a light regulatory touch. This, however, tended only to succeed in attracting labour-intensive industries. Governors, development boards and legislatures attempted to upgrade their tactics, recognising that the development of infrastructures and racial peace were essential for the development of high technology, capital-intensive industry. However, neither they nor the ‘progressive’ business elites they were allied with wished to challenge segregation if it could be avoided. Traditional class paternalism, while it founded

Southern resistance to unionisation, as in Operation Dixie, and to some extent constrained the emergence of the welfare state, was increasingly unsustainable. (Cobb, 1982; Chafe, 1982, 1991; Peters, 1994; Alston & Ferrie, 1999)

A complication for Southern elites was that the balance of political forces registered in the materiality and form of local states, where they enjoyed unparalleled dominance, was at odds with that registered in the national state. By the 1930s, under the pressure of Depression and a range of insurgent social movements, centrally a militant labour movement (Bernstein, 2010), the central state was beginning to pursue measures designed to modernise/rationalise the productive system, expand state capacity, and legitimise itself. The central state thus implemented programmes under the rubric of the New Deal which, though ‘racially laden’ in such a way as to (Katzenbach, 2006) and taken advantage of to benefit local manufacturers by Southern legislators, potentially threatened the South’s traditional forms of social control. New Deal reforms had encouraged liberals to organize for the abolition of the poll tax, for instance. While none of the anti-poll tax bills passed in Congress, numerous states did repeal their own poll tax. Later, war-time national mobilisation subsidised the mechanisation of plantations while at the same time encouraging urbanisation through the spread of New South businesses. (Frederickson, 2013; Cobb, 1997) The effect of this was to address the crisis at the expense of the South’s traditional forms of social control.

These processes also undermined the paternalistic model of industrial relations as higher wages undermined the cost-effectiveness of mill towns, tenant farmers became day labourers, and the industrial working class expanded. During the war, a quarter of the rural population of the South had left the plantations and farms for jobs in northern and southern cities, thus further eroding the basis of segregationist power. The great exodus of African Americans to the cities also produced a spatial re-organisation of southern segregation, so that its level of operation shifted from the state, county and city level to the level of the neighbourhood. (Honey, 2004; Lee, 2008: 7-12; Engerman & Gallman, 1986: 851; Johnson, 2010: 96-98; Wood, 1986; Massey, et al., 2009; Massey & Denton, 1993)

However, the turn to the right in the central state also undercut the basis for challenges to white supremacy. During the war, the federal government had supported unionisation in the South. But this support was withdrawn after 1945, leaving unions to struggle against local states and employers. Further, the emergence of a national 'Red Scare' in 1947 provided Southern states with the weapons needed to face down immediate challenges to the social order. Importantly, it helped to hold off the emergence of an African American movement against segregation. As Marable put it:

"The democratic upsurge of black people which characterized the late 1950s could have happened a decade earlier ... most of the important Supreme Court decisions that aided civil rights proponents had been passed some years before. ... Yet the

sit-ins, the non-violent street demonstrations, did not yet occur; the façade of white supremacy was crumbling, yet for almost ten years there was no overt and mass movement which challenged racism in the streets. ... The impact of the Cold War, the anti-communist purges and near-totalitarian social environment, had a devastating impact upon the cause of blacks' civil rights and civil liberties." (Marable, 2007: 18)

Cold War anticommunism arrived in the South as a politics of transition and crisis management. Just as its class relations and social geography were being re-organised, and the material basis for segregation and thus the cheap labour on which the region relied was being transformed, Southern states were gifted a series of political, ideological and legal means by which to disarm popular, labour and radical challenges. Just as the spatial grid of plantations and mill towns which had formed the basis for segregation was being unsettled, with new industries re-territorialising the region's productive and commercial surfaces, Southern states were in a position to ensure and rigidify the segregation of those spaces with a new arsenal of statutes, state codes and city ordinances. Opponents of segregation could be red-baited, cowed, divided, beaten and imprisoned. But the turn to anticommunism cannot be seen purely as a ruse. It was an integral part of a system of representations, a discursive formation that was rooted in Southern political traditions.

## **Representation in the Southern state**

“What is the State? It is the Democratic party . . . Whenever there were political questions involved, . . . we looked to the interests of the party, because they are the interests of the State.” —Judge Thomas J. Semmes, delegate at Louisiana’s constitutional convention, 1898. (Mickey, 2008)

It is impossible to address the crisis of Jim Crow without relating it to the position of representative democracy in the capitalist state. Here I will talk about representation in two related senses: 1) the party political representation of classes and class alliances; 2) the semiotic and discursive representation of class conflicts and ‘race’, as well as of their party political representation – the representation of representation. (Jessop, 2002; Hall, 1997; Foucault, 2002).

A capitalist state is “in a minimal, non-evaluative sense, always a régime of national representation”. This is true in both of the senses mentioned above. The ‘nation’ – construed as the adult population, often with varying types of (racist, sexist, ideology- or class-based) exclusion in operation – is either given party political representation in a parliamentary-democratic system, or is ostensibly represented through its incarnation in an authoritarian dictatorship. This regime also discursively represents the people/nation to itself as a particular kind of (historically produced) unity, and further represents its own representation of the people/nation. (Therborn, 1977; Poulantzas, 2000, p. 65)

The form of representations made by the Southern state, and the Democratic Party, during the Cold War was neither straightforwardly democratic, nor dictatorial. In Therborn's typologies, among the range of bourgeois regimes available, the US in the period of Jim Crow can be characterised as 'democratic exclusivist' in that the adult franchise co-existed with a cluster of exclusions structured around race (on the basis of poverty, illiteracy, criminality and so on). This sort of regime is to be distinguished from democracy in its normal sense, pertaining to a fully elective parliamentary regime with no exclusions among adults. In this sense, capitalist democracy was achieved by the majority of core OECD economies by 1920, but not in the U.S. until circa 1970 when the federal government enforced the spirit of the Fifteenth Amendment and the letter of the Voting Rights Act. The consolidation of democracy in the non-exclusivist sense, as the *sina qua non* of normal, stable capitalist rule in the United States, was largely the result of the outcome of World War II, the subsequent Cold War (in which the conflict between the democratic legitimization function of the state and the practice of white supremacy was intensified under global surveillance of the 'leader of the free world'), and the break-up of the colonial system culminating in the Vietnam War. (Therborn, 1977; Dudziak, 2000)

The point here is to situate the Democratic Party's representative role in the South in relation to the typology of 'democratic exclusivism'. If the state constitutes, in its institutions, a "material condensation" of the balance of political and class forces in

the social formation in which it has taken root, then the ‘line’ that emerges at any given moment is the result of an interplay between the institutional ensemble, its spatio-temporal matrix and the class antagonisms which cut across both. These factors determine the calculable range within which it is possible for given classes to assert their interests within the state.

This ‘strategic selectivity’ of the state, as Bob Jessop describes it (Jessop, 2008), has a peculiar form in the South. The local state, I have said, incarnates the balance of forces both within the wider social formation and within the local situation pertinent to it. It does the latter to the extent that it enjoys autonomy, which derives from the distribution of power within the national state. The type of ‘democratic exclusivism’ practiced in the South thus emerged from a constellation of forces involving: i) the spread of capitalist property relations in the agrarian south and the expansion of a planter capitalist class; ii) the defeat of Republican and Populist forces through a combination of political terror (the disorganisation of dominated classes) and co-optation of populist themes on a racist basis (‘transformism’); iii) the political exclusion of African Americans (and many poor whites); iv) the assertion of unchallenged Democratic Party dominance within the southern state as the necessary form of the political dominance of planter capitalists; v) the Northern reaction against immigrants, and the spread of new white supremacist doctrines concurrent with a colonial turn, leading to a new concord with the South. (Weston, 1972: 1-15; James, 1988; Hahn, 2006; Jacobson, 2001)

In this sense, the ‘Democracy’ was co-extensive with the state’s organisation of planter rule, and its disorganisation of the dominated classes through racial oppression and the incorporation of white workers into the polity on the basis of a discursive formation organised around *racial-populist* and, often, ‘*progressive*’ theatics. The major Democratic-allied institution of parapolitical terror, the Ku Klux Klan, upheld this discourse and the ‘progressive’, ‘liberal’ candidates – William Jennings Bryan and Woodrow Wilson – that expounded it. The most effective Southern politicians tended to be those, like Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi or Senator Huey Long of Louisiana, who combined paternalistic reformism with a commitment to Jim Crow, and who used a popular vernacular or affected grammatical errors such as Governor George Wallace of Alabama. (Jeansonne, 1994; Morgan, 1985; Lowndes, 2005) The people/nation was thus represented to itself as an “Anglo-Saxon democracy”, its relation to its party representation one of transparent race embodiment, its unity assured by a shared collective history projected back over an indefinite period. This was in contrast with a north-eastern, industrial Republican bloc numerically bloated by recently arrived immigrant voters. By reason of the same logic, African Americans were effectively non-nationals, and their (‘alien’, ‘Bolshevik’) allies, anti-nationals. (Horsman, 1981; McVeigh, 2009: 90-91)

The southern state also represented the people/nation through its legal axioms and its application of scientific-technical (administrative) knowledge. (See Scott, 1998)

The people/nation emerges in this sense as a series of data, represented in statistics purporting to show, for example, a higher rate of illegitimacy, sexual disease and criminality among African Americans. Jim Crow can thus be seen as a form of governmentality (Foucault, 1994) which applies racial knowledge in its techniques, produces racial subjects, and whose index of legitimacy is its ability to continually reproduce and protect the white nation from its internal enemies. However, the spread of Democratic influence in the North throughout the 1920s, partly due to the sizeable number of immigrant Catholic workers, and the strategic shift of the national Democratic Party's social base to incorporate organised labour during the 1930s, introduced what, in my periodisation in the next chapter, I will consider the first real fissures in the 'Democracy'. The decline of cotton industries after WWI had stimulated a wave of mass migration of African Americans to the industrial north, which didn't stop until the 1960s. The exacerbation of class antagonisms throughout the South during the Great Depression resulted in the Communist Party USA making its first breakthroughs among class conscious black workers, sharecroppers and cash tenants. And the emergence of monopoly capital demanding a centralisation of national state authority, further de-stabilised the system of Jim Crow representation. (Barlow, 2003: 35-36; Kelley, 1990: 34-56; Solomon, 1981) During the post-war era, when the alliance between the Democratic Party, monopoly capital and organised labour was consolidated, the balance of power gradually shifted away from the South.

The modes of representation adapted accordingly. Southern planter and textile capital mobilised through the state to outflank liberals, using the anticommunist

dispensations of the Cold War to witch-hunt ‘integrationists’. Southern politicians known to occupy the Democratic Party’s ‘progressive’ wing reacted to the crisis of the South by moving sharply to the right: Strom Thurmond, Orval Faubus and George Wallace became standard-bearers of a New Right rooted in the protection of ‘states’ rights’ and a commitment to reverse the interventionist, welfare legislation that had empowered the opponents of segregation. It is not that the old representational strategies were discarded, nor that anticommunism was in itself a novel factor. Anticommunism had long been interpenetrated with regional and national forms of nativism and white supremacy. (Kovel, 1997: 14-22; Heale, 1990: 60-96; Foglesong, 2007: 58)

But while liberal, paternalist policies of the sort associated with Wilson had once been seen as the most effective retort to radicalism and socialism, they were now regarded as handing the communists a more effective weapon of struggle than communists themselves were capable of devising. The elements of the old discursive formations were rather re-articulated, given a new unity under the dominance of anticommunism, which was the sign and sanction of a Southern party of order. This form of representation corresponds to a form of governmentality, of statecraft, which can be called crisis management.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on theorising the changing social geography of Southern capitalism. I have attempted to diagram a particular set of relationships between the development in the South of the capitalist mode of production, the reorganisation of social space that this entailed at the level of individual productive apparatuses and at the level of the state, the state forms arising from the balance of class and political forces produced by this productive matrix, the state interventions deployed to manage this geo-economy, and the stabilisation and then ultimate crisis of this ‘spatio-temporal fix’. In this view, Jim Crow emerges as a form of ‘passive revolution’ through which, by organising on the basis of white supremacy bound to paternalistic practices, the emerging Southern capitalist class was able to modernise and rationalise Southern technology, demography and politics in relation to capitalist imperatives. Anticommunism, in this connection, assumes prominence as a form of countersubversion when ‘passive revolution’, and thus the ability of Southern elites to retain the initiative while reorganising and updating the matrices of production and reproduction, is threatened. In the next chapter, the juridico-political moment of this process – and particularly the role of anticommunism in organising state responses to the crisis of Jim Crow, is given a more sustained theorisation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Law, Violence and Hegemony in the Deep South

*This chapter takes the Poulantzian insights into ‘the state’ which I have developed in the previous chapter, and applies them to the problem of the relationship between legitimacy and violence in the struggles over anticomunism and civil rights. If, as has been argued, the state is the central element in the organisation of any anticomunist struggle, it was also a crucial terrain of both Civil Rights and Massive Resistance struggles during the Cold War. Somehow, moreover, the Federal institutions of the state which started from a position of breaking up the incipient civil rights coalition with the apparatuses of countersubversion, ended up despatching armed forces to several southern states, from Arkansas to Alabama, in order to force Southern authorities to comply with civil rights. Here, the Poulantzian critique of the Law/Terror couplet could hardly be more apt. The deployment of state-monopolised violence in the reproduction and moulding of the social body was directed, codified and legitimised as law. The central concept of this chapter is that the state, being a formation of institutions, apparatuses and practices produced by a particular form-determined condensation of the balance of class and political forces, is subject to processes of deformation and reformation. Southern states, as ‘sites of power’ within the ‘centralised unity’ of the American state, were subject to similar processes, particularly in the period bracketed between 1945 and 1965. And law was the*

*privileged terrain on which the outcome of these processes was decided. Therefore, this chapter will begin by sketching out a theoretical interpretation of law and its role within the state, that extends the analyses developed previously. It will then develop a periodisation of the processes in which deformation was resisted, deflected, initiated, and accelerated, and reformation initiated, accelerated and consummated in response. It will situate the fluctuations of segregationist and civil rights struggle within these processes, and determine the role of anticommunism in them.*

### **Introduction: the ‘rule of law’, from segregation to civil rights**

Law was the main idiom and practice through which segregation was secured, and subsequently abolished. Following *Brown vs the Board of Education*, in particular, the ‘rule of law’ was a strategic cynosure in the discourses of both Massive Resistance and Civil Rights activists. This was not a straightforward matter for any participant in the struggle. If white elites exhorted resistance to the Supreme Court’s decision on *Brown*, they did so in the name of some more foundational legal tenets which they said were being trampled on. Thus, for Senator Byrd of Virginia, *Brown* constituted an “illegal demand”. For Senator Eastland of Mississippi, the Court had “disregarded the law” and “destroyed” the constitution, and as such could not be obeyed. The ‘Southern Manifesto’ offered a condensed summary of the relevant jurisprudence, as understood by segregationists, and concluded that the Supreme court had substituted “naked power” for the law, on behalf of their own “personal

political and social ideas". In the context of the civil rights struggle, segregationists would often invoke a legal discourse against activists whom they said had come to break the law. (Wilkinson III., 1978; Southern Manifesto, 1956) Indeed, for civil rights activists, it was often the 'rule of law' that had brutalised African Americans. Yet, insofar as they sought to challenge the law, they did so by invoking legal principles, as well as jurisprudence, which they said were being violated by segregation laws. A central strategic justification for this approach was that the law itself is beholden to a fundamental ambiguity between its formal commitment to equity and its substantive enforcement of injustice. The moral force of the law was precisely its claim to equitably treat all cases. This very ambiguity may have been one reason why the legal apparatuses deployed against civil rights activists in the South were initially developed with the explicit remit of containing the threat of communism. Thus, when Mississippi congressman John Rankin took a leading position in the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947, his immediate focus was on combatting black civil rights activism. He attributed black radicalism to "the tentacles of this great octopus, communism, which is out to destroy everything" and, in a variant of what Kovel (1997) calls 'black hole anticommunism', HUAC under his watch relentlessly conflated the goals of the civil rights mainstream with those of communist 'conspiracy'. Later, as the nationwide anticommunist sweep waned, Southern states created "little HUACs", such as Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission (SSC), to pursue the same essential strategy. (Woods, 2004: 27-8 & 95-6; Prechter, 2009) Yet, whatever validity this observation contains, it only opens further questions. Why were agents located in the repressive legal apparatuses

- Attorney Generals, judges, police chiefs – generally the most belligerent in pursuing these strategies? Why did they use a legal idiom at all? And why use an *anticommunist* legal idiom?

The ‘rule of law’ appears, at first, as a particular type of congealed violence. That is, the violence immanent to civil society intercourse has been extruded, monopolised by the state, and condensed within the state’s apparatuses as law. The figure of the ‘night watchman’ state lurks in this image. Set apart from the society, it guards the perimeters and frontiers, monitors the circulation of people and goods, and upholds ‘the rules of the game’. It acts ‘under law’: that is, it implements the rules and mediates between rival claims based on a chain of logical-deductive reasoning from founding axioms, case history, and so on, to application. As such, the law also restricts its scope of action, constraining it within a predictable range of actions permitted by the constitution, code or common law.

A mainstay of white supremacist resistance to desegregation was that decisions such as *Brown vs the Board of Education* subverted the ‘rule of law’ by deviating from the US Constitution. It was a legal assault on property rights quite at odds with established jurisprudence, and was thus introducing a ‘totalitarian’ deviation in US traditions. Senator Eastland demanded an investigation into the “subversive influence behind the desegregation” wherein communists were trying to “graft into the organic law of the land” teachings “which can be traced to Karl Marx”. The greatest danger,

according to the conservative youth organisation, Young Americans for Freedom, was the blurring of the distinction between public and private spheres. Civil rights legislation would treat the private property of traders as public accommodations, thus effectively abolishing the distinction when it came to commerce. This “leftist” ploy, in redefining the terms “public” and “private”, was doing nothing less than creating a “right to trespass”, erasing property rights where they were needed most – in the market. Likewise, the People’s Association for Selective Shopping in Atlanta, a citizens’ lobby aimed at boycotting desegregating businesses, denounced the “Communist inspired lawless racial agitators” who would destroy the “American Free Enterprise System”. (Bloom, 1987: 95; Moore, 1963; PASS, 1963) Segregationist thought has often sought its buttresses in Constitutional traditions, against which its opponents appear as agents of, not just a profoundly alien political doctrine but above all a perverse and *illegal* legal doctrine.

Not all political struggles invoke and involve the law in this way. The constant presence of the law in the making and unmaking of racial power in the South, and the constant recourse to legal argument in mediating the rival claims in the period of Cold War and Civil Rights, is indicative that something quite unusual was taking place. The ‘rule of law’ was a privileged token of struggle, but in what sense? I will advance the following guidelines for interpreting what follows<sup>11</sup>:

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<sup>11</sup> These observations are the product of an engagement with Thompson (1977), Pashukanis (1924), Poulantzas (2000), Miéville (2006), Gilroy (1982), Gilroy & Simm (1985), Althusser (2014), and Corrigan & Sayer (1985).

1. Law is the dominant form of the dominant ideology. If, as Althusser argued, ideology comprises “material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals”, this entails that any action, from a punch to a prayer, could be an ideological action. There is thus no necessary opposition between violence and ideology. The law is where the dominant ideology is concretised in practices which are permanently articulated with and structured by the political violence which secures its dominance. The main form of this articulation is the ritual – what Poulantzas referred to as the “theatricals” of fear – wherein violence is withdrawn from view but is nonetheless determinant. Insofar as legitimacy and coercion are mutually constituting in law, law is a productive and not merely repressive factor. In its organisation of the social body, it both induces certain actions or statements (informing, giving testimony, giving pledges of allegiance), and constitutes particular types of subjects, and social roles (white, black, criminal, citizen, traitor, patriot).
2. Law in a modern capitalist state is indeterminate. While jurisprudence is elaborated seemingly according to a logical-deductive chain, a system of axioms deriving from first principles which lends some predictability to the system, there are two sources of indeterminacy in the chain of reasoning. The first is the structure of language itself, wherein the slippage of signifiers guarantees a degree of polysemy and room for ‘tort’. The second is the normative structure of capitalist modernity, wherein the norms upon which legal axioms are founded are often tendentially contradictory (for example, the

individual's right not to be tortured, as opposed to the state's right to punish).

In this situation, the only determinacy to the legal process is contributed by state-monopolised physical violence.

3. Law is a form-determined juridical condensation of the relations of forces in the social formation that it rules. It is form-determined insofar as the materiality of the law and its languages impose limitations on the types of legal statements that can be made in any given context. This gives it a structural or strategic selectivity, in that the form of law will tend to favour certain class, gender, sexual, racial or national outcomes over others. But it is also a condensation of relations of force insofar as legislation, Court appointees and elected or appointed legal positions are susceptible to the mediated pressure of political struggles and of ideological ferment.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enable certain patterns and relations in the unfolding of a concrete situation, which I will now anatomise, to be discerned.

### **Prolegomenon: De-formation initiated. Fissures in 'The Democracy' (1944-5)**

The 'all-white' primary contests in Southern elections had been one of the key means by which African Americans were excluded from politics in Jim Crow states. In fact, as the paladin of liberal anti-racism Gunnar Myrdal pointed out, the

organisation of Southern politics excluded a large number of whites, favouring an effectively oligarchic form of politics empowering landowners, industrialists, bankers and merchants, with a share of this de facto political power enjoyed by inter-regional and Northern firms with investments in the region. (Piven & Cloward, 1979: 188)

But by the Second World War, the conditions for the erosion of this system were established. The growing economic base of African Americans had created opportunities for political and particularly legal mobilisation. At the same time, the Democratic Party's social base had undergone a radical shift. Under FDR, the Democratic Party established a base in the industrial working class for the first time. Some of the platform of progressive legislation intended to consolidate this base, had to address the problems of black workers. “However discriminatory its administration,” Klarman writes, “the New Deal at least included blacks within its pool of beneficiaries”. The incorporation of black advisors, albeit without direct political authority and some concessions in the way of racial quotas within the Public Works Administration housing projects, indicated the influence that a growing number of northern black voters could exert. (Mickey, 2008; Marable, 2007; Hine, 2003; Klarman, 2004: 110-1) As we will see, this shift was permanent, and would be a decisive factor in Truman’s pivotal 1948 presidential candidacy during which the Cold War consensus was established.

The legal opportunity to attack the ‘all-white’ primary had come from the precedent set by the conviction of Patrick Classic for falsifying primary returns. The NAACP saw a chance to force the Supreme Court to uphold the legal rights of black voters. As usual, local judiciaries were obstructive. The Texas federal grand jury held a hearing at which only four witnesses were allowed to testify, and could not be convinced that any constitutional provision was being breached. But the judgment of the Supreme Court in the conviction of Classic proved that the primaries were not merely matters of voluntary association, but rather constituted a “delegation” of state power to the parties running the primaries. In this sense, the Democratic Party’s action, in excluding black voters from participating in primaries, was “the action of the state” – and was thus unconstitutional. (Hine, 2003: 238)

This decision should not be treated as a logical deduction from precedent. Rather, as Klarman emphasises, the Supreme Court had to make a decision as to what forms of involvement in the constitution of ‘civil society’ the state of Texas should be deemed responsible for. Past Supreme Court decisions had upheld white primaries. The sudden turnaround owed itself more to the political context than to legal logic. FDR’s reconstitution of the Supreme Court judges was one factor. The courts discarded the traditional ‘non-intervention’ (ie from a specific intervention in favour of property rights) in favour of the radically ‘interventionist’ state that was emerging under FDR. But a more pressing factor was the transformation of political alignments during World War II. The ‘war for democracy’ produced an ideological opportunity-structure which civil rights activists could leverage against the racist one-party

system in the South. More than this, it provided an organisational opportunity. National mobilisations have historically provided a critical aperture for democratising movements, and the enhanced leverage that African Americans could exert during World War II, (and perhaps again during the Vietnam War) was evident in the way in which Roosevelt bowed to pressure to implement a Fair Employment Practices Commission to address racist discrimination in employment and prohibit discrimination in the thriving defence industry, and Congress debate the repeal of poll taxes. (Klarman, 2004: 198-199; Sitkoff, 1978: 216-217; Therborn, 1977)

Black civil rights activists, presented with this opportunity, did not prevaricate. The National Progressive Voters League was founded in Arkansas to mobilise a “newly enfranchised” electorate. The ensuing increase in black voter registration across southern states, rising from a quarter of a million in 1944 to a million in 1952, provoked efforts to circumvent *Smith vs. Allwright* that presaged ‘Massive Resistance’. For example, Governor Olin Johnston of South Carolina convened the state legislature in order to throw out all laws pertaining to party organisation, the implication being that the Democrats could run their operation as they saw fit. This subterfuge was outlawed by the Judge Waring of Charleston in 1947, which signalled the beginning of the end of the all-white primary. (Davis, 2000: 17; Bartley, 1999: 7-8) Yet, the increase in black voter registration still left the vast majority of African Americans un-registered. The gains that were achieved, moreover, were significantly reversed in the years after 1952.

The year after *Smith vs. Allwright*, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) became a standing committee of the House of Representatives. In the years that followed, the ‘Popular Front’ left would disintegrate, and the Democratic Party would consolidate its new popular base. Challenges to southern segregation would wilt under the pressure of constant state surveillance, investigation and intervention. For the next decade, despite Truman’s cautious adoption of some civil rights reforms, no serious blow would be landed to the system of white supremacy. (Marable, 2007: 17-27)

### **Part I: De-formation resisted. The Dixiecrat revolt and the defeat of the ‘Popular Front’ left (1946-8)**

The state, Corrigan and Sayer punned, *states*. But it does not state with a single voice. Rather, it contains an “amalgam of separate and often competing institutions, bureaucracies and political parties”. It produces not a unified discourse, but “several discourses that are adapted to the various classes and differentially incarnated in its apparatuses according to their class destination”. (Corrigan & Sayer, 1985, p. 3; Schrecker, 2002, p. 25; Poulantzas, 2000, p. 32) The consolidation of an anticommunist politics at the inception of the Cold War thus did not involve a single set of directives, ordinances, representational strategies or alliances. Rather, from the interplay of institutions (both those belonging to the ‘public’ core of the state, and

those understood as ‘civil society’ but properly operating within the field of the state) and the class struggles condensed within them, allowed a ‘system of alliances’ to emerge under a general ‘line’. This anticomunist ‘line’ unified a majoritarian bloc while dividing and disrupting oppositional, subaltern forces, shaking loose vulnerable elements and either co-opting or penalising them. The name of this type of class-democratic politics, and of the state’s central role in organising it, is hegemony. (Poulantzas, 1978; Gramsci, 1971)

And the moment of 1946-8, from the ‘Iron Curtain’ speech and ‘Long Telegram’, inaugurating the Cold War, to the 1948 presidential election campaign producing a surprise victory for ‘Vital Centre’ liberalism, was a *hegemonic moment*. It represented the shattering of the ‘Popular Front’ Left, the ascendancy of anticomunist politics as the horizon of acceptable dissent, a temporary settling of accounts with the South broadly in the latter’s favour, and the emergence of a relatively stable coalition of classes and fractions under the dominance of Fordist monopoly capital. The state’s intervention was crucial at each stage. President Truman’s loyalty oath programme, ordered in 1947, constituted the widest ranging government investigation to date, urging that all state employees be interviewed and tested for loyalty. The result was that hundreds were fired for presumed disloyalty on the basis of anonymous evidence which could not be refuted from people whom the defendants could not cross-examine. By 1950, up to 40% of American workers were either under investigation or subject to loyalty oath. (Robin, 2004: 15; Greenberg & Watts, 2009: 18-19)

HUAC's investigations were being given wide latitude by the Supreme Court. Unfriendly witnesses who refused to testify were cited for contempt, and the Court did not favour them. In the hugely symbolic case of the Hollywood Ten, a number of screenwriters and directors who refused to testify, citing a violation of their First Amendment rights. Several of the witnesses actually ended up in prison. The legal and political situation was thus so arranged that the committee could stage its rituals of unmasking, exposure and censure unimpeded. Even the disapprobation of the White House produced a belligerent response, accusing the administration of failing to obviate the necessity of the committee by informing people of the danger of communism. (Greenberg & Watts, 2009: 18-19; Schrecker, 2002: 65-6; Clark, 1976) HUAC's central target, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), which had been the most dynamic sector of the Popular Front left, attempted to rally its old allies against Truman's escalating contest with the USSR. However, it was compromised in a number of ways: i) by the sudden swerves in its political strategy and alliances as it subordinated domestic policy to the survival of the USSR, culminating in the jettisoning of Popular Front alliances and a restoration of 'Marxist-Leninist' orthodoxy after WWII, just when it needed its old allies; ii) its support for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, after years of campaigning as an 'anti-fascist' organisation; and iii) its uncritical support for the USSR despite its territorial aggrandisements. If communists campaigned for 'peace' and the cessation of Cold War hostilities, the American state waged war for 'freedom' and argued that the communist promise of

peace was hollow in light of the overland expansion of the Soviet Union. (Lieberman, 2010: 32; Otanelli, 1991: 159-206; Isserman, 1993)

The result was that the CPUSA was increasingly isolated at the moment of the state's escalating war on the party. Anticommunist legislation was thus effectively used to isolate the party in its spheres of influence, such as in the left-wing trade unions. Here, the Taft-Hartley Act played a critical role. Although aimed at obstructing union organisation as such, it also required that union leaders file an affidavit stating that they were not in the party. Such measures were used not only by the state but by anticommunists within the trade unions. (Schrecker, 2002: 59-62; Rupert, 1995) Alongside HUAC, one of the major organisational loci for anticommunist repression within the national state was the FBI, a division of the Justice Department with a history of leading parapolitical red-hunts and engaging in actions of dubious legality in the pursuit of 'aliens', 'radicals' and 'subversives'. The Bureau was formed in anticommunist struggle, its political culture inflected with the nativist chords of post-WWI reaction. Its role as a political intelligence addendum to the White House arose from the centralisation and rationalisation of state authority in the 'Progressive Era'. The FBI's role was to provide federal agencies involved in the suppression of communism with a flow of information, with 'field notes' from investigations given a particular spin in the FBI's internal 'assessment' to lend weight to shaky charges. Like HUAC, the FBI considered the government's stance on communist subversion overly lenient, and used its strategic position to force the

administration into adopting a harder stance. (Schmidt, 2000; Schrecker, 2002: 28-30; Walker, 2011: 115)

In the South, anticommunist rhetoric and action focused on the threat posed by union organisation and civil rights agitation to the sustainable reproduction of the region's class and political system. Thus, Georgia Governor Herman Talmadge alleged that the CIO's gains in the South were being driven by a 'subversive' campaign to organise an African-American voting bloc that communists could then use against the South. Operation Dixie, although focused on an overwhelmingly white textile industry and thus not directly challenging white supremacy, was treated in a similar way. The collapse of the organising drive owed itself largely to the effects of the rivalries and anticommunist purges produced by the Cold War crackdown. But even relatively moderate civil rights reform, such as the Fair Employment Practices Commission was deemed "a communist inspired conspiracy to undermine American unity". Here, again it could be tempting to treat anticommunism as a ruse, a proxy for the 'real' goal of protecting white supremacy. In fact, the 'real' goal was rarely concealed, except inasmuch as 'separate but equal' was in some sense an adequate subterfuge. The insertion of communism as a quilting element in a chain of equivalents linking welfare, unionisation and civil rights reform to 'subversion' did no more than take the institutions of the central state at their word. If the pressing domestic and international issue was communist subversion, working through the traditional organisations of labour and the Left, it followed that the same could be true in the South. Much of the information to support such judgments came from

federal bodies such as the Justice Department, or HUAC, which assisted the struggle against the Southern Council for Human Welfare (SCHW), a civil rights organisation formed under the impetus of New Deal reforms, by declaring it a “deviously camouflaged Communist front organization”. By 1948, the lineaments of the national anticomunist consensus had been fully absorbed and weaponised by Southern state leaders, who alleged that Truman’s moderate civil rights reform agenda was being driven by international communist pressure. (Lewis, 2004: 22-23; Clark, 1976; Frederickson, 2001: 49; Roediger, 2008: 193; Davis, 1999: 86-93)

Both the defeat of the ‘Popular Front’ Left, and the temporary truce with the South, were crystallised in the 1948 presidential election. In it, Truman’s bid as a Cold War liberal was challenged from two wings of the Democratic Party. Henry Wallace, representing the social democratic, anti-racist, and anti-anticommunist wing, stood as a candidate for the Progressive Party. Strom Thurmond, a former New Dealer who was committed to defending white supremacy as the local form of class compromise, and ‘states’ rights’ as a particular form of distribution of power within the state allowing the South to preserve its perceived advantages, stood for the States Rights Democratic Party. While Wallace’s remit was to realign Democratic politics to the Left, and oppose the rush toward hostility with Russia as a “position of ruthless imperialism”, Thurmond’s role was to articulate the efforts by conservatives within the ‘Democracy’ to marginalise progressives and New Deal liberals, not just in the Southern party but – by upsetting Truman’s re-election bid – in the country as a

whole. (Frederickson, 2001; Barnard, 1985: 95-96; Yarnell, 1974: 32-33 & 87-90; Kovel, 1997, pp. 43-49; Schrecker, 1999: 158-167)

Democratic strategists relied heavily on anticomunism to coordinate Truman's manoeuvres against his opponents and to reconcile a series of highly antagonistic subject-positions among his intended base. The Democratic strategy, outlined in the 'Clifford memorandum', sought to "identify [Wallace] in the public mind with the Communists", compelling liberals and moderate socialists to take sides against Wallace's 'appeasement'. Norman Thomas accused Wallace of condoning "human slavery under Stalin", and the radical pacifist A J Muste described him as "the instrument and captive" of the CPUSA, the ADA attacked his willingness to work with communists. The Dixiecrats, not possible to red-bait, were accused of undermining America's international standing, the same argument that would be presented to the judges considering the case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. Most southern voters remained stolidly Democratic. The Dixiecrats were strongest in the plantation counties, the Black Belt areas, and those states where white workers were the most disenfranchised – Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina, three states that retained the poll tax. Although the Dixiecrats hardly received more votes in total than the Progressive Party (both fell just short of 1.2m), the geographical concentration of their support ensured that they carried four core Southern states – Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina. (Yarnell, 1974: 87; Lieberman, 2010: 52; Johnson, 2010: 113; Woods, 2004: 37; Goldzwig, 2008: 61-70; Mayers, 2007: 297)

The outcome showed that the Dixiecrats were well-organised, well-placed in relation to their ability to take hold of local state machineries, and already had a substantial popular base from which to build. The argument that there was a conspiracy to subvert the Solid South was given a spurious concreteness by the national Red Scare and the policies of anticommunist repression aimed at exposing, denouncing and punishing the conspiracy in myriad daily rituals. Anticommunism attributed the factors undermining Jim Crow to a seemingly plausible, coherent agency, replacing multi-causal with mono-causal explanation, displacing critical scrutiny from its injustices onto those mobilising against the injustices. It also reinforced the South's claim to Americanism – indeed, to a purer and more militant Americanism than any which prevailed in other regions. The Dixiecrats increasingly linked their defence of white-supremacy to a critique of the liberal state: civil rights measures were the first step toward a “federal police state,” Thurmond warned. (Crespino, 2007: 50-51; Frederickson, 2001: 7)

Aside from bolstering the South's representative strategies, anticommunism also provided some techniques of statecraft. Whether the body involved was SISS, HUAC, the FBI or the local state police, the Red Scare transposed the normal state representation of the population as data in a field of calculable (scientific-technical) intervention, into an alternative representation as ciphers, cryptographical data available for interpretation through a set of investigative techniques, bureaucratic-

legal rituals of inquisition, quarantine ('blacklisting') and correction through punishment. In the years directly following the election campaign, the States Rights Democratic Party was wound up, and its supporters returned to the Democratic Party – although, elements of the money and the political machinery, as well as leading personnel involved in the party, would later become available for Massive Resistance campaigns. (Moye, 2004: 69) The balance of opinion among Southern Democrats continued to shift to the right. For the time being, the racial status quo was preserved, with Cold War anticommunism supplying the rationale and technical repertoire sustaining its conservation.

## **Part II: De-formation deflected. The Liberal State, the Cold War and the stabilization of the anticommunist 'line' (1949-53)**

The zenith of anticommunism in the Cold War era was reached in the years immediately preceding *Brown vs the Board of Education*. The moment for organised labour to resist had passed, and their attitude was increasingly docile. The passivity on the part of organised labour was matched by a similar complacence among professional associations. Civil rights organisations which did not carry out ritualistic self-purging, began to be red-hunted (detailed in Chapter Eight). Southern segregationists were arguably the major beneficiaries of this trend. It was not just that the administrative-repressive techniques refined in Washington DC could be adapted for the South, though this did happen. For example, the city of Birmingham,

Alabama, menaced communists with \$100 fines and 180 day jail sentences for every day that they remained in the town. Rather, Southern politicians began to be able, through their disproportionate dominance in the elected chambers, to direct the central anticommunist apparatuses to their own ends. (Schrecker, 2002: 83, 101; Braden, 1964)

After 1948, HUAC had a new southern chair, the Georgia congressman John Wood. Under his leadership, it embarked on a series of “Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of Minority Groups”. Just as Southern panellists had dissuaded the committee from investigating the re-appearance of the Ku Klux Klan in the South after its formal post-war disappearance, on the grounds that “the KKK is an old American institution,” now they directed HUAC to investigate the KKK’s targets and victims, and their advocates. Often, the basis upon which organisations were targeted was information coming straight from the government itself. For example, it was the Attorney General who, in 1947, insisted that the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) which was founded the previous year, be included in the ‘List of Subversive Organisations’ as a ‘Communist front group’. Thus, as the CRC organised legal defence campaigns for Willie McGee, and the Martinsville Seven, and later mobilised around the murder of Emmett Till, it was targeted by anticommunist investigators. Indeed, going after the CRC served many purposes, in that, to the extent that the ‘Communist front’ charge was justified, it was the main group fighting cases brought under the Smith Act and the McCarran Act, and defending those singled out by HUAC. Embedded in the logic of the McCarthyites, here, was a ‘good Negro/bad

Negro' dichotomy. That is, HUAC insisted that the majority of African Americans were loyal and being badly represented by the few malcontents, such as Paul Robeson, who heaped contumelious insults on the nation. The ex-Communist and black labour leader Manning Johnson was one of those to provide testimonial basis for this dichotomy. Johnson's testimony, accusing the CPUSA of using civil rights as a decoy for subversion, suggesting that they aimed to provoked armed insurrection, riots and so forth across the South, corroborated the most recalcitrant southern nationalists in their belief that the source of all agitation was communist conspiracy. Similar testimonies implying that the whole civil rights movement was a communist front, equipped Southern politicians with the political and ideological rationale they needed for unyielding resistance. (Woods, 2004: 36-8; Newton, 2010: 102; Horne, 1987; Horne, 1990: 134-135)

In 1950, the newly elected Senator Joseph McCarthy, a mid-Western conservative who enjoyed the backing of Southern oil, made headlines by flourishing his infamous 'list' of 205 communists in the State Department. In fact, there was no list, and the number was improvised on the spot. Later, he reduced the number to 57, but still declined to produce details. In a less publicity-conscious mode, Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada assembled the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS), stuffed with political allies such as Senator Eastland. SISS did not develop a reputation for vulgar theatrics as did HUAC. Its rituals were more restrained, as beffitted the upper chamber. Yet the logic behind its targeting of individuals was not the less convoluted, nor the less determined in its attempt to depict the workings of a

communist conspiracy at the heart of government. Legal decisions undertaken in this period also expressed the prevailing balance of forces in favour of segregation. In the case of *Briggs vs. Elliot*, a three-judge District Court in South Carolina upheld the doctrine of ‘separate but equal,’ maintaining that the poor quality of schools for African Americans could be remedied within the existing legal architecture. (Fried, 1991; Bennett, 1988: 293-4; Fitzgerald, 2007: 42-43; Bloom, 1987: 94; Martin, 1986: 126-31)

Anticommunist measures had a chilling effect on the civil rights movement. The NAACP, while it continued to lobby for the integration of the South, was intimidated by the scale and ubiquity of the investigations into communism. It distanced itself from supporters such as W E B Du Bois on the grounds of the latter’s sympathy for the USSR, and upheld a vigorously anticommunist, Americanist politics. It is unclear whether the NAACP in this format represented the liberal anticommunist wing of civil rights, or “the left-wing of McCarthyism”, as Manning Marable described it. Just as the labor movement was de-radicalised, so were mainstream civil rights organisations. The effect was not just on whom they could ally with, but also on what sort of tactics they were prepared to countenance. For example, when the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) embarked on “Journeys of Reconciliation” (precursors to the 1960s “freedom rides”) to test desegregation on southern buses, the NAACP leadership energetically opposed the move. Thurgood Marshall warned: “a disobedience movement on the part of Negroes and their white allies, if employed in the South, would result in wholesale slaughter with no good achieved.” The CORE

for its part was profoundly disabled by its fear of red-baiting. It did everything possible to distance itself from communism, and announced that it would not work with “Communist-controlled” groups. The result was that CORE saw its growth slowed to a near standstill and its organisation reduced to a shell. (Marable, 2007:17-27; Fried, 1991: 165)

The deployment of ritualised terror by state apparatuses during the early Cold War era was effective insofar as, to be summoned and accused was to be guilty. To take the Fifth Amendment was often to lose one’s job. President Harry Gideonse of Brooklyn College, an anticommunist witness before SISS, explained: “a witness who, as an officer of the city of New York, pleads self-incrimination as an excuse for not answering questions about what he does in his official capacity, has automatically by that very plea, as he spoke those words, discharged himself.” (SISS, 1953) The concerted action of repressive and ideological state apparatuses (understood here not as distinct but as mutually articulated apparatuses) produced a form of moral regulation, a set of norms and social classifications, through which this anticommunist bloc was constantly constructed and maintained, its opponents divided and cowed. The rituals and hierarchies of HUAC and SISS produced the social categories of deviant, alien, subversive and, the obverse, loyal, ‘good American,’ citizen, patriot. Through such means it produced consent, a *consensus*. But the nature of these actions, the ever-presence of politically organised violence as a determining factor, the basis of consent in political terror, undermines any attempt to understand hegemony strictly in the terms of a consent-coercion dichotomy. “Physical violence

and consent do not exist side by side,” Poulantzas (2000: 80-81) argued, “like two calculable homogeneous magnitudes, related in such a way that more consent corresponds to less violence. Violence-terror always occupies a determining place not merely because it remains in reserve”. The breakdown of anticomunist terror, concurrent with a crisis in the unity of the state apparatuses, was consubstantial with a breakdown in consent.

Of course, this incorporation was not effective only through repression and ideology: the state-organized “material substratum” of consent was the welfare state and corporatist bargaining through which wages would rise in line with productivity increases. But the efficacy of the anticomunist bloc depended on the conjunction of repression, ideological domination and material concessions. This reached its peak during the Korean War. This was not just because the U.S. government successfully persuaded most of the population that the war was exclusively the result of communist aggression, thus leaving the opposition parcelled out among a tiny cluster of communist, ‘fellow travelling,’ Trotskyist and pacifist groups and intellectuals who are castigated inside and outside of HUAC for their troubles. It was that at this moment, labour was most closely integrated into the corporatist alliance with the state and Fordist monopoly capital in the context of national mobilisation. It was at this moment that the AFL-CIO, drawn into the radius of the imperial state, becoming one of the means of state action with regard to overseas labour and a vital vector for the promulgation of anticomunist and imperialist ideology, in return for a relatively privileged position within a global division of labour. That this incorporation was

strictly subordinate is indicated by the role of the chief executive of General Electric in organising the mobilisation, and his way of steamrollering labour. Nonetheless, the political importance of labour in this coalition did produce concessions that were essential to the management of the bloc. (Casey, 2008: 75 & 200-202; Levy, 1994: 50)

Despite the complaints of some southern industrialists and planters, New Deal concessions had stabilising effects throughout the social formation, north and south. The problem for the dominant classes in the South, however, was that the “material substratum” of their rule – white supremacy, organised through localised sites of power and articulated with spatial-economic matrices of production – was already entering into a crisis, and insofar as it was an impediment to US hegemonic practices in the Cold War, was increasingly incompatible with the extended (international) reproduction of monopoly capital.

### **Part III: De-formation resisted, re-formation initiated. *Brown vs. the Board of Education and consequences (1954-60)***

By 1954, the hard, conservative edge of the national anticommunist campaign led by McCarthy and Eastland was beginning to disintegrate. The possibility of any ‘threat’ to American capitalism by the Communist Party USA had always been

remote, but even its ability to play a constructive role in a ‘Popular Front’ left had been dismembered by this point. In addition, the anticommunist doyens began to over-reach. McCarthy would be censured by the Senate in that year, following a year of televised hearings in which he attacked senior members of the establishment including, by implication, President Eisenhower. Ultimately, he lost control of SISS. In the months before the Supreme Court handed down its verdict on *Brown vs the Board of Education*, moreover, SISS, with Senator Eastland playing a leading role, experienced a public embarrassment arising from its investigation into the influence of communism in the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). The fund, set up in 1946 as a subsidiary of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare (SCHW), had assembled a coalition of liberals, New Dealers, leftists, southerners and other anti-segregation activists, with the aim of turning opinion against segregation. Its parent organisation, SCHW, had been effectively harassed by HUAC. Senator Eastland, leading the charge, directed SISS to begin investigations of SCEF in the hope of digging up involvement in ‘Popular Front’ organisations. The hearing was a failure for Eastland, inasmuch as the attempt to depict leaders such as Aubrey Williams of the National Youth Association, and Virginia Durr (known for her involvement in anti-poll tax campaigns), floundered on unconvincing testimony from an ex-Communist and state informer named Paul Crouch. Most of the Southern press was unconvinced, and Eastland himself had to admit that he not been persuaded by the testimony. The investigation had only succeeded in giving the targeted organisation some positive publicity. This was not the last such failure in connection with the SCEF. (Woods, 2004: 44-47; Mills, 2015; Griffith, 1987)

The national Supreme Court was compelled to decide in the matter of the segregation of education by the intense legal and political campaigning of the NAACP, supported by the Truman administration which, in its last weeks, submitted an *amicus curiae* to the court underlining the international ramifications of any decision. (Dudziak, 2000: 90) The court, in finding that *de jure* segregation was incompatible with equality and thus unconstitutional, left unsolved the problem of *de facto* segregation. In effect, it left open the possibility of allowing schooling to be operated on a geographical basis, which would leave most schools segregated since neighbourhoods were segregated. Indeed, this was arguably a weakness of the mainstream civil rights approach of the NAACP which, in choosing its fights on the terrain of state-mandated segregation, tended to avoid those complaints which adverted to the forms of discrimination practiced without legal compulsion. (Raskin, 2004: 157-8; Goluboff, 2007) Nonetheless, it reversed the trend since *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, in which the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation. It struck a seemingly fatal blow to the legal order of the South's 'Jim Crow' system. The ramifications of this decision were not immediately obvious. In the year following the first decision on *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, wrote C Vann Woodward, "neither side showed its hand fully ... It was a period of wait and see." (Woodward, 2002: 151-2) In the immediate period after the court's decision, Southern states sent delegations to the court to argue the case for "gradualism approaching infinity". They maintained that immediate de-segregation would result in chaos. African Americans were a source of sexual disease and illegitimacy, and the

integration of their children would lead to white parents rejecting the school system. Racial strife and bitterness would ensue. The intention behind these evocations was to frighten the judges into allowing the Southern states the maximum leverage in complying with the law, so that at most a token compliance would be enforced. In the second decision, pertaining to implementation, the court introduced the famous phrase “with all deliberate speed”, allowing that deliberation would be necessary as administrative problems were overcome. It did not set a date for compliance, intervene to support actively compliant district judges, or opt to approve only those plans that would result in substantial integration, but instead allowed that *de jure* segregation could continue indefinitely. (Wilkinson III., 1978; McKay, 1956)

As in *Smith vs Allwright*, the legal basis of the Supreme Court’s decision was secondary to political considerations, reflecting the imperatives imposed by Cold War imperialist politics. Thus, the charge from segregationists that they had been dealt a blow by a “political court” (Eastland quoted in Crespino, 2007: 18) was not entirely without foundation: the historical and social premises built into the “law of the land” as segregationist understood it had been politicised. However, the nature of this politicisation was profoundly ambivalent: *Brown II* effectively enabled the South to make at most token gestures toward compliance for several years. The letter of the law, and particularly the form of words “with all deliberate speed”, was structured in such a way as to accommodate white southern (dominant class) interests. Even so, the pressure for de-segregation to be implemented as the U.S. sought to construct a form of global hegemony, incorporating former colonial states into a broad pro-American

front, continued to grow. Vice President Richard Nixon, returning from a visit to Ghana in 1957, insisted that: “We cannot talk equality to the peoples of Africa and Asia and practice inequality in the United States”. The relationship between the global contest with the USSR, and domestic anticommunism became more complicated in these years. The death of Stalin in 1953 and Khrushchev’s ensuing glasnost had tended to moderate Cold War pressures. The invasion of Hungary in 1956 may have resuscitated them, but it also hastened the crisis of the CPUSA, leading to a mass exodus of members. The stabilisation of American capitalism and the weakening of its domestic foes meant that fervent countersubversion was no longer a national obsession, and indeed might tend to undermine America’s global position. Southern leaders nonetheless considered civil rights laws to be a capitulation in the face of communist propaganda. Governor Talmadge of Georgia, writing in *You and Segregation*, 1955, urged no surrender to Moscow: “Who cares what Reds say? Who cares what Pravda prints?” Georgia Senator Richard Russell similarly begged: If communists support racial integration, what greater proof could there be of its immorality? (Klarman, 2004; Isserman, 1989: 29-31; Borstelmann, 2001: 108-109)

Within two years, a clear majority of southern legislators had signed the Southern Manifesto, which accused the Supreme Court of abusing its power, and committed signatories to opposing de-segregation by “all lawful means”. Over the three years following the decision, 136 pieces of state legislation were ratified in order to facilitate resistance to de-segregation. In almost every city in the South, there was a

White Citizens' Council committed to defending Jim Crow. The reticence of the central state in implementing *Brown vs. the Board of Education* encouraged local states to escalate their resistance. For example, in North Carolina, the initial strategy was to devolve responsibility for pupil assignment to local school boards in order to compel the NAACP to challenge segregation on a board-by-board basis. However, within a year, the local state had adopted a more confrontational stance, deciding to shut down public schools 'threatened' with de-segregation and offer funding to white students who wanted private tuition. Aside from these measures, there proliferated a range of apparatuses, State Sovereignty Commissions<sup>12</sup> and other investigative bodies, often at the instigation of local right-wing coalitions such as the White Citizens' Councils, with Attorney Generals backing them up, whose remit was to go after alleged communism in the civil rights movement, using a combination of the investigative and interrogative techniques which had been deployed in HUAC and SISS, and by the FBI. Their powers and reach differed from state to state, but even the Arkansas State Sovereignty Commission was so extensive in its powers that it was described by the Arkansas Republican, and future governor, Winthrop Rockefeller, as an "Arkansas Gestapo". Similar language was used about the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission – a "cotton-patch Gestapo" – which was empowered, in strikingly open-ended language, to "perform any and all acts and things deemed necessary and proper to protect the sovereignty of the state of

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<sup>12</sup> There is strikingly little information available on many of these bodies. The chief reason for this is a concerted effort by local states to suppress or destroy the information. The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission is one exception. Many in the state legislature argued, when the Commission was finally wound down, that its documents should be burned rather than classified on the grounds that they would "dishonor many Mississippians" when made public, including "people sitting right here in this chamber". In the end, the documents were classified and declassified in 1998. The Louisiana State Sovereignty Commission's documents were burned shortly after the institution was closed. (Katagiri, 2001: xiv, 227-228; Butler, 2002)

Mississippi, and her sister states” from Federal encroachment. After 1959, this expanded to include comprehensive efforts on behalf of white citizens and law enforcement agencies to investigate supposed agitators, leak about them to the press, gather blackmail material, and support efforts at grassroots white resistance to integration. More broadly, the Commissions played a critical role in putting together political networks of the region’s Right on the basis of their anticommunism and segregationism, and supporting – either licitly or illicitly – the activities of the emerging White Citizens’ Councils which existed to rouse middle class white vigilance against civil rights as a communist threat. The scale of the resistance to desegregation was in some respects analogous to the extraordinarily wide-ranging federal anticommunist programmes in the late 1940s. Yet it was also more popularly based, incorporating small businesses, Protestant churches, middle class professionals, and a growing layer of evangelists. As C Vann Woodward describes it: “During 1957, 1958, and 1959 a fever of rebellion and malaise of fear spread over the region. Books were banned, libraries were purged, newspapers were slanted, magazines disappeared from stands, television programs were withheld, films were excluded. Teachers, preachers, and college professors were questioned, harassed, and many were driven from their positions or fled the South. The NAACP was virtually driven underground in some states.” This was a hugely effective response in the short-term, drastically reducing the rate of school de-segregations, and – following the civil rights movement’s breakthrough in Montgomery, Alabama (see Chapter Eight), there was no significant increase in the rate of civil rights actions until 1960.

(Lewis, 2004: 30-1 & 124-6; Clark, 1976: 115; Irons, 2010; Katagiri, 2001; Reed, 1997: 186; Butler, 2002; Woodward, 2002: 165-7; McAdam, 1983)

Yet while some were preparing an ‘extremist’ resistance to the integration of public schools, some local politicians took *Brown vs. the Board of Education* as a cue to begin re-formation. ‘Practical segregationists’ such as Governor J P Coleman of Mississippi, Governor LeRoy Collins of Florida, and Governor Luther Hodge of North Carolina, tried to avoid noisy, violent confrontations which would be bad for business. Coleman, concerned to maintain social peace and defend Federal legitimacy, sought to find ways to formally comply with the Supreme Court’s ruling, while introducing a set of racially-laden measures that would maintain as much of the old system of white supremacy as possible. The old structures of *de jure* racial discrimination could be reinvented as a *de facto* system of white supremacy, coded in the language of moral and public health reform – so that discrimination in welfare entitlements could be introduced in terms of disincentivising ‘illegitimacy’. ‘Practical segregationists’ also took the opportunity to modernise, rationalise and, above all, expand the power of the local state. Through such means, they sought to control outbursts of white violence which would rebound badly in the national political terrain, and restructure welfare and family law in ways that rationalised racial oppression, parlaying it into the discourse of benevolent governance. (Walker, 2009; Crespino, 2007; Walker, 1998)

Increasingly, particularly after the legal strategies of Massive Resistance began to fall apart at the turn of the Sixties, anticommunism was of less use to the ‘practical segregationists’ than to the ‘massive resisters’. The latter outflanked the ‘moderates’ in the relatively weaker state formations, based in predominantly rural and agrarian economies (Alabama, Mississippi), and situated in the Black Belt where black voters could potentially be powerful. The former, however, consolidated their strength in industrialised and urbanised states (North Carolina, Tennessee) with strong, centralised state apparatuses, and generally positioned outside the Black Belt. They sought to represent themselves as reasonable figures accommodating onerous demands, without necessarily conceding their legitimacy. The initial discovery of anticommunism had been a bonus. As Clark (1976: 115-116) argues, the failure of the Dixiecrat revolt had demonstrated that “the old blatant racism” was no longer sufficient by itself, any more than was an appeal to states’ rights, to excite the majority of white opinion. However, “when the traditional fears of racial change were linked to the relatively new fears growing out of the Cold War, the overwhelming majority of whites responded”. Yet, long after the CPUSA had been isolated by McCarthyism, its membership further depleted after the Twentieth Congress and Khrushchev’s disclosure of the crimes of *haut* Stalinism, there was little of communism’s historical influence left to bemoan. As state after state abandoned Massive Resistance, only an embattled and increasingly isolated minority could sustain the claim that the highest reaches of government had been infiltrated by communism. To this extent, if anticommunism was a politics of crisis management in

the Jim Crow South, its persistence only indicated the paucity of locally available solutions and a failure in state initiative and capacity.

#### **Part IV: Accelerated de-formation and re-formation, massive resistance, sit-ins and freedom rides (1960-65)**

Under President Kennedy, Cold War anticommunism was briefly given a new lease of life, inasmuch as he entered the White House determined to roll back the influence of communism in the hemisphere, by which was meant Cuba. In running for the White House, Kennedy had sought and obtained the support of the most belligerent segregationists. Among his supporters was Governor Patterson of Alabama, a hard-line anticommunist and segregationist whose endorsement of Kennedy made NAACP leaders uneasy. Patterson was closely involved with Kennedy's plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion. (Horne, 1986: 296)

In the fevered atmosphere of Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis, a revival of Red Scare hysteria might have been anticipated. In fact, the civil rights movement suddenly experienced a dramatic growth, while giving rise to the first tributaries of the 'New Left'. This was in part because of the setbacks inflicted on Massive Resistance, as state laws shutting down public schools or introducing pupil placement plans (wherein pupils were assigned to schools by a panel, on the basis of criteria that

while not explicitly racial, where ‘racially laden’) were struck down by the courts. (See Chapter Seven). It was also in part due to the tactical innovation of sit-ins, in which civil rights activists concentrated their forces at a particular vulnerable point in the armour of segregation. (McAdam, 1983) There had also been a decisive shift in the balance of juridical forces in the period of ascendant Massive Resistance. Aside from *Brown*, the Supreme Court made a number of crucial decisions consolidating the political turn away from hardline anticommunism. The most important of these was *Yates v the United States* (1957), in which the Supreme Court reversed the convictions of Communists imprisoned under the Smith Act, thus effectively neutralising the Act. A number of other decisions, in *Jencks v United States* (1957), *Mesarosh v United States* (1956), and *Watkins v United States* (1957), weakened anticommunist laws like Taft-Hartley, and rebuked the proceedings of HUAC. And finally, an overarching structural factor was the *global crisis of white supremacy*, prompted by insurgent anti-colonial movements often under a communist or anticapitalist rubric – the global ‘colour line’ was eroding. In the year 1960 alone, fourteen newly independent, formerly colonial states came into being: Congo, Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Somalia, Niger, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Chad, Central African Republic, Gabon, Senegal, Mali. (Bush, 2009; Horne, 1991; Horne, 1986; Du Bois, 2008; Lichtman, 2012: 91-92, 94-96)

Here, then, was an overdetermined political moment, a “ruptural unity”. (Althusser, 2005: 99) The crisis of ‘Massive Resistance’ in the South was met by an opposite and eventually overwhelming escalation of the civil rights movement. The

tactics of sit-ins, in which African Americans would occupy premises or seats reserved for whites, and freedom rides, in which civil rights activists would cross Jim Crow barriers on public transport, began to exhaust the capacity of Southern states to effectively respond. Either they were compelled to meet the demands of the movement, or smear and harass them, or physically assault them. Only the first of these worked, as had happened following the sit-ins in Nashville, Tennessee when Mayor Ben West was persuaded to publicly oppose segregation, while businesses negotiated the end of segregated custom with protesters. Legal harassment was widespread, certainly. In the three years following the sit-ins at the Woolworths lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, approximately 20,000 people were arrested for participating in similar protests. But the threat of arrest did not impede the spread of this tactic. Outright brutality, which was common in many Southern redoubts, was anticipated by the tactic of non-violent civil disobedience, and in fact planned for, as it would illustrate the severity of the Jim Crow system to a wider public.

Parapolitical violence, in the form of Ku Klux Klan attacks, bombings and lynchings, were another element of the state's response. (The precise way in which the state was involved is addressed and theorised in Chapter Seven). Though formally private, civil society organisations, the Ku Klux Klans of the South were integrated into the state through covert hierarchies and networks. They thus participated in the state's administrative and technical expertise, its monopoly on public violence, while helping to deploy it to resolve bureaucratic, population problems in ways that could be disavowed. But the use of terror, over the longer term, tended to rebound badly

and lose its efficacy. The period of the “historical primacy of terror as a means of social control” in the South was being brought to a close. (Piven & Cloward, 1979, p. 182; Chalmers, 2003; Eyes on the Prize 3: Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961), 1990; Marable, 2007, p. 67; Carson, 1996; Newton, 2010)

What was important about these tactics was that they were pointed at a strategic cleavage within state power, deliberately attempting to leverage it. While conventional social movement studies focus on the communicative, ‘non-violent’ aspects of civil rights struggle, Frances Fox Piven reminds us that the key to the movement’s strategy was to activate “disruptive power”. (Piven & Cloward, 1979, pp. 181-263; Piven, 2006) The repertoires of such disruptive power, as much as their ideological forms, were propagated through a global assault on the colour line: anticolonial struggle, and particularly India’s successful fight for independence. For Martin Luther King Jr., it was Gandhi’s doctrine of nonviolent resistance that he adopted for the US civil rights movement. “To other countries I may go as a tourist,” he once said upon visiting Delhi, “but to India I come as a pilgrim.” About the specific methods of Gandhi, he cited the example of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: “We have found them to be effective and sustaining—they work!” (King Jr., 2005; Horne, 2008)

As the traditional ideological supports of Jim Crow weakened, anticomunism was still occasionally useful as a proxy means for battling Jim Crow. The North

Carolina General Assembly, though it governed a well industrialised Southern state which experienced relatively little of the violence that other Southern states had, responded to the successes of the civil rights movement by embarking on a new anticommunist crackdown focused on Universities. On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1963, the Assembly rushed through a law banning anyone who was a known member of the Communist Party, or who was known to advocate overthrow of the United States Constitution, or who had invoked the Fifth Amendment in respect of communist or "subversive" connections, from speaking on North Carolina campuses. Its passage was expedited by the conservative Senate President Clarence Stone, who led a troupe of reactionaries determined to prevent desegregation. But the law was widely opposed within the state, including by Governor Sanford and much of the local media, and arguably provided a mobilising tool for the radical left - as when Herbert Aptheker and Frank Wilkinson addressed large crowds just outside the campus in Chapel Hill.

The last stronghold of traditional, Southern racial anticommunism, was perhaps Alabama. There, the least centralised state administration co-existed with the least developed industrial base. Alabama had fewer means by which to accommodate the end of Jim Crow than most states, and a greater interest in resisting it. As a consequence, its responses were more violent, authoritarian and, as figured in the speech of its Governor George Wallace, more conventionally anticommunist. The state's Department of Public Safety, based on information supplied by the FBI, labelled Martin Luther King Jr. and his allies among the "Left-Wing Pro-Communist Groups" menacing the social order. A local Peace Commission report charged that King was responsible for sixty communist front groups, yet another that he was under

the direction of the Communist Party. Wallace himself volubly rebuked the “Communist conspiracy” at the heart of the “so-called civil rights movement”. Yet here, King and his allies knew that the state’s response was dysfunctional, that the anticommunist offensive was so bound up with paranoia, so incapable of compromise or accommodation, that the mere invitation to accommodate by peaceful means was liable to provoke violence, force the federal government to react, and thus further the crisis within the state.

The Selma-to-Montgomery marches of 1965 organised principally by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in response to the repression of voter-registration, was a tactic devised in recognition of this. The first demonstration, on 7 March 1965, was assaulted by police, with tear gas and billy clubs as it crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The event, rapidly dubbed ‘Bloody Sunday’, aroused not only popular anger but also dismay on the part of border state Southern Democrats such as Texas Senator Ralph Yarborough. In amplifying divisions within the ‘Solid South’, the tactics of the Alabama state also provoked Federal intervention. Not only that, but the boldness and presence of the SCLC aroused the involvement of local black sharecroppers for the first time, despite the threats that they had with the result that the third and last Selma-to-Montgomery march was protected by a federalised National Guard and permitted 25,000 marchers to finally march the distance to Montgomery unmolested by the state or parapolitical militias. (Woods, 2004, pp. 218-24; Vaughn & Davis, 2006, pp. 201-235) The mobilisation of masses inside the sphere of Jim Crow was thus intended to force change from outside Jim Crow. It

leveraged the divisions within the US ruling class, creating such disruption that thousands of businesses across the South de-segregated long before any legal mandate, and compelled the Federal government to act. The result, where local government did not adapt, was a profound degeneration in local state capacity, and the accumulation of further antagonisms ('contradictions') within and between central and local state apparatuses.

This, and the logarithmic growth of civil rights campaigns leading to the 300,000 strong March on Washington in 1963, produced two distinctive kinds of response from the central state. One was that the FBI under Hoover intensified its campaign of harassment, disruption and subversion of civil rights leaders. For example, from 1963 until his assassination in 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was the target of a "systematic program of harassment ... by means both legal and illegal" intended to neutralise him as an effective civil rights leader. The power previously accumulated by Hoover's bureaucratic office in the context of providing political intelligence to the White House and leading counter-subversion campaigns, played a significant role in this. For the majority of his staff were unconvinced of any significant communist presence in the organisation for the March on Washington. Yet, Hoover's insistence to the contrary was sufficient to have reports re-written, conclusions revised and a "substantial" communist menace concocted. On the basis of such fictions, and more substantial ones besides, the FBI continued to disrupt the civil rights movement's operations, leaking red-baiting smears to the media and generally acting as a powerful alibi to an embattled south. (FBI, 2007, pp. 1-5; Lewis, 2004, pp. 68-72)

Yet, as would be anticipated by the above remarks on the consent-coercion couplet above, the very efficacy of popular organisation in breaking down the traditional means of state repression and terror was also a factor in disintegrating the efficacy of anticommunist white-supremacism.

The second response was that of the executive, under President Johnson. While he had initially been party to Kennedy's strategy of continuing the course of moderate, cautious reform, the extent of disruption compelled a more radical approach. With cross-party backing, he pushed Congress to introduce a legislative programme to effectively overthrow Jim Crow, beginning with the Twenty Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, outlawing the poll tax and the Civil Rights Act, outlawing segregation, in 1964. In August 1965, a Voting Rights Act was passed, providing Federal protection for African Americans who wanted to register to vote. Although it would take some time to compel Southern states to implement these changes, the Supreme Court signalled its intent by upholding the power of Congress to protect African American citizens in this way. (Capozzi, 2006)

This response was explicitly prompted by ongoing, repeated crises in the South, culminating in Selma's 'Bloody Sunday'. But an implicit context was the Vietnam War, which was already prompting an antiwar movement integrally related to the civil rights struggle. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) which the former had helped build,

and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were among the organisations involved in civil rights also opposing the Vietnam War. These organisations represented a militant component of the New Left that was in formation, and which threatened the Democratic Party's national organisation. As an internal report of the liberal, anticommunist Democratic organisation the ADA had put it, the Party's support for voting rights would result in "quick recruitment by the Democratic Party, which will mean quick scuttling of the Freedom Democratic Parties and SNCC control." (Gettleman, et al., 1995: 299; Neale, 2004: 127-9; Dittmer, 1995: 294; Sitkoff, 1981)

But not only did such developments threaten the Democratic Party and its particular representational strategies (the attempt to keep segregationists on board while satisfying African American demands). The Vietnam War required a national mobilisation of young men, drafted on the basis of anticommunist struggle and the protection of Americanism, as well as the acquiescence of a wider public. The fact that large numbers of Americans had fought in battles that had, for them, a great deal in common with those of the 'Third World', in the course of which they had developed tactics designed to overcome state resistance rather than simply be morally persuasive, presented a tremendous obstacle to this. The longer the crisis of Southern segregation went on, the greater the dilemma would become. Johnson's intervention can thus be interpreted as an attempt to resolve the brewing crisis of authority and construct a new hegemony under Democratic Party leadership. Yet, the very attempt to do so while retaining the segregationists as a core, conservative element of the

party machine, exacerbated the crisis of authority. As Cleveland Sellers of the SNCC put it, “Never again were we lulled into believing that our task was exposing injustices so that the ‘good’ people of American could eliminate them … our struggle was not for civil rights, but for liberation.” (Sellers & Terrell, 1990: 111)

## CHAPTER SIX

### Discourse: Reds and race in popular and elite discourse

*This chapter approaches the subject of race and anticomunism from a radically new starting point, that of Lacanian discourse analysis. Thus far, I have approached the intersections of these two registers mainly as a strategic matter, in terms of its contested functionality in sustaining white-supremacy against challenges. In this chapter, I am more interested in locating the psychic investments in white-supremacy, and where anticomunism might fit in. This is necessary because without such an account, there is a danger of over-rationalising racist anticomunism. Particularly, there is a risk of over-stating the strategic utility of anticomunist terror, and violence, and underestimating its non-rational sources. It is also a useful approach insofar as it involves scrutinising the language of white-supremacist anticomunism in some detail, and following its logic and non-logic, rather than assuming that it is already understood. Therefore, making use of some of the resources of whiteness studies, and particularly the psychoanalytic approaches of Fanon and Seshadri-Crooks, I embark upon an analysis of some specimens of white-supremacist anticomunist discourse, and locate what I argue is a fantasmatic kernel of enjoyment in white-supremacist language. I further argue that where the historical basis and fundamental contingency of whiteness is exposed, the ensuing anxiety produces a space in which a specifically racialised anticomunism can emerge. In*

*this discourse, communism emerges as a ‘monstrous’, racially ambiguous figure which can be the subject of fantasy projection.*

### **Taking Them At Their Word**

I began this research with the conviction that the language of anticomunism in the context of Massive Resistance must be treated very seriously. To ‘flatten’ the discourse, to treat it as either a shallow instrumentalisation or a hollow delusion, would be to risk missing what was truly interesting and instructive about the ideological aspect of their struggle. For example, if segregationist protesters at the Little Rock capitol suggested that ‘Race Mixing is Communism’, we must at least make space for the possibility that it meant something subjectively important. This chapter consists of an extended foray into discourse analysis in which I aim to take the Senators and shopkeepers, Klans and councils, planters and protesters, *fully at their word.*

To do this, I am shifting in this chapter from a terrain largely coordinated by Gramsci, Althusser and Poulantzas, to a Lacanian terrain. In principle, there is much

in both Althusser and Gramsci that I could bring to bear in the analysis of discourse.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, to slip from the problematic of historical materialism to that of psychoanalysis is such a profound shift in register that it will require some explanation. The purpose of deploying a psychoanalytic reading is to help me do one thing above all, and that is follow the texts scrupulously and attentively, paying close attention to what is actually said. It is the obvious, the surface of speech, that Lacanian analysis is concerned with – rather than with what is assumed to be behind or beneath it. Lacan warned analysts not to try to ‘understand’ too quickly, for if they did so they would generally only find meanings congruent with their own lived reality. In that sense, analyst and analysand would be communicating on a purely imaginary plane, in which speech as a medium functioned like a two-way mirror, each participant only finding such meanings as he or she was already prepared to find. Instead, Lacan suggested that analysts should position themselves on a different axis, the symbolic axis, that governed by the logic of language itself. They should “listen for sounds and phonemes, words, locutions, and sentences, not forgetting pauses, scensions, cuts, periods, and parallelisms”. For it is in paying ‘free-floating’ attention the formal properties of speech that one notices the parapraxes, missed syntagms, mixed metaphors, deletions, litotes, compromise formations, absences,

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<sup>13</sup> In *Reading Capital*, Althusser et al excavated what they argued was the logic of the symptom embedded in historical materialism. This resulted in a unique epistemology and practice of reading, concerned with knowledge as a production, and theory (and implicitly all texts) as the product of a conjuncture and thus riddled with contradictions and symptomatic gaps. On top of this, Althusser offered an original approach to ideology and subject-formation, coining the highly productive concept of ‘interpellation’. Gramsci, meanwhile, emphasised the formative materiality of ideological superstructures, and the centrality of language to the formation of political domination. Through his understanding of ‘common sense’, he stressed the role of lived experiences and traditions in the formation of ideology. In drawing attention to the way in which discourse was accented with, bisected by, the lived experiences of distinct social classes and groups, he underlined how the achievement of any form of unity, particularly hegemonic unity, was a necessarily complex negotiation wherein linguistic practices had to be made to act as a kind of social cement.

catachreses, constant associations and slurred statements. And it is there, in the non-sense, the non-logic, that there can be found an auspicious deposit of meaning generally overlooked. That deposit is, of course, the work of the unconscious. (Van Haute, 2002; Miller, 2011; Fink, 2014a; Pavón-Cuéllar, 2010; Lacan, 2006: 394)

I invoke Lacanian psychoanalysis in this context with some caution. Lacan's concepts were designed for use in a clinical situation, in which the suffering subject is finding ways to speak the unspeakable. The role of the analyst in this context is to hear the gaps through which the unconscious Other is speaking within the analysand's discourse. A great deal of his work which is applicable to discourse is only of use in the clinical situation with its dynamics of transference and resistance. In this context, interpretation is one means among others – punctuation and scanning – to produce more material. Hence the generally oracular, elliptical quality of Lacanian interpretations which are intended, not to make sense, but to "make waves". (Lacan, quoted in Fink, 2007: 81) To attempt to apply the same methods to a transcript, let alone a structured piece of writing or a work of propaganda that may have been collectively laboured over, would appear to be futile. No confirmatory material can be generated. There is no analysand to affect. Unlike in the clinic, we have no choice but to 'understand,' since there is no other criterion of success.

There is, moreover, a gulf between the subjective or inter-subjective level of psychoanalysis, and the broader ideological structures to which we hope discourse analysis might give us access. Psychoanalysis is concerned with the particular. In this

vein, Paul Verhaeghe (2008) contrasts psychoanalysis, which begins with the general (diagnostic categories, registers of analysis) and reaches toward the particular (the symptom, the fundamental fantasy), with medical practices which begin with the particular (symptoms), and proceed toward the general (diagnosis and prescribed cure). A precondition for any successful analysis is that the analysand can be situated in relation to one of the major diagnostic categories – neurotic (obsessive or hysterical), psychotic, or pervert – but this doesn't indicate the treatment so much as provide broad guidelines for proceeding with further analysis. For example, in the treatment of a neurotic, the analyst's mission is to weaken their ego, their already-too-strong sense of self, to put their desires into question (and thus into motion). In the treatment of a psychotic, such an approach would be potentially disastrous. In that case, the analyst seeks to strengthen the ego, and to help create an anchor in meaning around which they can organise their relationship to reality.

Lacan himself expressed scepticism about the attempt to analyse neuroses and so on at the social level: 'mass psychology' is not very useful when individual agents, rather than societies, experience symptoms. (Lacan & Granzotto, 2004) He also classed psychoanalysis as a 'conjectural science,' suggesting a distance from the 'exact sciences' (Lacan, 2006: 732). His use of tropes from game theory, set theory and so on constituted an attempt to close that gap, but it seems to remain wide open. This being the case, what sort of epistemic violence might be wrought by taking these already tentative conceptual operations out of their context and trying to make them work abroad? If I want to derive any general conclusions from my reading of the

diaries, newspapers, propaganda sheets, speeches, letters and other texts of segregationists, surely it would be more appropriate to use a Foucauldian or Gramscian – that is to say, historical and genealogical – mode of discourse analysis?

And yet, beginning with Freud's writings on art and war, psychoanalysis has often furnished us with analyses of collective, trans-subjective phenomena. There are today a number of influential or at least authoritative psychoanalytic readings of ideological 'symptoms', of cultural formations, and particularly of race. (Bhabha, 1983; Davids, 2011; Fanon, 2008; Hook, 2004; Hook, 2005; Kovel, 1997; Seshadri-Crooks, 2000; Žižek, 2008a; Žižek, 2008b) One can be sceptical of the extraordinary range of phenomena which analyses, originally devised for the clinic, are being used to explain – particularly as there isn't even an abundance of proof that they are even 'true' in their original setting. Still, to leave matters there would be to dismiss a range of extraordinarily sophisticated and suggestive writing in quite a summary way. And such abstinence would be supererogatory.

Recall that for Lacan, there is no subjectivity without the Other, in relation to which the unconscious is formed. Sedimented in the unconscious is precisely "the deposit, the alluvium, the petrification" (Lacan, quoted in Soler, 2014: 27) of group experience – nation, race, gender, sex, and all of the historically produced, mortified and transfigured realities which constitute the group. In the highly specific chains of significations that constitute each particular subject, one finds their relation to the symbolic order and ideological imaginary. In a 1955 seminar, Lacan gives the

example of a writer whose cramp was related to the fact that in Koranic Law, theft can be punished by the amputation of the hand – a traumatic fact for the subject whose father had been accused of being a thief. In effect, refusing to understand the relation between theft and amputation, he cut off his own hand. (Lacan, 1991b: 129-130) His discourse was no doubt highly particular, but also impossible to extricate from, or analyse without reference to, the social structure, the judicial order, and the prevailing moral discourse. Thus, as Palacios (2009: 20) puts it, “The fact that Lacan ‘translated’ Freudian psychoanalysis to the language of linguistic structuralism makes the transition and interaction between individual selves and social selves very smooth: they are both ‘sewn’ by the signifying operation of language.” What Lacanian analysis can give us a unique access to, then, is the subject’s relationship to the social link, to the space which is usually called *ideology*.

There are also, irrespective of the ‘truth’ of Lacanian psychoanalysis, advantages to deploying it in this context. In the first instance, the unique Lacanian take on meaning allows me to combine a hermeneutics of suspicion with an approach that takes the subject’s discourse seriously. It makes it possible to read the text in a critical fashion without making the untenable assumption that the reader knows what the author ‘really’ meant to say.<sup>14</sup> Because subjects give a bad, incomplete and contradictory account of themselves, while simultaneously offering explanations to

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<sup>14</sup> This, of course, has limits outside of a clinical context. For, the number of meanings that could be attached to just one statement through association is potentially limitless: the analysand would usually decide what to associate the terms to. In the analysis of discourse, unavoidably, I must select some meanings based on an interpretation of the historical context. This is where ‘understanding’ necessarily creeps back in and limits the production of new knowledge. The only thing one can do about this is take it into account and discount for it.

conceal the lack, we can take subjects fully at their word, without necessarily believing a word they say. We can “hold on to this dialectic, this movement between fragmentation and integration” which is integral to the subject’s discourse. (Frosh, 2014: 20) Secondly, this approach does not seek to flatten or reduce the discourse by ironing out ambiguities and contradictions, but treats them as points of enlightenment. This is made possible by an approach to subjectivity in which the self-contained subject driven by biologically given needs (self-preservation) linked to rationally ordered preferences, is decentred, displaced by the split subject, whose statements are likely to be polysemic, even to the point of expressing contradictory feelings and desires. That there may be more than one thought formation going on at the same time, that indeed *it is not always clear which subject is speaking*, is a necessary corollary of psychoanalysis. (Van Haute, 2002). This gives us the chance to make space for several, contending thoughts expressed in a seemingly simple statement. Thirdly, the core of psychoanalysis is the patriarchal family and its normal dysfunctions. This gives us a unique way to speak of race in relation to sex and reproduction. So I maintain that with appropriate caveats, and with due sensitivity to the context of their operation, it is both possible to deploy psychoanalytic readings in the analysis of discourse and ideological formations, and advantageous to do so.

For the purposes of this discussion Parker’s (2005, 2014) “seven theoretical elements,” identifying some coordinates of a Lacanian approach to discourse, will orient me in analysing the texts which I want to look at. These do not constitute, and will not be deployed as, a methodological schema, a series of ‘steps’ that I can take to

exhaustively analyse a text. Rather, they can act as starting points for a flexible inquiry, some being more productive than others. These elements can be summed up schematically here as:

- i) the primacy of the formal quality of a text over its apparent or intended meaning;
- ii) the importance of ‘quilting points’, or ‘master signifiers’ which guarantee the structure of a text when the relation of signifier to signified is otherwise apt to slide;
- iii) the agency of the unconscious in discourse, where the unconscious is “the discourse of the Other”;
- iv) the structuring of discourse by its relation to knowledge, specifically what the Other is ‘supposed’ or hypothesised to know;
- v) the way in which speaking subjects are positioned by language relative to another;
- vi) the emphasis on contradiction, dissent, and deadlocks of perspective, rather than consensus, as the condition of possibility of speech;
- vii) interpretation that operates on the surface of speech, rather than attempting to divine the internal world of the speaker.

Any analysis has to be guided by a reflexive understanding of the discourse of the analyst. Lacan identified ‘four discourses’ – the discourse of the master, the hysterical, the university, and the analyst. (Lacan, 1991c) It will not be necessary here to enter

into a detailed account of these, or the mathemes diagramming their structure. It is sufficient for our purposes to say that of the four discourses Lacan described, only the discourse of the analyst was one of non-mastery. The discourse of the master is overtly concerned with domination, and with the production of knowledge only insofar as it will make things work. The discourse of the hysteric is one in which the subject puts the master signifier to work, producing knowledge about itself in order to expose its lack. The position of mastery remains, but is usurped by the hysterical subject. That of the university is more covertly a discourse of mastery since, while it appears to privilege knowledge for its own sake, the knowledge it is concerned with is that whose authority is the pedagogue.

The discourse of the analyst is concerned with something else. The analyst tries to occupy the position not of the master-signifier (master discourse), not of knowledge *per se* (university discourse), but rather of something more enigmatic – object a, the object-cause of desire. In practice, this means listening for the effects of the unconscious. In the context of an analysis of discourse, the analyst has to refrain from interpolating themselves as the bearer of the real knowledge about the text. As will become plain, however, this emphasis on the structural features of discourse, and the ways in which it can position subjects, is not purely reflexive. These cartographies offer a useful schema of the dilemmas of those invested in the signifier of ‘whiteness’, and threatened with its loss of potency.

### **The ‘white unconscious’ of privilege.**

“It must be remembered that the white group of labourers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the coloured schools. The newspapers specialised on news that flattered the poor whites and almost utterly ignored the Negro except in crime and ridicule.

“On the other hand, in the same way, the Negro was subject to public insult; was afraid of mobs; was liable to the jibes of children and the unreasoning fears of white women; and was compelled almost continuously to submit to various badges of inferiority. The result of this was that the wages of both classes could be kept low, the whites fearing to be supplanted by Negro labour, the Negroes always being threatened by the substitution of white labour.” – W E B Du Bois (1965: 700-701)

Du Bois's famous formulation concerning the "public and psychological wage" of whiteness has become the basis upon which a range of critical approaches to race have been developed, above all 'whiteness studies'. While the study of "white skin privilege" had been initiated by marxist intellectuals working in the New Left of Sixties America, the idea of 'whiteness' as an object of study, as a problem to be explained, came into its own in the 1990s. (Allen, 1994; Allen, 1997; Kolchin, 2002) Has too much emphasis been placed on the 'psychological' element of the formulation, and none sufficiently on the 'public' – or, as it might otherwise be stated, 'social'? Many of the most significant studies of 'whiteness' have focused on the cultural and cognitive claims that it entails. (Hale, 1998; Jacobson, 1999; Jacobson, 2001; Jacobson, 2008; Krikler, 2005; Lipsitz, 1998; Roediger, 2007) Yet, the social compensations of whiteness for white workers, as listed by Du Bois, are not insignificant: deference, access to public goods and resources, access to the state, and a sympathetic media.

However, it is significant that Du Bois does not draw any dichotomy between the 'public' and symbolic 'psychological'. He does not draw up two sets of books, with criminal justice listed under 'public' and deference listed under 'psychological'. It is each to the extent of the other; the 'wage' which is allocated in the form of access to public goods has a clear 'psychological' dimension; the 'wage' which is 'psychological' has a social dimension. If, as Allen (1994, 1997) argues, the long-term effect of the system of 'white-skin privilege' is to exert social control as a mode of class domination over both black and white workers, to reduce the bargaining

power of both black and white workers, and if ‘race management’ (Roediger & Esch, 2012) secures the loyalty of white workers to a system in which they produce a surplus that is exploited, their advantage is relative not just to the situation of black workers, but to their purview. In a certain, relatively immediate, short-term perspective, white workers can be invested in deference, seniority rights, the colour bar and so on which, in the perspective of class analysis and in light of ‘the actuality of communism’ (Bosteels, 2011), might appear to be nothing more than the absence of special penalty, or at best minimal compensations for subordination and exploitation.

The point here is not to query whether these privileges are therefore ‘real’. ‘White-skin privilege’ is at least as real as its effects, as real as the investments in it. But this does compel us to ask what privilege offers those who choose to invest in it. Having just said that it is in part a matter of perspective, it appears that there is nothing *self-evident* in the workings of privilege, no straightforward reason why the currency in which the ‘public and psychological wage’ is paid should be accepted, no reason why ‘whiteness’ should be introjected so readily, no reason why other ‘interests’ relative to a given social field shouldn’t come first, the question of what privilege does for its subjects stands out more than before. One way to answer it is to approach the problem as a matter of political strategy. As Corey Robin (2011) argues, one of the distinguishing features of conservatism’s popular appeal is that it offers some of the subaltern classes a share in mastery: a purpose for which race is ideal. Even where this mastery is largely symbolic – the majority of whites in the

antebellum South did not own slaves, for example – race has a compelling ability to summon cross-class solidarities. However, in this chapter I am less engaged in trying to explain the strategic utilities and functions of race than in exploring the psychic investment in race *for white subjects*, and the possible relevance of anticomunism in safeguarding that investment.

The argument of this chapter will therefore take the approach of Seshadri-Crooks (2000) as its starting point. Beginning on a problematic inaugurated by Fanon, of what it means to *desire whiteness*, Seshadri-Crooks argues that whiteness offers, in what can be counted a typically conservative ideological gesture, the fantasy of organic wholeness, promising a phallic fullness of being and plenitude of enjoyment. The signifier ‘Whiteness’ promises to supplement the lack in being which sexual difference introduces. Yet at the same time, it also limits this jouissance by reinstating difference as hierarchy, limiting and thus conserving the domain of sameness. In this view, race is a regime of visibility, which “organizes difference and elicits investment in its subjects because it promises access to being itself. It offers the prestige of being better and superior; it is the promise of being more human, more full, less lacking”. The enjoyment in the fullness of being offered by racial solidarity, ‘whiteness’, is – like all jouissance – excessive. There is something horrific in the fantasy of wholeness, wherein difference is eliminated, such that difference must be resurrected at another level as somatically marked racial difference. (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 7)

The status of ‘Whiteness’ as determinant here is, in a sense, counterintuitive. If race is, in its essence, racism, then it would appear to be only non-white groups who are raced, with whiteness appearing as effect rather than cause of this process. Such, at any rate, would seem to be the default in the racial culture of the United States. As Barbara Fields wrote in a highly regarded essay, “Americans regard people of known African descent or visible African appearance as a race, but not people of known European descent or visible European appearance. That is why, in the United States, there are scholars and *black* scholars, women and *black* women.” And moreover, “people in the United States do not classify as races peoples of non-European but also non-African appearance or descent, except for purposes of direct or indirect contrast with people of African descent”. (Fields & Fields, 2012: 115) This is to say, in effect, that there is only *one* race in American racist ideology: the black race.

Taken too literally, this position appears to be overstated. Whether in law, science, or political discourse, it is not uncommon to find people of European descent classified as races in American history. That the subject of whiteness has historically been contested – with Anglo-Saxonism the initially dominant strain later giving way to Caucasianism – is evidence first of how the framing of race was contingent on the politics of slavery and immigration, and second of how incoherent race ideology necessarily is, rather than evidence that the white race is nonexistent in American history. (Krenn, 2006: 1-19; Horsman, 1981; Jacobson, 1998) And where the race system enters into crisis of any sort, ‘the white race’ often appears with a strident assertion of its rights and the imperatives of race solidarity. Nor is it obvious that

“white racial consciousness” (Roediger, 2007: xxi) is ultimately reducible to consciousness of the *black* race and its proximity. Nevertheless, it is immensely and profoundly interesting that in the binaries of traditional racial ideology, ‘blackness’ has been placed on the side of biology, animality, sexuality and nature (Fanon, 2008: 124-128), whereas ‘whiteness’ has been placed on the side of culture, civilisation, and thus the ability to *transcend race*. Likewise, in contrast to the abundance of significations attached to ‘blackness’, which is a marked category, ‘whiteness’ is so often an unspoken default, a semantically empty, unmarked remainder. To be white is to be the race-of-no-race, to be convinced that one’s whiteness has no bearing on one’s interests and actions. (Brekhus, 1998; Dyer, 1997; Murray, 1998)

There is therefore something enigmatic about ‘Whiteness’. The puzzle is not that it appears but that it disappears so quickly and yet is still somehow active. It is true that American racial ideology holds that, “virtually everything people of African descent do, think, or say is racial in nature” (Fields & Fields, 2012: 116) while the actions of white people are assumed to have in some sense transcended race. But if it also happens that, “any situation” involving Euro-Americans and African-Americans “automatically falls under the heading ‘race relations’” (Fields & Fields, 2012: 117), such a turn of phrase at least implies that there is more than one race present. Indeed, if race is – like class and gender to this extent – inherently a relational system, the existence of a black race presupposes a white race, at least as a structural location. Even if it is a paradoxically non-raced race, it is a necessary part of the structure of race.

The point about ‘Whiteness’ therefore seems to be this: inasmuch as it is strangely absent from discourse yet still determining, inasmuch as these absences have a structural effect within the discourse, it makes sense to speak of a *white unconscious*. ‘Whiteness’ in this sense is, in Seshadri-Crooks’s terms, “an unconscious signifier, one that generates a combinatory with its own set of inclusions and exclusions that determine the subject. To be raced is to be subject to the signifier Whiteness.” (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 24-25) But what does it mean to be ‘subject to’ this signifier – or, to be more precise, master-signifier? To be a subject, in a sense, is to be a ‘bearer’ of something. (Kesel, 2009: Loc. 295) For Lacan, this something is nothing other than the order of linguistically mediated social relations: hence, the symbolic order. The subject bears a comprehension and ‘memory’ of itself provided by the symbolic order, by chains of signifiers. To be a subject of race is to be subject to a logic of differences in the symbolic order which overwrite and ‘race’ bodies.

This introduces an important cleavage, taking Seshadri-Crooks’s account away from that of Fanon. Fanon’s analysis of race is situated plainly on what Lacan would call the imaginary. Indeed, Fanon specifically refers to Lacan’s account of the mirror-stage to suggest that racial identification for “the white man” involves the imaginary misrecognition of “the black man” as the Other, that which cannot be assimilated and can therefore only be the target of aggressivity, a “phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety”. (Fanon, 2008: 117, 124) This focus on the gaze, the scopic drive, as the means by which racist identity is established, has become influential in postcolonial

theory. Bhabha (1994) interprets Fanon through this Lacanian optic, focusing on the splitting or alienation of the subject on the imaginary plane. To leave it there, however, would risk simplifying Lacan's account of the imaginary. As we have seen, imaginary identification is already situated by the symbolic register. We can add that, a condition for admission to the symbolic order is not just the introjection of a paternal prohibition, but also the ability to identify with what Lacan called a 'unary trait', a specific attribute of an Other (say, the little boy who carries a miniature version of his father's briefcase) which stands in for them without effacing their alterity. (Lacan, 2014: 21-22, 40) This unary trait, in other words, is a *signifier*, and this mode of identification is *symbolic identification*. While, for Lacan, the imaginary is filled with narcissism and aggressivity, which it is easy to identify as the dominant modes of colonial domination (Ryder, 2005), it is in the field of the Other that the subject is constituted, and it is in the symbolic order that is the locus of unassimilable Otherness. And it is here that whiteness and blackness are 'marked' as racial difference. To overlook this necessary aspect would risk treating whiteness or blackness as brute somatic facts, and the racial visibility of the body "as an ontological necessity". It would also risk giving an account of language as being tendentially free from race. (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 30-32) Seshadri-Crooks's argument can be understood here, not as a straightforward rejection of Fanon's interpretation of the raced body as a phobic object of the scopic drive, but as a re-stating it in more thoroughly Lacanian terms.

There remains, before I introduce the question of anticomunism into this schema, the problem of anxiety. The racial gaze is an anxious gaze: what does it show? Seshadri-Crooks takes from Lacan's *Seminar X* the problem of the remainder, that part of the "libidinal cathexis" which escapes both image and symbol, and appears only "in the form of a lack". (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 36-37; Lacan, 2014: 38-39) This lack is what Lacan refers to as the phallus, a claim which positions him against Freud's interpretation of anxiety as a threat to the body, such as castration. For Lacan, the true cause of anxiety is when something uncannily "appears at the place where the [phallus] should be". (Lacan, 2014: 42) The anxiety of race, argues Seshadri-Crooks, is induced when Whiteness occupies the space of the phallus as object of desire: it is thus a phallic signifier, and the plenitude of enjoyment that it promises can be characterised as *phallic jouissance*. This fullness of being, the closing of the gap and the jouissance it is supposed to engender, is strictly speaking *impossible*. There is therefore something inherently uncanny and anxiety-inducing about the gap being occupied in this way. The signifier of whiteness enables a fantasy image to be staged which screens off this traumatic impossibility, but the anxiety remains: and this is the point at which desire must be restored through the production of another lack, that induced by racialisation. The signifying chains linked to Whiteness produce, as their remainder in the real, the uncanny visible racial body. (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 37-38)

What happens when the anxious racial gaze confronts an ambiguously raced body? Or when whiteness loses its ability to act as a symbolic guarantee, its

contingency exposed? This inflamed anxiety produces the space in which a specifically racialised anticomunism can emerge.

### **When ‘Race Mixing is Communism’: the Red as nemesis of Whiteness**

What happens when white meets red? There has long been an anxiety in American racial thinking that communism represents an attack on race from, in a sense, within. The anxiety is expressed exactly as if the existence of communism has already given the lie to Whiteness, by exposing its historicity. The Harvard-educated eugenicist Lothrop Stoddard’s polemic against *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* – published at the peak of Wilsonian anticomunism – does not hesitate to hymn the ‘white race’ at its ostensible moment of peril, but it does not begin its attack on the “menace of Bolshevism” there. Rather, it looks to the collapse of the social distinctions that Bolshevism would produce, resulting in “the death or degradation of nearly all persons displaying constructive ability, and the tyranny of the ignorant and anti-social elements”. The fate of “the race, summarily drained of its good blood” and lurching into “the depths of degenerate barbarism” is, we are given to understand, bound up with the future of its classes. The Bolshevik war on “the classes” produces “incalculable” “racial impoverishment”, “the most gigantic triumph of disgenics ever seen”. But worse, “Bolshevism is, in fact, as anti-racial as it is anti-social”, in that “the very existence of superior biological values is a crime” (Stoddard, 1920: 219):

“Bolshevism has vowed the proletarianization of the world, beginning with the white peoples. To this end it not only foments social revolution within the white world itself, but it also seeks to enlist the colored races in its grand assault on civilization. The rulers of Soviet Russia are well aware of the profound ferment now going on in colored lands. They watch this ferment with the same terrible glee that they watched the Great War and the fiasco of Versailles—and they plot to turn it to the same profit. ... Every nationalist aspiration, every political grievance, every social discrimination, is fuel for Bolshevism’s hellish incitement to racial as well as to class war. ... Bolshevism thus reveals itself as the arch-enemy of civilization and the race. Bolshevism is the renegade, the traitor within the gates, who would betray the citadel, degrade the very fibre of our being, and ultimately hurl a rebarbarized, racially impoverished world into the most debased and hopeless of mongrelizations.”

(Stoddard, 1920: 220)

The dialectic of this argument is interesting. Bolshevism here is characterised almost as an Iago-like malevolence, motiveless malignity, pure vindictive chaos: it seeks abominable ends with “terrible glee” and by means of “hellish incitement”. Nothing of Bolshevism’s drive is, or can be, attributed to real social ills which it may be addressing. Nothing of it must be allowed to survive: it must be crushed beneath an “iron heel”. This “moral splitting,” as Kovel (1997: 47) characterises such gestures, between ‘civilisation’ and its nemesis, as characteristic of the projection which Fanon identifies in racial scapegoating (Fanon, 2008: 113-114), and in this case licences ferocious libidinised violence.

Yet, what is Bolshevism really charged with here? It is an attack on being itself. First, it is as if, by its very founding act of identifying and naming “the classes”, Bolshevism has already taken something from whiteness. The promise of full, superior being in whiteness, the promise of organic wholeness, is undermined when Bolshevism is seen by dint of its pursuit of class struggle to be putting the lack back into whiteness, exposing its historically determined substratum. Whiteness, in the name of “superior biological values” – those of the “superior white stocks” of Nordic blood (Stoddard, 1920: 253) – demands the constitution of class hierarchies as its necessary foundation, a fact which must be repressed if Whiteness is to be effective. Secondly, having drained Whiteness of its phallic power, Bolshevism is accused of engaging, by means of its attack on race, by means of ultimate “mongrelization”, in the all-out annihilation of being, a total loss of being which is labelled “racial impoverishment”.

It appears, then, that Bolshevism has become *identified with the phobic object itself* through a particular chain of equivalences. In Stoddard’s account, it is the ‘rising ride of color’ and the death of civilisation it portends that Bolshevism comes to embody. Equivalence, or identification at the symbolic level, is to be scrupulously distinguished from identification at the imaginary level. For, while Stoddard characterises Bolshevism as an operation beginning among whites, the introduction by his eugenicist colleague Madison Grant’s to the text goes so far as to emphasise that the Russian revolt was in fact one of the “half-Asiatic Slavic peasantry” against

the “Nordic aristocracy” that ruled it. (Stoddard, 1920: xxviii) Other racialisations were available: the view of Wilson’s Secretary of State, Robert Lansing was that Bolshevism represented a Jewish racial conspiracy against civilisation.<sup>15</sup> So, the fact that Stoddard specifically identified Bolshevism as a disintegrative force within whiteness, its attack on class being the principle upon which whiteness is first harmed, must be taken to be significant.

A similar structure of moral splitting, projection and libidinised violence in defence of the phallic *jouissance* of race can be seen in a later anticommunist conjuncture. Secretary of State George F Kennan’s ‘Long Telegram’, a key document from February 1946 which provided the intellectual and ideological framework of US Cold War policy, and ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’, an article from the following year expounding the same themes, can be understood as examples of race thinking in the same key as Stoddard’s. The Princeton-educated Kennan was not a race theorist of Stoddard’s type. His categories were those of international relations, and he alighted on the categories of “Anglo-Saxon”, “Asiatic”, and “oriental”, when he did, in order to comment on their ostensible cultural and political defaults, rather than their supposed evolutionary-biological foundation. Where Stoddard’s is a ‘naturalist’ racism, Kennan’s is ‘historicist’. But, like Stoddard, he produced a profoundly ideological, manifesto-like, exhortative account of the imperialist world-system at a

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<sup>15</sup> Lansing suggested, first, that the truth of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion was evidenced in the Russian revolution, and second that “Jews” were largely responsible for the propaganda war on its behalf.

moment when white world-supremacy was in question, and when communism in some way stood for the threat to whiteness.

In the ‘Long Telegram’ (Kennan, 1946) and in ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’ (Kennan, 1947), Kennan offers a characterisation of Soviet policy-making that is remarkably like Stoddard’s in several ways. First, he represents the USSR as utterly irrational by the standards of “Anglo-Saxon” civilisation, conceding not even the smallest kernel of legitimacy to the Russia’s position. Second, he identifies this irrationality in relation to race and class, in ways to be further outlined below. Third, he identifies its reach in innumerable possible frontiers and zones of plotting, particularly where there are “grievances, whether economic or racial”, or where the power of the white world over “colonial backward, or dependent peoples” can be exploited, and “resentment” stoked until “Soviet dominated puppet political machines” can take power. Ultimately, the USSR is understood as autotelically eliminationist, dedicated to the destruction of all rivals and total world-domination. This is every bit as catastrophist a prospect as that placed before us by Stoddard.

This eliminationist bent is blamed by Kennan on a number of factors ranging from internal regime necessities to Marxist dogma. However, as one proceeds through and compares the texts, it appears that the apparently fleeting reference to racial categories is more productive than it would immediately appear in ‘The Long Telegram’. In the latter, there is one direct reference to “oriental secretiveness and conspiracy” on the part of the Russians, which punctuates the ‘background’ that

Kennan offers to Soviet policymaking. The punctuating position of this observation, despite it not being at all elaborated on, indicates that it is perhaps more important than other parts of the text. And indeed, one finds it to be mirrored directly in ‘The Sources of Soviet Conduct’ which expatiates on “the Russian or the oriental mind”, geared by the history of “nomadic” rivalries in its territory toward “caution, circumspection, flexibility and deception”, and the “Russian-Asiatic world” whose “fanaticism” is opposed to “Anglo-Saxon traditions of compromise”. Similar references, as Borstelmann (2001: 50) points out, pepper Kennan’s other lectures and articles in which, like Stoddard’s colleague, Grant, Kennan fancied that the Russian revolution had been in part a racial revolt, overthrowing “the westernized upper crust” of the old ruling class, revealing Russians to be “a 17<sup>th</sup>-century semi-Asiatic people” evidently profoundly barbarised by a “century-long contract with Asiatic hordes”.

The reference to “oriental secretiveness and conspiracy” in the ‘Long Telegram’, retroactively also alters the sense of a previous passage in which Kennan invokes a “traditional and instinctive” Russian insecurity complex relative to the West. In the same way, similar references in later texts perform a retroactive transformation of the meaning of certain terms. The commentary on the Russian “mind” or “psychology” is linked directly to an Orientalisation, wherein “fanaticism” stands in once again for unreasoning malevolence which is “impervious to logic of reason” but “highly sensitive to logic of force” (on the trope of ‘fanaticism’, see Toscano, 2010), and produces this conclusion: “they have learned to seek security only in patient but

deadly struggle for total destruction of rival power, never in compacts and compromises with it.” Thus, the key ground on which Kennan establishes the impossibility of peaceful co-existence, and the necessity of the most profound distrust and tireless struggle to control the enemy, is that of race. As Kovel (1997: 46-47) points out, ‘The Long Telegram’ is the very image of the Soviet enemy that it produces: it “becomes what it beholds,” “denies objective truth to meet its inner needs” and *in effect* proposes the same policy of “endless intervention and subversion imputed to the Russians,” without explicitly saying so.

In one of his most telling tropes, Kennan compares “[w]orld communism” to “a malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue,” necessitating attention to the “health and vigor of our own society”. It would be straining to depict this somatic metaphor as self-evidently racial: there has long been an ideological tradition of representing society by means of a corporeal metaphor. Kennan did, in other writings, advert to the principles by which “our society” might be deemed healthful: if the founding fathers “disapproved of democracy for a population predominantly white, Protestant and British, faced with relatively simple problems, would they not turn over in their graves at the mere thought of the democratic principle being applied to a population containing ten million Negroes and many more millions of Southern Europeans to whom the democratic principle is completely strange?”<sup>16</sup> (Kovel, 1997: 53) Kennan’s Anglo-Saxonism, like Stoddard’s Anglo-Saxon Nordicism, was not

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<sup>16</sup> Or, as Grant’s introduction to Stoddard (1920: xxxii) had suggested, “Democratic ideals among an homogeneous population of Nordic blood, as in England or America, is one thing, but it is quite another for the white man to share his blood with, or intrust his ideals to, brown, yellow, black, or red men.”

only racist but sustained in relation to an anti-democratic elitism. However, the point is that communism is identified here, in respect of civilisation, as a purely disintegrative principle, a force which has no constructive capacity whatsoever.

Both Stoddard and Kennan situate themselves in the discourse of the master. Adopting a tone of scientific rigour and realpolitik (Kennan distinguishes his position from that of “hysterical anti-Sovietism”), their goal is to make knowledge produce something for the master, in this case an expertise in the management of world affairs that is effectual. The *jouissance* in their discourse is found precisely in the brutal and dispassionate statement of (eugenic or geopolitical) ‘facts’. Here, in both cases, we see that the signifier ‘communism’ is overdetermined. It is represented as both an obsessively integrative and fanatically disintegrative project; a ruthless bid for world domination by a patient, manipulative, powerful agitator and global stirrer, and a reckless, levelling attack on the foundations of civilisation; simultaneously a master and a slave; clever and irrational; internationally expansionist and autarkically enclosed; tightly disciplined and despotic and yet anarchic and subversive; both a ruinous enemy of empire, and an empire in itself; both white and Asiatic. This is where it is true but not sufficient to say that the argument involves a form of moral splitting and projection. The representation of Soviet behaviour is not simply an inversion of American behaviour, or even that recommended by Stoddard or Kennan.

There is something about it that is uncanny, which bears no relevance to any social reality, and which as such adverts to the operation of fantasy.<sup>17</sup>

Fantasy, whether conscious or unconscious, is a powerful image which ‘stages’ an unconscious desire. Lacan, however, insists that the image assumes its place in relation to the symbolic order. The fantasy of total dominance, limitless enjoyment, mastery without boundaries which features in white-supremacist ideology, only becomes a racial fantasy insofar as it is positioned by as such by the symbolic order. It is “an image set to work in the signifying structure”. (Lacan, 2006: 532) The master-signifier, ‘Whiteness’, begins the chain of significations that puts the image to work as a fantasy of racist domination: the full and unimpeded access to and control over black life and death. Like the ‘primordial father’ who enjoys limitless and lawless access to and enjoyment of all women (see Žižek, 2008b: vii-x), the white master here operates on the premise of total power: if black people are allowed to exist at all, it is an act of white benevolence. They are thought to owe everything to whites.

This is the white-supremacist fantasy in its *initial phase*. Following Freud (2001: 179-204), I will suggest that fantasy can proceed through various phases and permutations, with different levels of disguise and displacement. When the initial fantasy is unconscious, it can only be recovered as a construction of analysis, made

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<sup>17</sup> Indeed, strictly speaking, projection is an operation of fantasy which, like any other fantasmatic image, fulfils its function of warding off the traumatic reality of castration. “It is because it wards off this moment of lack [manque] that an image assumes the role of bearing the full brunt of desire: projection, an imaginary function.” (Lacan, 2006: 549)

possible by the return of the repressed. The explicit kernel of fantasy in the discourse of Stoddard and Kennan, respectively, is different. Stoddard avails himself of the language of eugenics to openly extol dominative principles. However, he does not suggest that domination should be utterly without limits, and indeed insists that it is for the advantage and furtherance of the “colored” masses that white rule must be perpetuated. Kennan refers only obliquely to the subordinate – “backward” “dependent” – position of non-whites. Despite his racial denigration of the Russian masses, he insists that the American relationship with them is one of friendship. He does not explicitly defend colonial rule, but only notes the Russian propensity for trouble-making in these zones. In one case, the fantasy is of communism threatening vigorous and competitive racial domination, sustained by race solidarity among whites, and underpinned by Social Darwinist principles. In the other, it is of communism threatening tactful, mandarin white rule legitimised by cultural and civilisational achievements.

How, then, is the ultimate subjection of both authors to this white-supremacist fantasy of limitless enjoyment visible? First, it is evident in the exclusion of any claim on the part of anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles, whose existence is spoken of only in the terms of nebulous ‘grievance’ and ‘resentment’. They are seen through the lens of mastery, as technical problems posed by the race-management of uneven and combined development, disruptions to an otherwise orderly hierarchy run benevolently by whites. Everything is stated as if black people have no cause to resent domination, and owe everything to whites, including their lives. Their agency

is secondary; the only real agents can be some other would-be master, some other imperial pretender. As such, there is nothing inherent to the situation, other than their own good will, which could prevent white people from enjoying limitless. Second, this fantasy incorporates communism as a symptom of its own impossibility. The signifier ‘communism’ is richly overdetermined and, as such, signifies something terribly ambiguous, a whiteness thwarted and gone awry, turned satanic and drawn into the camp of the ‘backward’ rebels. The mechanisms of overdetermination and displacement are particularly evident in the fact that ‘communism’ attracts elements of stereotypes usually associated with both the dominant and the dominated in global affairs. Structurally, this is remarkably similar to antisemitic fantasy, such that the recurring overlap of antisemitism and anticomunism may not be coincidental. (Žižek, 2008a: 140-144) Like the ‘Jew’ of antisemitic discourse, ‘world communism’ is a symptom which embodies all of the intolerable excesses of an imperialist, white-supremacist world system. In its ambiguity, it stands outside its hierarchies and can’t be assimilated: peaceful co-existence is impossible. As such, the impossibility of enjoyment without limits is not regarded as something intrinsic to the situation, but rather as the result of an external, diabolical force.

I want to suggest that these examples anticipate a common structure found, with their own distinct modulations, in Southern segregationist anticomunism. A useful starting point would be the protesters outside the state capitol in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1959, whose message was fairly concise and can thus be unpacked relatively straightforwardly. The protesters bore placards, and American flags. (It is

perhaps symptomatic that one historical account saw these as Confederate flags. Coskey, 2005: 147) The placards said, ‘Race Mixing is Communism’ and pleaded, ‘Stop the Race Mixing March of the Anti-Christ’. Others said ‘Governor Faubus Save Our Christian America’, and ‘We Want Americanization Not Red-ucation’. The protest was organised by, among others, the Capital Citizens’ Council, which distributed a leaflet warning: ‘The Negro’s Ambition – A Mongrel American Race’. Amis Guthridge, a businessman who had previously played a key role in trying to agitate against desegregation in the Delta town of Hoxie, called on “patriotic citizens” to join the protest against “federally dominated tyranny”. (Jacoway, 2008: 343-344)

It would be tempting to rationalise these, perhaps along the following lines: i) segregation is based on distinctly American values, above all Christianity; ii) integration is equality, artificially imposed by the central government, which is inconsistent with American values, particularly its foundational republicanism and ‘states rights’ discourse; iii) by dint of the inter-dependent nature of social hierarchies, an attack on segregation threatens all of the vital hierarchies which define American national life. But this would be, in a sense, the opposite of analysis: it does not follow the text to the letter. The slogans, whatever we may think they ‘mean’, actually *say* ‘Race Mixing is Communism’ and ‘Stop the Race Mixing March of the Anti-Christ’. It is not that ‘race mixing’ might lead to communism. It is not that Christian values might be undermined if communism takes hold. The chain of equivalents is stated very clearly: ‘race mixing’ *is* communism, and *is* the work of ‘the Anti-Christ’. The stars n stripes, in a way, is its own message: it functions here as

the master-signifier, anchoring and overdetermining the discourse. In particular, in this case, it structures the discourse in an hysterical way. While articulating a southern nationalist claim against “federally dominated tyranny”, the protesters make clear that they consider the federal government a fake master, not the real embodiment of America.

With these elements, it is possible to reconstruct the fantasy structuring the kernel of enjoyment in this discourse. ‘Race mixing’, as concretely represented in the integration of Southern schools and the dismantling of segregation, once again can be driven by no legitimate claims. Further, African-Americans are assigned no agency in the process of integration; they may be considered troublesome, or in need of protection from communism (both in some instances, as we shall see), but here they are symptomatically absent. They are deleted. Communism once again occupies the position of antithesis, the worldly form of ‘the Anti-Christ’ which threatens the American nation, and is responsible for all the chaos. For all that it is evil, perverse, it appears here as the only real agent capable of challenging white power, representing as it does something not just racially ambiguous but anti-racial – ‘race mixing’. The fantasy disguised here, is of a stable, perpetual world peace underpinned by white-supremacy, without real challenge, without ever incurring any real antagonisms from within. It stages the desire for limitless domination over black lives, limitless enjoyment and disposal of them, being without boundaries in whiteness. Communism as ‘the Anti-Christ’, the exogenous destabilising element, allows the fantasy to take its own impossibility into account. (Žižek, 2008a: 142)

The hystericalisation of segregationist discourse can be linked to a shift in the structure of the fantasy, perhaps first signalled by ‘The Southern Manifesto’. (Southern Manifesto, 1956) Drafted in early 1956 by the segregationist Senators Strom Thurmond and Richard Russell, the Manifesto – formally dubbed the ‘Declaration of Constitutional Principles’ – declared the position of the Southern political elites as they embarked on the strategy of ‘Massive Resistance’ to the integration of public schools. Fundamentally, the Manifesto contends that far from remedying an injustice, the Supreme Court of the United States, in Brown vs the Board of Education, had substituted “naked power”, “naked judicial power” for “established law”, the “established law of the land”, the established “constitutional doctrine” developed “in the North – not in the South” and “re-stated time and again”. Judges had placed “personal political and social beliefs” before the law, and in so doing had threatened a social peace “heretofore” characterised by “friendship and understanding” “between the white and Negro races”, an amity “created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races”. This was a case of “outside meddlers” and “outside agitators” engaged in “judicial usurpation” and bringing “revolutionary changes” which would create an “explosive and dangerous” situation.

An immediately striking aspect of the Manifesto is that it specifically does not explicitly refer to communism, even though both if its drafters were hardened and skilled anticommunist pugilists, known for their association of civil rights with communism. The suppression of this reference does not, however, mean that the

space which might be occupied by communism disappears. Rather, the authors of the Manifesto make themselves very clear: there would be social peace but for meddlers and agitators who have usurped the place of the law. They recognise no injustice to be remedied, and African Americans are not taken seriously as agents of their own struggle. The entire combustible situation is laid at the feed of the agitators, who in attacking segregation are attacking the foundations of American civilisation. However, the suppression of this reference is perhaps linked to shifting mode in anticommunist discourse. Whereas in the cases of Stoddard and Kennan, the authors situated themselves in a discourse of mastery, the Southern Manifesto adopts the hysterics discourse. Far from putting knowledge to work in order to resolve problems of governance and dominion, they are on the defensive, and master-signifier of the Constitution is put to work in order to expose the master as a fake, as lacking, as usurping the role. They are anxious, too, to demonstrate their fidelity to the *position* of mastery – they occupy it, in fact, claiming to be the true advocates of patriotism even as an anxiety-inducing gap opens up between their fervent southern nationalism and their loyalty to American nationalism. They are thus in the position of levelling hysterical questioning and demands at the most senior legal institution in the land, while also deferring to its office. The careful extrusion of any explicit reference to communism in the Manifesto, even while its place is held open by proxy, could perhaps be explained (away) by noting that anticommunist discourse has often had recourse to the sorts of insinuation made possible by the slippage of signifiers. However, there are two alternative explanations available, for which space ought also be made. First, the moment when the master's discourse slips into that of the hysterics

is an anxious one, and one that a group of powerful Southern politicians may wish to disguise. To explicitly accuse the highest court in the land of being influenced by communism would not be stately or masterful. Second, in the anxiety associated with losing mastery, there need be no automaticity in generating a new single, coherent fantasmatic projection. The ideological elements may take time to find their new structure and determination.

These discursive patterns, the fantasmatic structure they help articulate, and the desire staged therein, will now be explored more thoroughly and open-endedly than hitherto with a concrete example. In the course of my empirical research through the archives, I happened upon the files and correspondence of the Southern Regional Council. Among the extensive records kept were documents pertaining to a campaign by a Georgia-based organisation called HOPE Inc., which sought to oppose the state's Massive Resistance efforts without explicitly aligning with integration. In exploring these documents, I will not be looking to extract a particular theme, viz. race and communism. The point will be to really work through their logic, and see how the ideological field in which they work is structured.

### **An case study: HOPE Inc., the white unconscious and the spectre of communism.**

In 1955, the General Assembly of the state of Georgia, responding to *Brown vs the Board of Education*, voted to withdraw all state funding for any school authority

which embarked on integration. In anticipation of this fight, the Assembly had already passed laws allowing for privatisation, wherein groups of private citizens could open segregated schools with public money. Later, the Assembly legislated that the governor was required to close any school system which integrated its pupils. This, part of a campaign of Massive Resistance, was given a considerable boost in 1948 when gubernatorial candidate Ernest Sandiver won on a promise that “No, not one” black student would enter a white school. (Mertz, 1993) The state’s religious Right added its support to Massive Resistance in January 1959, when evangelical ministers set up the Evangelical Christian Council to stand against desegregation. In March, 53 of its members issued a manifesto denouncing integration as “Satanic, unconstitutional and one of the main objectives of the Communist Party.” (Harmon, 1996: 109)

Nor was the position of the evangelicals marginal: anticomunism offered the state many resources for attacking the civil rights coalition. Georgia was a member of the Southern Association of Investigators, which collected information on perceived agitators. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation modelled its activities in this period on those of Hoover’s FBI, and spent much of its time gathering intelligence on communists – supposed or actual – in the civil rights movement. Its attorney-general, Eugene Cook, who led the state’s legal battle against desegregation, used the anticomunist Floyd Act to persecute civil rights activists as ‘subversives’, and identified the NAACP as “South-hating white people with long records of affinity for, affiliation with, and participation in Communist, Communist-front, fellow-traveling

and subversive activities, organizations and causes". Senator Talmadge of Georgia had, a year after the first *Brown* decision and while still Governor and embarking on his senatorial campaign, published a pamphlet entitled *You and Segregation*, identifying desegregation as a communist conspiracy against states rights. (Woods, 2004: 62-63, 93-94; Harmon, 1996: 84; Roche, 2010: 23; Pratt, 2005) Those opposed to segregation had occasionally appealed to anticommunist discourse themselves, as when the editors of the University of Georgia's undergraduate weekly, *The Red and Black*, declared in 1953 that Governor Talmadge's pro-segregation exhortations would "cause the death of democracy by the hands of its own leaders". "With Communism knocking at the Negro's back door," they suggested, "we cannot afford to let educational segregation barriers stand." Yet the fact that the editors were compelled to resign, rather than enjoying a degree of legitimacy conferred by anticommunist credentials, indicates the sheer inefficacy of such an appeal. (Pratt, 2005: 31; Daily Tar Heel, 1953)

By 1959, the movement and its supporters in the General Assembly were threatening to close down the entire Georgia public school system. This overlapped with a rising tide of civil rights opposition. 1960 saw the first sit-ins, making headlines in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the launching of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. The following year, 'freedom rides' began. In Georgia, the civil rights movement was largely clustered around the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, who moved to Atlanta in 1960, and the NAACP. King's high profile arrest in October 1960, while participating

in a sit-in alongside students, led to a reluctant but ultimately profitable intervention from the Kennedy campaign, freeing King while gaining his endorsement and thus a degree of support from the black electorate that was larger than Kennedy's final margin of victory. (Kuhn, 1997; Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 67-71)

But the threat to public education also began to generate some resistance from professionals, particularly those associated with knowledge-production. In December 1958, an organisation of 160 scientists based at the Communicable Disease Center issued a public plea, "vigorously" opposing "any plans which will result in abolition of the public school system". (Hughes, 1958) Faculty members at Oglethorpe University, a liberal arts college, condemned the "dangerous folly" afoot. (Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 1959) Faculty groups at Emory University, Georgia Tech and Georgia Scott College added their dissent. (Lassiter, 2013: 66) This was not, by and large, articulated as a defence of integration. Rather, the major concern was that the closure of public schools would have grave implications for the development of the state's technological and industrial base.

Such concerns shaped the development of one of the major, 'moderate' white-led opposition movements in the state, Help Our Public Education, or HOPE, Inc. (hereafter HOPE). HOPE was a campaign whose sole aim was to keep the public schools open, in compliance with the law. The campaign drew many of its supporters from the League of Women's Voters, and its inner core comprised both civil rights supporters and 'liberal-minded' segregationists. The organisation cooperated closely

with the Southern Regional Council (SRC), a non-denominational coalition of white Southern liberals opposed to segregation, especially through the biracial Georgia Council for Human Relations set up by the Council in January 1959. But in its own activities it refused to take any explicit position on segregation. In correspondence with newspapers or supporters, or soliciting the aid of businessmen, politicians and opinion leaders, HOPE focused on the practicalities of campaigning, offering only technical and pragmatic reasons to oppose the closure of schools. In a public advertising campaign, it proudly identified itself as the “only rallying point of moderate opinion on the school crisis,” while highlighting the possibility of “drastic economic losses”. It concluded by asking members of the public to take a stand “on the side of law, order, and public schools”. Moreover, and controversially for some of its early supporters, it admitted only white members – a decision which one of its energetic organisers, Harry Boyte, described as a “segregationist line”. The rationale was that the people with the power to change Georgia state policy were white people, and that the aim must be to mobilise a white public with a strong segregationist current. (Lassiter, 2013: 66; HOPE Inc., 1959a; HOPE Inc., 1959b; Mertz, 1993)

The effects of this campaign are difficult to gauge. The Massive Resistance campaign in Georgia was overwhelmingly dominated by the political legislature, rather than – as in other states such as Mississippi and Alabama – driven by the efforts of the middle class ‘grassroots’. As such, it was within their gift when the crisis reached an untenable pitch to embark on a course of adaptation in alliance with local business elites, abandoning *de jure* segregation in favour of *de facto*

segregation. The major policy instrument through which this was achieved was the Sibley Commission, appointed by Governor Vandiver to investigate the schools issue and make recommendations. The Commission heard evidence from a wide range of witnesses, from the NAACP to the Citizens' Council, from business to politicians. Sibley attempted to tilt the balance in favour of his preferred solution of 'token integration' – meaning that it would accept the order of the US District Court judge Frank Hooper that the schools would be desegregated while implementing measures to ensure that in practical terms segregation continued. But when a strong majority persisted in supporting resistance to desegregation, he ignored the balance of witness input and made his own recommendations to the Governor. When the crisis spread into the university system in 1961, Vandiver quickly expedited the implementation of Sibley's recommendations, thus beginning the dismantling of *de jure* segregation. (Roche, 2010; Hornsby, Jr., 1982)

How did HOPE's campaign contribute to this outcome? Given that the threat to public schools presented a crisis which threatened to divide the segregationist bloc in two, it is at least arguable that HOPE's discourse was well crafted to maximise the split and thus help create new opportunities to weaken segregation. Yet the relative timidity and silence of anti-segregation white liberals in this period may also have impeded even the adaptation that was reached, by contributing to a climate in which alternatives to the status quo were unthinkable. (Roche, 2010) It is possible, moreover, that HOPE's legalistic strategy backfired in numerous ways. First, it was difficult to maintain an *omertà* on the most important aspect of the entire struggle.

The campaign presented an argument to the wider public which radiated around a central aporia, a gap, a symptomatic hole in meaning. Suppressing the key issue in order to avoid polarising white opinion left a fissure in the discourse which could only be filled by fantasy. Second, deference to the legal Other, as the subject-supposed-to-know, depends on not acknowledging its constitutively relational, open-ended and contested character. As such, had the Georgia legislature found a way to implement a legal and effective form of segregation with wide public support, they might have been disarmed. As has already been shown, the segregationists can hardly be faulted for inattention to the law, or for failing to argue that their own position was that of “the law of the land,” the Constitution. Arguing on the same ground was always a potential hostage to fortune. Third, and as will become apparent, this legalism was racially freighted in ways that the campaigners might not have wished.

The focus in the ensuing analyses will not be on whether HOPE’s strategy was ultimately vindicated or reproved by history, but on the effects of its discourse, which can be seen in its publicity, its letters of appeal, and in the responses from a range of figures in business and politics.

#### *The law and the white unconscious of liberal anti-racists.*

The strategy of HOPE was to defer to the law. No matter what one thought of segregation, “law” and “order” were non-negotiable tenets of American politics, and the Supreme Court had decided. The only remaining issue was to ensure that everyone was informed of the facts – however much they be liked or disliked – and

given the means to comply with the law. As such, their discourse oscillated between one of outright mastery-by-proxy (in the form of appeals to unquestionable precepts), and one of covert mastery (in the form of university discourse, wherein knowledge occupies the position of mastery). Here was a looming problem of governance, something which threatened the smooth functioning of the system, and the task was to put knowledge to work in providing solutions. As a HOPE activist put it to a correspondent, they would “not enter into the controversy of segregation vs. integration”. They would only say that if ensuring “public schools operating legally” meant “desegregation in some placers” then it should be accepted. (Pauley, 1959) The chairman, in a letter to the *Atlanta Journal*, likewise disdained to engage in an “emotional reaction” to *Brown vs the Board of Education*, opining instead that the constitutionality of “separate but equal” schools had been settled, would not “go away”, and that the only remaining choice was between public schools and segregation. (Boyte, 1959) Many of those they corresponded with appeared to share this broad emphasis. Representative Ralph McClelland of Fulton County wrote to HOPE stating his agreement with the campaign’s goal, arguing that anyone “who has made any study at all, or has even casually followed the report of developments in the newspapers, knows what the law now is (as much as we may dislike it)”. (McClelland, 1959)

Loretta Chappell, an activist from the United Liberal Church working with HOPE, expressed some of the strategic rationale for refusing a position on segregation and simply urging compliance with the law. The “overwhelming majority” of “the Atlanta

community” and “our state” comprised “the group between” integrationists and “die-hard segregationists”. The involvement of “too many liberals may actually retard the movement,” whereas those who advocated reluctant, even pained acquiescence with the law might “have more weight, with the majority of Georgians”. (Chappell, 1959) It is an open question whether “the overwhelming majority of Georgians” inhabiting the perceived middle ground in this view included only white Georgians, since the 1960 US census recorded that 28% of the state’s residents were African American (Bureau of the Census, 1961). There is at least some evidence that the middle ground targeted by HOPE campaigning may have been engaged on the basis of their presumed racial identifications. For example, a letter sent to each local president of United Church Women in February 1959, points out that the public school system had enrolled 892,460 children in 1955, of whom “609,138 are white and 283,322 are colored. With wholesale closing of public schools, which race would suffer the most?” (Southern Regional Council, 1959)

In fact this letter, which appears early in the campaign, is not characteristic. In most cases, HOPE’s appeals, as well as its interactions with its supporters, make no mention whatsoever of race, even where its practical recommendations are centrally about race. For example, when the Legislative Committee set up by HOPE with the aim of lobbying the Georgia legislature wrote to state representatives for support, it suggested that the “alternative” to privatising the school system was “to accept such minimum desegregation of schools as the Federal Courts may require”. (Turvey, 1959) This would be compatible in principle with what was called ‘token

integration', or with the policy of pragmatic 'restructured' segregation that the state eventually undertook. But race was not mentioned. Its presence as a structuring relationship in the text was silenced. The fact that race appears as an absence in HOPE's discourse, a relationship which is repressed but which nonetheless structures the discourse allows us to see it as *the unconscious of the text*.

How does the white unconscious of the text position them in a fantasmatic structure? Symbolically, as white middle class liberals writing to white state personnel, they position themselves as pragmatic collaborators in the resolution of a policy problem. Having excluded black people from their organisation, black agency appears nowhere in their discourse. Indeed, they represent themselves as being an embattled – but enlightened – minority attempting to manipulate and nudge a truculent white majority. It is possible that they regarded themselves, by such means, as creating opportunities for more radical forces, but this is not what appears in their discourse. The animating prospect toward which all their efforts are geared is for a "reasonable compromise" for the benefit of all, based on good information. As such the jouissance in their discourse appears to be invested in the almost Fabian fantasy of the benevolent administration of gradual, consensual reform by an educated, professional white caste. The unconscious desire which this fantasy stages, albeit with some disguise, is a different kind of enjoyment without limits; the right of the intelligent, educated white to rule without boundaries.

### *The hystericalisation of segregationists*

The effects of this approach can partially be appreciated by scrutinising the correspondence that the organisation received in reply to an appeal (HOPE, 1959b) issued by the campaign, asking for statements of support and funding, as well as some related documents.

Notably, only one of the correspondents who agreed with HOPE mentioned anything about race. This was a letter from Representative McClelland (1959) who referred obliquely to “what the law now is (as much as we may dislike it)”, described the obstacle posed by the state’s “segregation laws”, and quoted the provision for “[s]eparate schools” for the “white and colored races”. Other correspondents concerned themselves with practicalities, and general statements of approval of HOPE’s mission. (Smith, 1959; Mackay, 1960) In one case (Lokey, 1959), a HOPE supporter wrote to assure a friend that the campaign was run by “decent, high type folks” who merely brought “the true facts” to light, and showed that “the destruction of the public school system” was “no answer” – though he did not say, to what question. Perhaps the most elaborate and passionate support for HOPE was offered by C D Carley of Carley Trailer & Equipment Company. (Carley, 1959) Carley’s express concern was about class, not race: the poorest would be “the ones to suffer the most” from privatization, and their ongoing poverty would reinforce the region’s historical impoverishment linked to a period when it was, he said, “practically in economic bondage to the banking centres of other sections of the country”. Aside

from Carley, the correspondents who wrote to support HOPE mirrored its discourse of mastery/knowledge, treating the matter as a practical one involving hard facts which had to be accommodated. Their rhetorical strategies matched and compounded the tactical conservatism of the campaign. Where the hard facts of state level politics could be said to pose an obstacle to progress, they were encouraged (McClelland, 1959) to defer to them.

The correspondents who declined to support HOPE reacted quite differently. Far from cautious, their speech was powerfully affected, marked by vivid disturbances and inconsistencies. Jack Crowder of the shirt-makers Cluett, Peabody & Co, Inc., was the first to reply to HOPE, declining to extend his support to the campaign. The logic of this refusal is troubling in its ambiguity. In the letter, Crowder explains that he is “not an integrationist” and “would much prefer to see our schools open on a segregated basis”. However, he contends that integration is probably unavoidable, and notes that a private schools system is only viable for a minority, not for “the multitude”. Neither “private schools” nor “token integration” can be “the answer”. Integration will happen “within the next five years”, being forestalled by “a year, or maybe two” with some resistance. “Therefore,” he concludes, “in view of my feelings expressed above, I do not feel I can contribute to the support of Hope, Inc., because I do not feel this is the answer.” (Crowder, 1959)

In principle, Crowder’s position was fully compatible with the aims of HOPE, and the logic of his rejection represents something of a puzzle. In the letter to which

Crowder was responding, the campaign had not mentioned integration at all, and instead focused narrowly on “the object of maintaining the system of public education”. (HOPE Inc., 1959b) The phrase “the answer” from Crowder’s final sentence turning down the appeal, seems to echo his earlier statement that the main alternatives to a fully integrated public schools system were not “the answer”. This appears to make his conclusion a non-sequitur, and suggests that there is a cut somewhere in the text, where one layer of meaning gives way to another. That is to say, there appears to be more than one thought structuring his reply. There is no way to parse from the letter precisely what this is. The “this” which is not “the answer” in view of Crowder’s express feelings could be any of the following possibilities which he has listed: i.) integration, which is inevitable but which he disapproves of; ii.) “private schools”, which are unworkable; iii.) “token integration”, which also cannot work. That is, either he takes HOPE to be a covertly integrationist organisation, or he has inverted its position and taken it as a Massive Resistance organisation, or he thinks it is invested in an unworkable ‘token integration’ tactic. Or alternatively, if we cut the ribbon of text in a different way, it could simply be that “this” letter is not “the answer” which HOPE was looking for. Rather than trying to work out what Crowder really ‘meant’, it might be more useful to note the overdetermination of the terms “this” and “the answer”: Crowder leaves them undecided. And this allows us to make some space for all of these conflicting thoughts making a claim on his text. The fact that Crowder does not decide on a particular meaning is significant in itself, and indicates some possible confusion and ambivalence about what HOPE is trying to achieve.

Whatever Crowder's suppositions, at least some of the campaign's targets for appeal appear to have been unsure of, and suspicious about, the purposes of HOPE. This is supported in the reply from K E Edwards Jr., president of the Georgia Arts Supply Company. (Edwards, Jr., 1959) Edwards begins by referring to the letter from HOPE, dated 20<sup>th</sup> February, "in which you state that if you do not hear from me that you will presume that I approve of your organization's aim and yet I do not find in this letter of yours where your aims are stated". The letter had in fact said, "we will assume, if we do not hear from you, that you *do not* approve of the organization's aims". [Emphases added] (HOPE Inc., 1959b)

Edwards carries out two deletions, which have the effect of positioning him as a subject relative to his correspondent. By re-stating HOPE's message, he attributes to it a form of *aggressivity*, an intent to violate him by involuntarily drafting him into their cause. This aspect of his discourse is situated on the imaginary axis and clearly constitutes a form of projection. He also reduces the number of their aims to one, only for the plural form to reappear as a query later in the sentence. The slippage here takes place on the symbolic axis. How this is so can be seen in the ensuing passages. Edwards identifies one 'aim' that he gathers from their text ("you are in favor of not destroying public education in Georgia") before specifying the absence where further 'aims' should be elaborated ("you do not state how far you would go in protecting public education"). Edwards goes on to express surprise that the organisation does not state its aims in the letter: "Why don't you, in a letter of this type, outline your

exact aims?” This challenge is, as we have seen, not entirely without foundation. However, the deletion and then restoration of the plural form of ‘aims’ is linked to an accusation which has been repressed and returned in reversed form – whereas Edwards states that HOPE accuses him of agreeing with their aims, his text accuses them not just of having unspoken aims, but of having *unspeakable aims*, which he could not possibly agree with. This positions Edwards in the discourse of the hysterical, demanding that the master produce knowledge about itself, in order to expose its own lack. In effect, he poses the classic hysterical question: ‘yes, you are saying all this, but what is it you really want?’

Edwards then speculates as to the nature of this lack, the unspoken and implicitly unspeakable aims, by warning of what he sees as the danger of integration. In a state where “40% of our population is Negro … we can certainly look forward to the amalgamation of our races if they are mixed in our schools. … [A]ll we have to do is look at Cuba, Puerto Rico and other Central and Southern American countries and we can easily see just exactly what will happen to our races if we mix them”. These references – “Cuba”, “Puerto Rico”, “Central and Southern American countries” – are not given further elaboration. It is assumed that these signifiers belong to a shared symbolic order, a shared racial knowledge. The Other is ‘supposed to know’. The entire discourse being structured around the question of knowledge, and more specifically the gaps in Edwards’s knowledge, he relies on the Other to supplement his own lack, the better to continue to expose the lack in the master. The genre of speech which Edwards appeals to can be named as ‘history’. Having some access to

this, it is possible to be lured into supposing that we know what he really meant to say. Again, however, it is necessary to resist the urge to decide what Edwards may have ‘meant’. Rather, the invocation of this shared racial knowledge advert to something significant in itself: without explicitly addressing it, it alludes to the race relation structuring the correspondence. For this is knowledge which is supposed to be shared by white people: and that appears to be part of the cause of his anxiety. His question, as to how “anyone with intelligence” can favour integration given their shared understanding, could be re-stated: ‘how can any white person want this?’

Other correspondence struck a similar note. In June 1959, Representative Talmadge B Echols of Upson County replied to a letter received from Frank B Roberts, the chairman of the local Kiwanis Club. (Echols, 1959) Roberts had drawn attention to a speech made by the superintendent of Dekalb County school system opposing the closure of public schools. Echols remarks in his letter that “a large segment of our good people of Georgia” are being “brain-washed” by “out-of-state forces” such as “your metropolitan newspapers”, the NAACP “and their fellow conspirators”, the Ford Foundation, “and the leftist influence in my own Methodist Church”. Why, Echols wonders, don’t correspondents such as Roberts direct their fire at those instigators, rather than at the Georgia State Assembly? Echols, like Edwards, zeroes in on the ambiguities and hesitations in the discourse of those defending public schools. Is the superintendent for “equal and separate schools” or for public education “over any other consideration”. “In other words, is he for mixing the races in our schools or not?” More to the point, “are you for mixing races in our school, which

will lead to the eventual mongrelization of the races?" "I'm not willing," he adds, "for my children and the younger white children of my State to be forced to be associated with a people whose moral standards permit about a third of their children to be born of illegitimate physical unions." Invoking "conditions worse than death", he uses a martial language, urging Georgians who may feel "up against a stone wall" to "stand fast before the onslaught".

In a further correspondence, Echols replies to a letter addressed by the campaign's Legislative Committee to members of the legislature appealing for support and assistance in forming a platform supporting the continuation of public schools on the basis of a "reasonable compromise". This compromise, as noted above, was to involve the minimum necessary compliance expected by the Federal courts. (Turvey, 1959; Echols, 1959b) Echols once again adopts a hysterical subject-position, swerving between accusations, ("you want capitulation", "If you are looking for Quislings look in your own back yard"), exhortations to defend segregation, ("On this question of integration of the races in our schools there are only two sides – for or against." "Let's you and I and other well-meaning Georgians join ranks, stiffen our spines and fight the good fight for the preservation of our rights"), and demands for information, ("I would like you to answer a question for me either yes or no. Are you in favor of mixing children of the white and colored races in our public schools?"). Once again, he also attempts to anticipate and repudiate HOPE's possible answers to his questions, invoking both the letter of the law ("the way the English language reads" as against the way the Supreme Court has "misinterpreted it"), and the norm it

is supposed to product (the “freedom to choose our associates”, “earnestly to be desired by negro and white alike”). Finally, he expresses some disavowed schadenfreude in the “racial tension, strife and struggle” affecting some states which were “supposed to have reached Utopia in their race relations”. “I deplore the strife,” Echols insists, having already depicted it as a possible asset in the struggle against desegregation, but suggests it is the “inevitable harvest” of “unnatural race relations”.

At several points, Echols’s discourse presents a puzzle. It is formatted, in many respects, like that of the other instances of Southern segregationist anticomunist discourse mentioned before. As in previous instances, there is no acknowledgment of any real antagonism indigenous to the Southern racial formation which could be propelling the drive to integration. Everything is the work of “outside agitators” “conspirators”, “leftist influence” and “brainwashing”. As in previous instances, integration constitutes moral and civilisational decline – “a fate worse than death” – which can only be the work of the mad or wicked. And yet, despite the obvious manicheanism (“there are only two sides”), and despite his complaints about leftist conspiracy, he is strikingly unable to decide upon a single scapegoat. One is struck by the proliferation of enemies, not their resolution into a single diabolical figure. Further, his vatic statements looking forward to sacrifice, anticipating with relish the spread of “racial tension, strife and struggle” in other parts of the country, his highly affected exhortations to stand firm, indicate that far from simply wanting to thwart the challenge to white-supremacy, he has found a way to take satisfaction in the prospect of a “fate worse than death”.

This signals a mutation in the fantasmatic structure, and a shift in the locus of jouissance. The fantasy is no longer straightforwardly that of a peaceable racial hierarchy loved by “negro and white alike”, intruded upon by an alien, subversive force that will not fit within the racial hierarchy. Rather, it is a fantasy of *reckoning*: of race revenge, and punishment. The language invoking a state of siege, also hopes for the provocation of whites into a martial footing. It looks forward to the moment when whites across the nation will be convinced of the need to return fire on restive black citizens and their fellow “conspirators”, and forcibly restore the old hierarchy. The staid politics of ‘reasonable compromise’ advocated by HOPE, even where this compromise gave segregationists considerable room for manoeuvre, may have had little hope against the thrilling jouissance that such a prospect offered. The question tacitly posed by Echols, however, was on which side HOPE would find itself on the day of reckoning.

HOPE’s discourse thus, curiously, had the most profound and overdetermined effects on its opponents. It made waves, but far less among its sympathisers than among those who rejected it. It provoked anger, suspicion, grief, bafflement, anxious questioning and belligerence. It placed them on the defensive. The isolation of the issue of public schools as a matter of urgent action, as a commercial and developmental interest of the state, threatened to close down the only concrete option thus far availing in the resistance to desegregation, thus suggesting that the fight to defend segregation was already a lost cause. Echols’s accusation was in this sense

well-founded: HOPE had calmly suggested to segregationists that, short of economic ruin, capitulation was the only sensible answer. And within two years, most of Echols's fellow representatives had taken the point.

### *Conclusion*

In analysing these materials, I have not tried to confirm previously outlined patterns by rediscovering them here, although I have assuredly found some of them. Nor have I tried, in the first instance, to 'make sense' of the materials. My emphasis has been on reading for non-sense, absences, non-sequiturs, deletions and slips, and then interpreting them in light of the conceptual apparatus unfurled earlier in the essay. I have tried to make space for contradiction, for the inhabitation of one statement by many thoughts and desires. It would be foolish to deny that the knowledge I already bring to bear and am invested in – historical knowledge, theoretical perspectives, even a certain political and moral knowledge – will have influenced my interpretations. In particular, it was difficult not to judge HOPE's discourse in light of what I know of subsequent events, and in view of my own political and strategic dispositions. However, consistent with the Lacanian approach I have adopted from the outset, I have tried to keep as far as possible to the letter of the texts, to take the authors at their word, and to use the ambiguities and gaps discovered therein, as well as the possibilities opened up by the formal properties of the texts, as allies against my existing 'understanding'. Insofar as I have succeeded in this, what has been the product?

I did not encounter a direct reference to communism in the pro-segregationist discourse analysed, but this fact alone signalled something important. It was not difficult to locate the fantasmatic space, where the signifier ‘communism’ might appear. The fact that ‘communism’ did not fill that space, and yet it still existed and was occupied by other signifiers, drew my attention back to the conditions for the emergence of racist anticomunism. Previously in the chapter, I have argued that the signifier ‘communism’ functions in white-supremacist fantasy much like that of ‘Jew’, in that it names a symptomal knot which stands for the impossibility of that fantasy. It is a symbolically overdetermined projection of the dysfunctions and antagonisms internal to white-supremacy

I also noted that one of the ways in which ‘Jew’ and ‘communism’ were structurally similar was in their ambiguous position in the racial hierarchy, being somehow neither white nor fully black; at best, a thwarted white; being neither fully a master nor a slave, but perhaps a perverse, rebellious or fake master. This *racial ambiguation*, in the hystericalised discourse of the segregationists discussed here, is what gives rise to the anxiety around which racist anticomunism might (but does not necessarily) crystallise. The questions, accusations and exhortations provoked by HOPE’s letters bespeak the traumatising realisation that if some white people are behaving like ‘Quislings’, demanding ‘capitulation’, or even ‘agitating’ and ‘meddling’ against white rule, then whiteness contains no guarantees, its dominance is historically contingent, and the fantasy that coheres it is impossible.

Finally, having not set out to do more than work out whether there was a possibly generalisable structure of relations between anticommmunist and white-supremacist discourse, I found it necessary to isolate in concrete situations distinct modalities of white-supremacist fantasy. I have suggested that these are related as *phases* of the same fantasmatic structure. In the fantasies organising the discourses of Stoddard and Kennan, there was an important distinction. Stoddard's white-supremacist fantasy was explicitly dominative and biologically determinist. Kennan's was historicist, culturalist and its commitment to racist domination was more tacit. In the correspondence discussed above, we see segregation justified on aversive rather than explicitly dominative principles. (This distinction is coined in Kovel, 1988). These could loosely be treated as approximations in type, which might be found to be at the core of specific racial projects (Omi & Winant, 1994): schematically, one might refer in this context to the global-supremacist project, the conservative-segregationist project, and the 'colour-blind' liberal-reformist project. However, Echols's discourse suggests that there are other ways in which the fantasy structure can be modulated. For here we saw that, insofar as the anxiety induced by the exposed lack in whiteness is not offset by means of a coherent projection which screens off the lack, another compensating fantasy can appear. Jouissance in this way can be obtained through the fantasy of restoration and punishment visited by an aroused and newly unified white population, thus proving once again the limitless mastery of whites and extirpating the lack in whiteness with a blood sacrifice. This, of course, requires the prospect of annihilation as one of its conditions. Such jouissance presents one of the psychic

sources of segregationist absolutism, in which the smallest concession is an unnecessary loss of the principle, the thin end of the wedge and, more importantly, a deviation from the strategy of bringing matters to a head and forcing a choice.

This suggests that, methodologically, the phases and variations of white-supremacist fantasy must ultimately be referred back to the balance of the Other. For what we are speaking of here is not just a transformation wrought by the precipitation of a new political superego in a new symbolic context, but also the accretion of new symbolic configurations in the unconscious.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Social Movements I: Massive Resistance, Countersubversion and Parapolitics.**

*This chapter considers Massive Resistance as a social movement in defence of white-supremacy, organised by anticomunism. Thus far, the main type of agency I have focused on is the state. However, this is just one element of the anticomunist network, particularly in the South where a panoply of civil society groups, parties, churches and paramilitaries implemented anticomunist ideologies in their struggle against the civil rights movement. And given the ontology of the state discussed in Chapters Four and Five, in which political power emerges as a condensation of the balance of social forces, there is a need to give some account of the forces which struggle.*

*I will first of all develop an original framework for interpreting social movements, in engagement with extant social movement theory, which is capable of accounting for some of the specific dimensions of right-wing social movements. I focus on three types of action: first, perhaps surprisingly, the role of Southern states as an essential element in the social movement; second, the role of civic activism of a type embodied by the White Citizens' Councils; and third, the role of what I call 'parapolitical' action, characteristic of the Klans. In dealing with the Klans, I offer some rudiments*

*toward a theory of the parapolitical. Finally, I conclude with a detailed case study, that of Little Rock in 1957, where I apply the principles of analysis which I have developed. Throughout the chapter, I will aim to demonstrate the specific role of anticommunism in cohering the right-wing social movement, structuring the use of repressive practices within it (not just by state actors, but particularly by civic and parapolitical actors), and in shifting the balance of social forces in such a way as to hold back the advance of the civil rights movement.*

## **Social Movements: An Alternative Framework**

Whereas traditionally, ‘Massive Resistance’ had been constructed as a univocal and doomed chorus of reactionaries out to resist the inevitable, a growing body of literature is dedicated to taking it seriously as a social movement. Lewis (2006: 8) compares the movement to “the multi-headed Hydra that had once faced Hercules”, for it “developed a wide array of ploys, tactics, mechanisms, and arguments in defense of the southern status quo”. Far from being monotonously single-minded and strategically moribund, it constituted a complex unity-in-difference, aligning agents from diverse classes, social groups, and political identities, with a range of sometimes contradictory tactics and strategies, in defence of the status quo. It was, in short, *a conservative social movement*. (See Chapter One for a critical discussion of this problem.)

### *Relations, reproduction and struggle*

One might thus say that any theory of social movements presupposes an epistemology, whose premises must be stated explicitly in order to avert the reification of the empirical. In this research, I have taken a Gramscian problematic as my starting point and orientation, while also drawing on Poulantzas and Althusser. I have stressed that its concepts are strategic in orientation, and cannot be extricated from the political project of socialism without doing some epistemological damage. By the same token, precisely because they are the product of a particular project, and a particular set of theoretical and political conjunctures, they at best provide only flexible starting points for interpreting situations. Here, I will state some premises and then elaborate on how they might be relevant to the analysis of social movements.

First, the most basic social unit is not the individual, which is merely a politico-juridical effect, but the *relation*. Relations can be categorised for convenience as economic, political or ideological, even though they usually exceed these classifications. (A romantic relationship, for example, might operate on all three dimensions, and yet not be adequately characterised by them.) The political, ideological, symbolic or cultural practices have their own determining, formative efficacy, which is not epiphenomenal to or purely derivative of economic practices. Second, these relations are organised in a particular *mode of (re)production*, which assigns a dominant or subjugated social position the bearers of these relations. Third, consequently, the dominant relations in a given mode of (re)production are

antagonistic and potentially conflictual, leaving the social field cross-sected by *struggles* – the entire matrix of social practices is overdetermined by struggle. Fourth, the mode of (re)production is never fully ‘realised’. Relations form a complex, open and generative structure-in-difference or *social formation* (not a ‘totality’<sup>18</sup>), in which not only the aspects of the structure but also its subjects are each *overdetermined* and assigned particular meanings and effects by their situation in relation to the structure. One thinks here of a simple example, how the name of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the “most simple-minded man in France” once “acquired the most multifarious significance” for the French social formation. (Marx, 2000: 321) The social formation, in a given *conjuncture*, is the terrain of action of social forces. Fifth, for relations to persist, they must be reproduced, and thus the manner of their *reproduction*, and the *productive forces* available to sustain their reproduction, is decisive in assigning the properties and capacities to the agents who are the subjects (or ‘bearers’) of relations.

The centring of reproduction is arguably the critical démarche of this historical materialist approach (Therborn, 2008: 138). Reproduction theory indicates something about the nature of power which Schwartz phrases as follows: “*Any system contains within itself the possibility of a power strong enough to alter it*”. (Quoted in McAdam, 1982: 37. Emphasis in original.) And the concepts with which I have attempted to organise the exposition of this topic thus far – hegemony, relations of

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<sup>18</sup> Poulantzas, in his earlier works, had recourse to the language of totality at times. However, I take the view that this was language borrowed, initially by Althusser, from another problematic and as such is not useful to the Poulantzin optic. On the complex althusserian legacy regarding ‘structure’ and ‘totality’, see Montag, 2013: 15-20

force, systems of alliances, historical blocs, and so on – define moments in a process of reproduction-through-struggle. This is a *processual* perspective, and as such it can help avoid the reification of the category, ‘social movement’. With these premises in mind, I propose to apply the following guidelines for the interpretation of social movements:

i) A condition for the emergence of a social movement is that the reproduction of a social relationship has been put into question. This already implies something more fundamental than opposition to a particular policy, for instance, even though the relationship in question is often embodied in that policy. Thus, a social movement will be concerned with the conservation, disruption, reform, abolition or expanded reproduction of a set of social relations. This provides a first typological principle, insofar as we will be able to speak broadly of reactionary, conservative, reformist and revolutionary movements. However, there is no reason to assume that the precise political character of a movement is ever fully decidable, since that would depend upon the nature of the conflict being fully transparent, for which there is no evidence, and upon the constituents of the movement being homogenous in their interests and purview, something I will shortly rule out. The question of political *representation*, in its various senses, is already implied by this condition.

ii) A second condition for the emergence of a social movement is the coming into conflict of (members of) social groups who are in an antagonistic social relationship with one another. This offers a second typological principle, insofar as we can speak of those movements instigated and led by dominant groups (“social movements from

above”), those instigated and led by subaltern groups (“social movements from below”) (Nilsen & Cox, 2013) To these, we can add those which somehow occupy a contradictory or middling location between both categories (for want of a better term, “social movements from in-between”). However, these are only broadly drawn tendencies. In practice, it is not always possible to identify a single leadership or assign a determinate social character to a movement.

iii) A third condition is that, since social movements necessarily contain a *politicality* which consists precisely in its attempt to transform a social relationship involving the subjugation of one or more elements of a social formation (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001: 163), they must have a reference to political power. Offe (1985) argues that a crucial distinction between radical and conservative social movements is that radicals aim at contesting the civil society bases of political authority, whereas conservative movements seek to restore the “uncontested and noncontingent premises (both structural and evaluative) of politics”. This way of putting the point is still too invested in the state-civil society schema which Offe explicitly repudiates, and rests upon a liberal problematic in which the state constitutes the alienation of humanity’s rights and powers. (Poulantzas, 1973: 124-5) Social movements may or may not include action in the terrain of the state institutions, and the differential access of classes and social groups to the state provides varying opportunities for mobilisation (what is sometimes referred to as the ‘political-opportunity structure’, see Tarrow, 1998) and contrasting repertoires of contention. The fact that there are profound differences in the relationship between state power and social movements of the right,

and the left, underpins an essential explanatory element of this chapter, viz. the ‘parapolitical’.

iv) A fourth condition is that the participants extend beyond those directly involved in the antagonistic relationship. The overdetermination of each aspect of a social formation by the organisation of its structure means that the attempt to transform, conserve or extend a social relationship has effects beyond that specific relation. Concretely, one often finds that hierarchies and forms of domination are interdependent and mutually sustaining. At the same time, not every subject of a given relation necessarily responds in the same way. In Gramscian terms, popular ‘consciousness’ is a ‘contradictory’ formation consisting of the traces of experience articulated with the elements of various kinds of ‘common sense’. Hence the social movement is necessarily a ‘system of alliances’. This poses the problem of identifications and ‘chains of equivalence’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001) wherein differently situated agents are induced to join one side of the conflict. This process cannot be reduced to an identity of the *interests* which are computable within a field of practices in a given conjuncture (Poulantzas, 1978: 112); rather, since social relations have a necessarily *ideological* (symbolic or cultural) dimension, there must be a structure of meaning in which interests and identities can be apprehended. This, in social movement theory, is sometimes understood as ‘framing,’ in which social-structural processes are interpreted through a particular set of discursive coordinates. Such an approach can be useful provided it is understood that the meanings which help form social movement action often exceed the specific *politicality* of the movement; indeed, social movements as such ‘exceed the political’ (Poulantzas,

1979) insofar as they involve networks, forms of organisation, modes of sociality, cultural forms and significations that go beyond their political remit, engaging participants in a richly complex, organised ‘way of life,’ or several overlapping ways of life. These meanings and distinctive identities can anchor their political claims, but are deemed to be of value in themselves. Here, one thinks of the churches, clubs, unions, women’s groups and fraternal organisations whose identities often form part of the fabric of social movements.

v) A fifth condition is that social capacities arising from the social relations whose reproduction is in question, are activated in social conflict. These can take the form of *class capacities*.<sup>19</sup> However, class capacities – however important in the reproduction of social relations in any class society – are not the only social capacities that can be brought to bear. Nor are they distributed evenly throughout classes. Rather, class capacities can be concentrated within specific social milieux and networks (Touraine, 1971), in particular industrial organisations, and so on. Their endowment can also be affected by the modality in which class is experienced, be it racial, or national, or gendered. This is why it is helpful to refer to a broader category, “*disruptive capacity*,” wherein the contribution that agents make to the reproduction of a social formation can be withdrawn, and obstruction put in its place. (Piven & Cloward, 1988; Piven, 2006: 19-54) Given the disparate appearance of these capacities, and their relationship to the formation of identities and ways of life, the specific

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<sup>19</sup> Therborn (1983) argues that in the capitalist mode of production, these strengths can be comprehended roughly as follows: the bourgeoisie enjoys “market-expanding capacity” – its strategic ability to assert power through “incessant capital accumulation” – as its most significant strength; the petty bourgeoisie’s key source of power is its relative autonomy from other social classes, being dependent neither on employers nor employees; and the working class derives its major strength through its collectivity, as its agents are related to one another through “increasingly cooperative processes of work”.

organisation of these capacities will often entail not a unity of effort, but a division of labour, both political and organisational, loosely corresponding to distinct understandings, interests, capacities and strategies. Here, I would point out that the organisational question, which is foregrounded in resource-mobilisation theories, is in this account secondary to the political and ideological aspect of coalition forming.

vi) A final condition is that these social capacities can be convoked in particular spatial situations in which economic, political and ideological relations are concentrated. There is necessarily a *territoriality* to the action of social movements. As Castells (1977, 1983) has shown, the segmentation of social and political space (districts, counties, cities, towns; the urban, suburban and rural) constitutes a way of organising production relations, consumption patterns, sociality, social reproduction and the antagonisms which structure all of these relations and practices. Insofar as social movements arise from these relations, they arise within territorial matrices which structure their options and their chances. This is of particular importance when we consider movements on behalf of, and against, Jim Crow, a mode of power distinguished by its use of the ‘internal frontier’ and its careful mapping of race to place.

This chapter thus proceeds from the argument that Massive Resistance was a right-wing social movement, ‘from above’ to the extent that it was white, and ‘from in-between’ to the extent that it organised a diverse array of class actors from Senators to mechanics under the leadership of middle class notables. Like other right-wing movements among relatively well-to-do populations (McVeigh, 2009: 197),

Massive Resistance is a response to the threat of downward social mobility and a loss of privilege. As a movement summoned into existence by Civil Rights, this means that its opportunities for organisation were powerfully pre-structured by the extant activities of civil rights activists. Its particular strategy with regard to political power can be characterised, in Gramscian terms, as ‘countertransformist’<sup>20</sup>, in that it mimicked the practices of transformism in order to subvert it; constructing a coalition that bisects traditional class, party and ideological alignments in order to assail a power bloc in crisis and re-polarise first local and then national politics. Massive Resistance involved “dense networks” of actors ranging from individuals to clubs, churches, unions, and parties, with a distinct identity or family of identities, from Christianity to ‘Klankraft’. In geoeconomic terms, whereas Civil Rights was a movement of the working class and professional African Americans in the cities, Massive Resistance was predominantly a movement of planters, farmers and middle class notables based in suburban and rural settings – particularly the Black Belt and Delta regions of the South. Finally, in its orientation toward state power, Massive Resistance spanned a broad range of practices from the public to the private, from the licit to the illicit, from the consensual to the violent. It necessarily depended upon a

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<sup>20</sup> Gramsci's historical commentaries on transformism suggest that it was related to processes of 'passive revolution'. (Gramsci, 1971) Passive revolution incorporated two types of historical change. The first was the general type of capitalist transition effected without Jacobin-style frontal insurrections against the feudal state. The second was any major transformation within the capitalist mode of production, wherein the relations of production and domination are modified to help overcome otherwise potentially deadly obstacles to further accumulation. These changes, though progressive from the point of view of rationalising and developing the productive forces, were conservative-adaptive from a political point of view, often led by reactionary forces, and generally involved as much emphasis on coercion as the development of a new 'common sense'. This latter usage made passive revolution a tendency immanent to capitalist modernity as such. (Thomas, 2006) The related political strategy of 'transformism' is generally understood as a politics of the centre, wherein popular discontents of left and right are appropriated and incorporated into the capitalist middle-ground, their oppositional content neutralised.

*'parapolitical'* dimension in the pursuit of its objectives, a dimension that is inscribed in the history of counter-subversive practices.

The task in this chapter is to situate anticomunism as a possible element in the formation, cohesion and/or breakdown of Massive Resistance. These are the theoretical principles I will bring to bear in trying to isolate just that, first in a general anatomy of the movement wherein I will draw some general conclusions about the position of anticomunism as an organising principle, and then in a detailed examination of the movement in the seemingly 'moderate' city of Little Rock.

### **The anatomy of Massive Resistance**

The fact that a mass movement cohered around opposition to civil rights as a result of *Brown vs the Board of Education*, is not something that can be taken for granted. It was not immediately clear how unanimous the white South would be in its response to the measure. The cohesion of a powerful, reactionary movement to catalyse a broad shift to the right to protect racial segregation was prompted in the first instance not just by court decisions but, crucially, by African American activism, from bus boycotts in Tallahassee, FL and Montgomery, AL, to school board petitions. (Lewis, 2000: 44) It was the product of a multi-tiered effort by diverse, interdependent constituencies, drawing on the materials left by previous white-supremacist campaigns, from the first Klan to the post-war Dixiecrat insurgency, and those supplied by the apparatuses and ideologies of anticomunism.

It would be a mistake, and contrary to the arguments outlined already, to write as if Massive Resistance was “a single homogeneous movement”. (Lewis, 2006: 185) Such homogeneity is in principle impossible: we are dealing here with something more like an *assemblage* of heterogeneous elements, processes and objects (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Yet insofar as the different factions, milieux and power networks constituting this movement shared an over-riding strategic goal, it was first to intimidate African Americans into retreat, and second to present a Southern ‘united front’ in order to convince the majority of Americans, particularly powerful whites in the political and legal system who supported integration, that the South would never yield an inch on the subject. As Klarman, (2004: 409) puts it:

“If given a choice, portions of many southern states—northwestern Arkansas, West Texas, northern and western Virginia, eastern Tennessee, the city of Atlanta—were prepared to comply with Brown. But massive resisters in state government were determined to eliminate that choice for fear that any deviation from universal segregation would make integration appear inevitable, embolden the NAACP, and undermine the campaign to convince northern integrationists that the South would never tolerate Brown.”

This approach exploited a hesitation evident in the Supreme Court’s second decision in Brown which, by stressing ‘deliberate speed’, prioritised the scale of white resistance as opposed to the harm done by segregation in determining the speed

and scope of change (Roediger, 2008: 188). The implementation of this strategic perspective necessitated the deployment of a range of techniques, from legislative efforts to what Tilly called ‘WUNC displays’<sup>21</sup>, from moral and ideological appeals to intimidation, economic sabotage, violence and repression. An emergent division of labour allowed the different aspects of this effort to be pursued without maximising the conflict between ‘respectable’ and ‘extreme’ forms of resistance, a spectrum defined between the poles of an insidious ‘minimum compliance’ and systematic terror. There were also, as discussed in the last chapter, symbolic and fantasy elements ordering a minimal cohesion between the contending factions – although, the mere fact that this fantasmatic element involved the canalisation of aggressivity by means of a projection constitutes a warning against treating even the cohering dynamics as purely productive from the point of view of Massive Resistance.

In this chapter, I will focus on three types of action which I will interpret under the rubric of ‘Massive Resistance’. The first is the campaign by white supremacists at various levels of the American state; the second is the campaign of civic activism led by the Citizens Councils; and the third is the form of violent parapolitical action by the Klans of the civil rights era. I will argue that these strands drew together, in different mixtures and different proportions, the classic three elements of the counter-subversive campaign which Schrecker (2002) identifies as being integral to the ‘anticommunist network’: the business community, civic activists disproportionately drawn from the middle class, and layers of the state.

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<sup>21</sup> Displays of ‘worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment’ being a constitutive part of the social movement as spectacle. (Tilly, 2004)

Broadly speaking, one can speak of three phases of Massive Resistance to *Brown* and civil rights: Phase I (1954-1956) was a period of hesitation, the gradual canvassing and consolidation of local responses, and the initial formation of Resistance organisations; Phase II (1956-1959) was a period of escalating and increasingly effective Massive Resistance during which white ‘moderates’ and progressives were relatively quiet, centred on plans to close schools and otherwise defy the courts, and shut down the activities of civil rights organisations. In this period the Citizens’ Councils and Southern states led the offensive; Phase III (1960-1965) was a period of intensified conflict, defeat and adaptation, as school closures ended, Council influence waned, and states adopted piecemeal adaptation. In this period, the emphasis increasingly fell on a small number of resistant states, and the activities of the Ku Klux Klans.

### *The recomposition of the state.*

However counterintuitive it may seem to begin an anatomy of a social movement by discussing the state – particularly as it has already been discussed in Chapter Five – there is no avoiding the fact that a critical element contributing to the success and failures of Massive Resistance was the composition of Federal and local state apparatuses. Schrecker (2002) is undeniably correct to identify the state as the teeth of any counter-subversive movement, the necessary element that makes its campaigns effectual even where state personnel don’t play the leading role. We will see here that, even where the dominant forces in Massive Resistance are the most radicalised

middle class segregationists, the shift to the right in the state apparatuses and the availability of state resources for the counter-subversion campaign was decisive for the chances of the movement. At the Federal level, Southern politicians organised to use their traditional loci of power to blunt the thrust of desegregation. At the local level, they turned their fire on ‘moderates’, often depicted as the equivalent of post-Civil War ‘scalawags’, colluding in a new Reconstruction drive, and redeployed and organised new state apparatuses to target the civil rights movement. In doing so, they acted with a degree of concert with the social movements against civil rights.

The reaction in the Southern states to the threat of desegregation only began to come together after a significant lag. Despite the fact that they had seen the decision coming, Southern leaders largely failed to cohere any kind of response either in anticipation or in the immediate period following *Brown*, while voters reacted in quite distinct ways. For example, while most white Southerners did not accept the principle of integration – some 80% opposed the decision of the Supreme Court, and up to 90% in the Deep South – the responses of voters, newspapers and politicians in the upper South to the law generally speaking differed from those of the deeper South. While Governor Talmadge of Georgia and Senator Eastland of Mississippi declared for resistance, the governors of Virginia and Arkansas immediately pledged themselves to calm compliance with the law. In Virginia, Governor Stanley appointed the Gray Commission to develop a desegregation strategy. The Commission’s first recommendation, the ‘local option’ Southern politicians made clear their opposition, but in terms of practical action they wanted to wait until it was clear how the

Supreme Court would proceed and, as Virginia Senator Harry F Byrd put it, “the sentiment of the people in various areas of the State” became apparent. Byrd’s private stance was significant, given his later fame as a belligerent combatant. Even in Alabama, voters in the gubernatorial elections preferred to elect the populist liberal Jim Folsom, someone known for his progressive views on race. In Louisiana, the populist and racial ‘moderate’ Earl Long had no problem being elected. (Lewis, 2000: 41; Webb, 2005: 4-5; Klarman, 2004: 395; Klarman, 2005: 21)

Lewis (2000: 42) argues that “it was not until the Spring of 1956 that anything like a homogeneous resistance movement to Brown emerged in the South”. By this time, there were approximately twenty pro-segregation groups operating across the South, according to the Southern Regional Council. (Addison Clark, 1976: 152) Perhaps decisive in helping to consolidate this into a sharp regional turn to the right were the efforts of the political leadership of the South in Congress. This included the use of positions in the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC), chaired by southern Democrats for most of the period until 1955, and the Senate Intelligence Subcommittee on Internal Security (SISS), run by the red-baiting Senator Pat McCarran and then the segregationist Senator James Eastland. Southern politicians were generally speaking much more aggressive anticommunists than their northern equivalents. Senator Eastland even decided to focus the attention of SISS on the New York Times, in a way that even McCarthy might have resiled from, purely on the basis of its having endorsed *Brown*. (Alwood, 2007: 108-109) Leading figures of what Bartley describes as the “neo-Bourbon” tendency in the South (see Fairclough,

2005: 56), such as Senators Strom Thurmond, Richard Russell, James Eastland and Harry Byrd, also cooperated in developing a new segregationist platform and mobilised Congressional support for it. Their platform, the ‘Southern Manifesto’ (officially, The Declaration of Constitutional Principles), drafted by Congressmen from eleven southern states, articulated the bases for opposition to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown*. Challenging the legality of the Court’s decision in constitutional terms, it accused a conspiracy of “outside agitators” of having engineered the decision, leading to “revolutionary changes,” and committed supporters to using “all lawful means” to overturn it. Though accessing the language of Southern nationalism, above all the rhetoric of secessionist and slave owner John Calhoun, they also framed their arguments in terms of American nationhood, within which the South – duly protected by states rights – had a privileged claim. (Addison Clark, 1976: 151; Egerton, 1995: 621-624)

The major, calculated effect of the Manifesto was to provide legitimacy to the emerging political struggle against the law and the civil rights movement. As Senator Eastland told the white constituents of Mississippi: “You are not required to obey any court which passes out such a ruling. In fact, you are obligated to defy it.” The declaration of “lawful” resistance failed to induce opposition from Washington DC, and was even deemed legitimate by President Eisenhower. Southern states quickly increased the pace of their resistance activity, and an “avalanche of legislation” shortly befell the region. A struggle against the NAACP was initiated across the South, with legal manoeuvres and suppression ranging from fines to firings. A

significant basis for segregationists in state legislatures was a long-standing form of gerrymandering – the malapportionment of voting constituencies in order to give rural areas more power. Governor Long's efforts to address this in Louisiana simply gave the legislature the chance to implement resistance measures. Yet even without this, the core of hard segregationism in the Black Belt was sufficient to provide the bedrock upon which white-supremacist political machines were built. The support for segregation among southern whites was overwhelming: the differences in commitment being of degree rather than principle. And there was a reciprocal effect of state action on public opinion. The fact that the share of white Southerners who believed desegregation to be inevitable fell from 55% in 1956 to 43% in 1957 is likely to be in part due to the upsurge in Southern state activism against segregation. (Newton, 2014: 104; Mays, 2008: 26-28; Lassiter & Lewis, 1998: 1; Klarman, 2005: 29-30)

There were two major lines of counterattack on the part of Southern states. The first was to prepare plans for school closures and privatisation, with the preparations beginning relatively early on in Georgia and Virginia, while only beginning in Arkansas after the leadership's sharp right-ward turn in 1957. As Jack Bloom records: "state investigating committees pursued the organisation and its members with the same tactics and zeal with which the McCarthyites had hunted for Communists". These committees sometimes preceded Brown, as in Mississippi, where the General Legislative Investigating Committee (GLIC) was initially launched in 1946 to target graft, only later re-deployed as a counter-subversive organisation. In Arkansas, by

contrast, the State Sovereignty Commission was set up late in the day as a state backlash against integration, driven by the segregationist attorney-general, was launched. In many cases, state laws targeted teachers and other public employees, requiring them to identify their political affiliations so that they civil rights activists could be flushed out. In 1958, at the peak of Massive Resistance, Mississippi legislators instructed the GLIC to begin hearings into communist influence in the civil rights movement. The hearings drew on the accumulated expertise of existing anticommunist practitioners, such as former HUAC chief investigator JB Matthews. But it also took advice from civil society groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion in the extirpation of Communist influenced on campuses. (Kuhn, 1997; Mertz, 1993; Bloom, 1987: 109; Crespino, 2007: 54-57)

Even where ‘moderation’ had won the day in decisive gubernatorial races, in Louisiana and Alabama, the interaction between growing Massive Resistance organisations and right-ward moving legislatures spurred the implementation of the same policies. In Louisiana, state senator William Rainach promoted bills to circumvent desegregation and launched the Joint Legislative Committee to Maintain Segregation. In Alabama, the legislature embarked on a “pupil placement plan” already pioneered in Virginia, in which a board of three appointees would determine which school each student could attend, with the law so worded as to enable them to decide on an exclusively racial basis without explicit racial coding. Indeed, it was Alabama’s Massive Resistance which won a famous victory in 1958 when the

Supreme Court, in the case of *Shuttleworth v. Birmingham Board of Education*, supported the “pupil placement plan”. At this stage, every Southern state had adopted such a scheme, thus suggesting that a way around the problem had been found. A critical role was often played by Attorney Generals. In Louisiana, segregationist Attorney General Fred LeBlanc had been unsuccessful in campaigning against Governor Long’s statewide ticket, but faced few obstacles initiating a court-led attack on the NAACP. Long, maintaining an equipoise between the Citizens’ Councils and the NAACP, was unwilling to stymy this offensive. In Virginia, Attorney General Harrison played a key role in the Byrd Organisation, drove the legal campaign against integration and particularly the tactic of school closures. In Georgia, Eugene Cook pursued the “Communist, Communist-front and fellow-traveler” organisations he said were behind the NAACP. In Arkansas, Bruce Bennett drove the pursuit of the NAACP and like-minded bodies under the rubric of hardline segregationism and anticomunism. (Fairclough, 2005: 58-60; Stephan, 1980: 73; Klarman, 2007: 95-98; Woods, 2004: 62-63)

By the late Fifties, most Southern states had moved sharply to the right, with the defence of segregation the galvanising issue, while racial ‘moderates’ constituted an embattled and often silenced minority. All states had committed to at least some forms of resistance. Arkansas, a previously ‘moderate’ border state, had become a frontline of resistance by 1957, electrifying the whole South, and had closed its schools in 1958-59. By 1960, however, the main plank of Massive Resistance was essentially lost. The school closures in Arkansas and Virginia had provoked public

backlash and legal opposition, resulting in the effective abandonment of resistance. This did not take place without tumult and resistance on the part of state officials. Leading figures in the Byrd Organisation took the fight to “the Communist, Jews, Negroes and so-called liberal Democrats” who were said to be behind integration. The threat to close schools in Georgia already appeared doomed, and by 1961 was abandoned on the recommendation of the Sibley Commission, despite a strongly segregationist public opinion. Several ‘moderate’ states – among them Florida, Texas and Tennessee – dropped all semblance of implemented Massive Resistance. In Louisiana, the election of the segregationist Governor Davis, and his attempts to override court orders with special legislation proved futile. Nor was it just the schools. Desegregation in public facilities began to roll out in several Southern states. Most famously, the Greensboro sit-ins contributed to North Carolina restaurants desegregating. (Lewis, 2004: 144-145; Roche, 2010; Klarman, 2004: 400-404)

Increasingly, as the South shifted toward adaptation and ‘practical segregation,’ resistance was left to a diminishing core of states. In Mississippi, Governor Barnett’s pledge that no school would be integrated as long as he was governor ultimately led to the Ole Miss race riot, and the despatch of federal troops to crush it. This began to turn the tide in the remaining hold-outs, as South Carolina’s political elites, anxious to avoid a similar federal incursion, publicly adjusted to what they had privately admitted for some time: that integration was inevitable. There remained Alabama. Under Governor Patterson, Alabama pledged to persist with its ‘pupil placement plan’ and resist even ‘token integration’ as a “sign of weakness”. But even here, a section

of politically powerful businesses and the Attorney General were wearying of the state's reactionaries. Wallace's 1962 gubernatorial victory, underlined by the 'segregation forever' speech written by Klan leader Asa Carter, was a victory for a lost cause. Wallace promised and embarked on repeated but ultimately futile acts of defiance. The 'last stand' of the segregationist core took on an increasingly anticommunist register. For example, Wallace's attempt to prevent the integration of four elementary schools in September 1963 was justified as resistance to "Martin Luther King and his group of pro-communists". This was a continual theme: "leftist ideology," "socialist ideology," "the official Communist Party of the United States," and even "the leaders of world communism," are all found behind civil rights legislation. Fairly typical was the address by Wallace to a gathering of the great and the good, reported on by AFL-CIO representative Earl Pippin. "Wallace told us in no uncertain terms that it was our duty to strangle the communist movement before it gained momentum through the civil rights movement. ... 'They want every little white school child to turn to communism,' he said." (Klarman, 2004: 403-406; Greenhaw, 2011: 109; Rohler, 2004: 33-34)

*"Manicured Kluxism": the Citizens' Councils.*

In July 1954, approximately two months after the first *Brown vs the Board of Education* decision overturned *Plessy vs Ferguson*, the first White Citizens Council was formed in Indianola, Mississippi, in the home county of the segregationist Senator James Eastland.

The formation of the first Citizens' Council owed itself as much to the heightened activity of local African Americans, already visible long before the rebellion of Fannie Lou Hamer, as to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown*. The post-war wave of repression and lynchings aimed at putting African Americans 'in their place' had not impeded the gradual transformation of the region. Voter registration drives taking advantage of *Smith v Allwright*, took place in every state. Between 1947 and 1952, the number of African Americans qualified to vote in twelve Southern states doubled from 600,000 to 1,200,000, with the result that African Americans began to appear in some local elective offices such as school boards and city councils – albeit, this took place largely in the states of the Upper South, in the areas outside from the Black Belt where black majorities could seriously threaten white supremacy. (Wormser, 2004: 454; Woodward, 1966: 141-142)

Lurking in the background of the Council's formation was a geoeconomic structure in which class and race relations were formed. Indianola is located in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, "the most Southern place on earth" by history and culture. The flat, fecund terrain, flooded over centuries by the Yazoo and Delta rivers, had supported the production of considerable wealth, first through cotton plantations and a racial slave-based agrarian economy and subsequently through production based on sharecroppers and tenant farmers, regulated by a racial caste system. By the time of the launch of the Citizens' Councils, the economy had become a more complex and diversified sphere, so that plantation owners were joined by industrialists, merchants and bankers. Nonetheless, salient planter-capitalists included

such figures as Senator Eastland himself, while the founder of the first Citizens' Council, former paratrooper Robert Patterson, managed a 1,500 acre plantation in Leflore County. The geo-economic terrain of the Deep South, and the Delta in particular, provided the heartland from which white resistance to desegregation would emerge. In part, this can be attributed to a crude demographic factor: the fact that in many such areas, African Americans outnumbered whites, or at least represented a potentially powerful minority. However, just as important was how these demographic factors were linked to local production relations, the racialised class structure, the degree of urbanisation and industrialisation, and the political character of the state leadership. By and large, the Border States were more likely to be urbanised, less dependent on traditional rural class relations, and more likely to have a 'moderate' political leadership, and thus Massive Resistance was weaker. Arkansas presents an interesting exception which will be examined in detail at the end of this chapter. (Adams & Gorton, 2004; Cobb, 1994: 96, 213; McMillen, 1994: 6-7)

Among the charter members of the Citizens' Council launched by Patterson were Arthur B Clark, a Harvard-educated lawyer, Herman Moore, a banker, and a local cotton industry manager named D. H. Hawkins. The remainder of the coalition consisted of professionals, farmers, merchants, and lone businessmen. The early meetings were several dozens strong, and indicated a powerful local backlash which would subsequently generalise into a robust regional coalition. (Moye, 2004: 64-65) The strength of the reaction among local planter capitalists and their class allies was in part due to the fact that they had a certain shared experience of white supremacy

formed in an agrarian context, in which black workers represented a demographic majority.<sup>22</sup> Patterson, in setting up the Council, also found an ally in a circuit court judge and member of the fraternal society, *Sons of the American Revolution*, Tom Brady. Brady had given a speech to his local *Sons* chapter denouncing the first Brown decision as a manifestation of “communism”. In a later text, entitled Black Monday, he essayed on the intrinsic differences between black and white Americans which necessitated their segregation: “You can dress a chimpanzee, housebreak him, and teach him to use a knife and fork, but it will take countless generations of evolutionary development, if ever, before you can convince him that a caterpillar or a cockroach is not a delicacy. Likewise the social, political, economical, and religious preferences of the negro remain close to the caterpillar and the cockroach.” (Quoted, Evers-Williams, 1996: 111) Along with Brady, Patterson found supporters in a local cotton manager, a Harvard-educated attorney, and a banker. Soon, the mayor of Indianola joined, along with a string of local notables. (Cobb, 1994: 213-214)

In short order, the Council added a national television and radio programme – ‘The Citizens’ Council Forum’ – to its considerable assets. It also found that it had influence in the legislatures, for example in the form of Representative Wilma Sledge who assured the Mississippi legislature of the Council’s upstanding methods and

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<sup>22</sup> Industrial businesses, such as those represented by the Southern States Industrial Council (SSIC), tended to be as supportive of efforts to resist desegregation as rural capital, and as resentful of Federal ‘intervention’. This had roots in their formative opposition to New Deal programmes and the unionisation struggles of the Thirties. However, they were also at odds with the agrarian-oriented Democratic leadership and as an organisation they foregrounded free market arguments rather than segregationist arguments. This did not prevent leaders such as Thurman Sensing appearing at White Citizens’ Councils and Daughters of the American Revolution meetings, but the SSIC as a body was vague in its public expressions of pro-segregation sentiment. (Jewell, 2010; Webb, 2004).

purpose. William J Simmons of the Mississippi Citizens' Council enjoyed ready access to and influence with the legislature. It found support from the owners of Mississippi's two largest daily newspapers. It picked up funding and influential personnel from the remnants of the 1948 Dixiecrat machinery. It recruited from among Rotary Club and Chambers of Commerce leaders, from Boy Scout leaders and elements of the American Legion, from local Democratic Party chairmen and school superintendents. Editorials in local newspapers such as the *Indianola Enterprise-Tocsin* exhorted local residents to join its fight against the "socialist aims" of the NAACP. In short, the Citizens' Councils became part of the circulation of political and ideological state power, with links to civic, governmental and media institutions. Soon, the Council launched its own newspaper, *The Citizens' Council*. By 1955, the Councils had chapters in every southern state, and soon grew to include 60,000 members and perhaps ultimately as many as 250,000, mainly concentrated in the rural Black Belt where the threat of black political empowerment was most palpable. (Moye, 2004: 68-69, 72-73 & 79; Webb, 2005: 4-5; Frederickson, 2001: 233-234; McMillen, 1994: 25; Wood, 2004: 143-144; Citizens' Council: 1955; Klarman, 2005: 22; Street, 1956)

The goal of the Citizens' Councils was to articulate a respectable, mainstream opposition to de-segregation predicated chiefly on middle class mobilisation. Formally eschewing violence and the explicit supremacism of the Klans, their tactics nonetheless included intimidation, their links with local businesses enabling them to get African Americans fired for attempting to register to vote. They attempted, in

their own words, “to make it difficult, if not impossible, for any Negro who advocates desegregation to find and hold a job, get credit, or renew a mortgage.” Council members responded to NAACP recruitment by, where possible, firing black employees. Their membership, their antisemitism and their racist ideology overlapped with that of the Klans. They pursued “white-collar terrorism”, “manicured Kluxism”, “the agenda of the Klan with the demeanour of the Rotary Club.” (Addison Clark, 1976: 101-3; Payne, 2007: 34-35; Newton, 2014: 105; Klarmann, 2005: 26; Moyer, 2004: 66)

There was, as these pithy formulations suggest, a class pertinence to such terror, for it was a terror rooted partially in what Marx called the “dull compulsion of economic relations” which ensures the “dependence” of the labourer “on capital”. (Marx, 1996: 726) Part of the struggle of Massive Resistance was to maintain and conserve the dependence of African Americans on whites. As a landowner instructed a black family, while driving them off the land, “Your food, your work and your very lives depend on good-hearted white people.” (Payne, 2007: 19) These were methods distinctly available to elements of planter capital, small businesses and influential middle class notables. However, the strategic-rational element of these means need not occlude the sadistic and punitive aspects of such actions. The entire Southern social order was precariously organised around a symbolic structure in which racial etiquette – “decent racial conduct” as the *Citizens’ Council* would describe it – was paramount. Winant (1994: 7) describes how this Jim Crow etiquette required African Americans to “remove their hats in the presence of whites, to step off the sidewalk

(where one existed) into the muddy street at the passage of a white, and to wait in such shops as would serve blacks until all whites had been served, no matter who had arrived first". These, and a "thousand other rules of this type," constituted a heavily structured symbolic order, in which transgression could easily result in an explosion of racist violence and lynching. Nor was Council activity entirely innocent of this stratum of violence in the movement. Its economic terror often depended on subtle, or less-than-subtle, threats. Webb (2011: 47-48) recounts a typical instance in which a laundry owner in Jackson, Mississippi was urged by an anonymous caller claiming to be from the local Citizens' Council to fire his African American employee involved in civil rights activity. The employer's refusal was met by the simply threat: "you'll be sorry." In other cases, Council members advocated violence or participated in riots and bombings. (Newton, 2010: 108-109) Flyers distributed at a mass Citizens' Council rally in Montgomery, Alabama in February 1956 gave vent to the outright genocidal plea to "abolish the Negro race" using "arrows, sling shots and knives", and affirmed the right of every white person to "the pursuit of dead niggers". (Phibbs, 2009: 49)

It would be a mistake to assume that even this wing of massive resisters was ideologically, tactically or strategically homogenous. They were nonetheless saturated in the same supremacist culture that pervaded the South. As Fairclough (1995: 167) suggests, even the term 'racist' doesn't "prepare one for the depths of disgust, contempt and condescension with which whites, to varying degrees, still regarded their black fellow citizens in the 1950s". Such contempt was carefully coded in the

official propaganda of the Councils. Indeed, it was their contention that they were on the side of African Americans, and this provided part of the legitimising myth of the white-supremacist system. Senator Eastland argued the case on national television:

“Now this doctrine of the separation of the races has been evolved over many years by both races. It’s not something that one race has imposed on another race. It’s not a badge of inferiority or superiority. ... It might interest you to know this, now. After the South was defeated, when the white people were disenfranchised and could not vote, the first Reconstruction legislature of my state, controlled by members of the Nigra race, passed three laws. One, that there be segregation on trains and in public transportation. Two, that there be a separate school system. Three, they levied a poll tax. Four, they made it a felony for races to inter-marry, and made it a life sentence in the penitentiary for one who crossed that line.” (Wallace, 1957)

This was a carefully constructed fabulation: at no point had whites been disenfranchised, and it was the white-dominated legislature which had introduced segregation statutes aimed at freedmen, which were later overturned by a Radical Reconstruction administration. Though the state had a majority of black voters, it never had a black majority legislature or a black governor. (Newton, 2010: 43-44) Nonetheless, this state mythology condensed a series of what might be called ‘race lessons’. The first was that the separation of races was sought and endorsed by ‘both races’, and was thus ‘natural’. The second was that if African Americans were able to

vote, they would trample over the rights of whites. Therefore, competition and domination between the ‘races’ was also ‘natural’. The third, since Eastland also claimed that the South was relatively racially egalitarian, was that Mississippi whites, in maintaining segregation, were conscientious and fair in ensuring equity, in a way that African Americans could not be trusted to be. It followed, therefore, that any attack on segregation must be mischievous and, since it would not flow naturally from any grievances on the part of black Southerners, must be the work of ‘outside agitators’. This, though the notoriously red-baiting Eastland did not mention communism specifically here, conforms in its elements to the fantasmatic structure of white-supremacist anticomunism identified in the previous chapter.

And indeed, the Councils foregrounded counter-subversion in the anticomunist key as a thematic in their campaigns. The first issue of *The Citizens' Council* (1955) reported calls for the NAACP to be investigated. It quoted Congressional representative Jerry M Hughes urging that the faculty and student body of State College in South Carolina be investigated by the local legislature to find out who was a member of the NAACP and if they were “misleading the Negro citizens and misrepresenting the aims and objectives of the NAACP to the Negro people”. In the same issue, it reproduced three articles from “the front pages of the Charleston, S. C., News and Courier,” the main daily newspaper in the city, by the editor of the same newspaper. The articles claimed that Citizens’ Councils were defenders of ancient republican principles of out “to guard both whites and Negroes,” by combating NAACP agitators and stymying the “wrath of ruffian white people who may resort to

violence" by channelling it in legal ways. The article noted that certain economic pressures could be brought to bear, which "could include firing employes [sic], or refusing to renew leases for sharecroppers who have followed the NAACP line", but repeated the Citizens' Council line that this was not organised by the Councils. It concluded: "this observer from South Carolina believes that the councils are both sound and decent, and loaded with power for good." (Waring, 1955a, 1955b, 1955c)

Cartoons featured in *The Citizens' Council* depicted the NAACP as a communist front, and the South as beset while it slept by 'red termites' which needed to be gassed by the Council.



Figure 2. 'Exposed' in *The Citizens' Council*, Vol 2 No 1, October 1956.

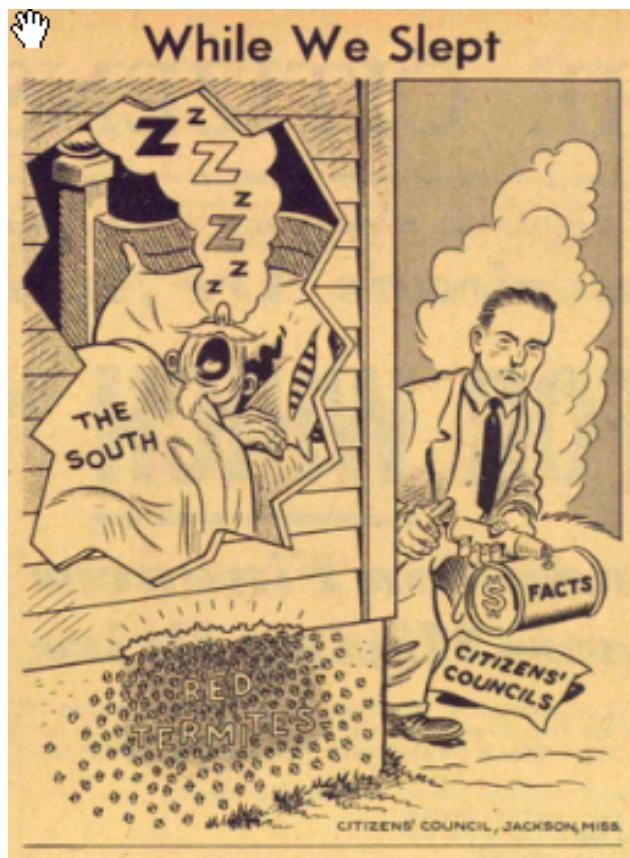


Figure 3. 'While We Slept' in *The Citizens' Council*, Vol 2 No 1, October 1956.

The Council's publications obsessed about communist plotting, from "Red-Tinged Churchmen" to "left-wing" plots to promote "inter-marriage". Judge Brady, of the Mississippi Citizens' Councils, denounced the Supreme Court's "socialistic and unconstitutional decrees", and charged it with having "aided the Communists of this country far beyond Lenin's wildest dreams". (Citizens Council, 1958: 2) A former FBI agent who joined the Citizens' Council in Mississippi reported that the NAACP was "the present-day stepchild of the Communist Party ... so heavily infiltrated with Communists that they must, of necessity, obey every order and command of the Communist Party". (Citizens Council, 1958: 4) A Citizens Council pamphlet charged "that the NAACP is a left-wing, power-mad organisation of destruction that cares nothing for the Negro." (Quoted in Waring, 1955c) Notably, their discourse became

more frenzied as, at the end of the Fifties, southern states began to capitulate. No longer was it just communists and their confederates. The retreat, far from representing the real balance of forces in the country, had to be a product of infiltrators, “planted voices,” “massive betrayal,” and “collaborators”. (McMillen, 1994: 250)

By itself this form of anticomunism could perhaps be written off as fantastical propaganda. However, it is important to note that the Councils’ efforts to intimidate opponents, harassing would-be voters or driving activists out of work, depended in part upon their networked integration with state actors in the legislatures, Sovereignty Commissions, and Bureaus of Investigation. (Butler, 2002) For example, in Mississippi, the Citizens’ Council had played a key role in driving the formation of the formation of the State Sovereignty Commission, and enjoyed relatively close relations with the Commission, throughout Governor Coleman’s “undeclared war” against the Council, whose methods he regarded as counterproductive to the defence of segregation, and through most of Governor Barnett’s more hardline administration. In Alabama, under the segregationist administration of Governor Patterson, the Citizens’ Council had close and regular contacts with the gubernatorial office, and the Alabama State Sovereignty Commission provided the Council with \$5,000 per month for its radio and television department. (Irons, 2010: 37-60; Katagiri, 2001: 27; Montgomery Advertiser, 1963) In 1961 it emerged that the Mississippi Citizens’ Councils had been provided with information by the State Sovereignty Commission, verified by the Bureau of Investigation and with the connivance of the Governor,

identifying a range of students as integrationist plants being prepared for a role in the “left-wing apparatus”, and specifying a candidate for student editor of *The Mississippian*, who it transpired was a conservative, as such an apparatchik. (McMillen, 1994: 253-4) I will return later in the chapter to the effects of anticommunism within this movement, but for now it is important to note that whatever the *strategic functionality* of such ideological theatics, their basis in fantasy projections does not permit us to assume that anticommunism was straightforwardly rational and productive in the terms of Massive Resistance. In the case just cited, it is obvious that the information they acted on was not correct, and their conduct was counterproductive.

By 1962, the Councils had largely lost influence, their relations to local state apparatuses weakened. Some resorted to headline-grabbing stunts such as ‘Reverse Freedom Rides’ in which Southern blacks were invited to emigrate to the North, but these were desperate and ineffectual measures. However, the anticommunist struggle was continued by other organisations and tendencies, from the John Birch Society to the Christian Right. The Committee for Segregation in Georgia in 1963 produced a leaflet detailing the plan “backed by the communists and socialists” for “total integration to the point of intermarriage”. It identified the origins of the plot in the writings of former CPUSA chair, William Z Foster, and hinted that the Kennedy brothers, being “ultra-liberals,” had adopted most of this programme. The Rev. Billy James Hargis became one of many leading ‘authorities’ in the South on the Communist conspiracy, which he said was trying to set blacks against whites –

singling out “leftist negro ministers” and Martin Luther King Jr. As the “chief agitator” with a “communist front record”. (Webb, 2004; Anti-Defamation League, 1962; Montgomery Advertiser, 1963; Committee for Segregation, 1963; Clark, 1976: 129-130)

This, then, was the ‘respectable,’ middle class leadership of the Massive Resistance movement. But it also acquired an another, relatively autonomous parapolitical wing, in the tradition of America’s Ku Klux Klans.

*“Klankraft”: the ‘parapolitical’ dimension.*

“Black power and civil rights are not the true issues in America today. They are taken-for-granted means of the international communist conspiracy spreading frustration, animosity and ill will.” Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, August 1966 (Cunningham, 2013: 3-4)

“The Communists Love Me This I Know, for Martin Luther King Tells Me So”. – Ku Klux Klan parody, ’Rules for Conduct in Sit-in Demonstrations’ (Georgia KKK, 1963)

The first *Brown* decision, apart from precipitating the emergence of the Citizens’ Councils, acted as a catalyst for the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. As white Southerners stocked up on guns in preparation for a coming civil war, new Klans

were launched. The year after the launch of the first Citizens' Council, in October 1955, the North Alabama Citizens' Council broke ranks under the leadership of the politician, former Navy soldier, and western novelist Asa Carter, before evolving into The Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Carter had made a name for himself attacking rock music, bearing a sign that said: "BE-BOP PROMOTES COMMUNISM". And in the same month as Carter's break, the U.S. Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klans, Inc., was launched by an automobile sprayer from Atlanta, Georgia named Eldon Edwards. The U.S. Klans was to be the dominant Klan organisation in the coming decade, alongside the United Klans of America which, after launching in Alabama in 1961 built a powerful presence in North Carolina, and identified itself first and foremost as an anticommunist fighting organisation.

(Newton, 2014: 103-108; Cunningham, 2013; Chalmers, 2007: Loc. 6257)

— FIGHT COMMUNISM —

**YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO JOIN THE UNITED KLANZ OF AMERICA, Inc.**

**KNIGHTS OF KU KLUX KLAN**

—If you are a Native-born Loyal United States Citizen, 18 years old, a White Gentile Person of Temperate Habits, of Protestant Faith, and believe in White Supremacy and Americansim. Please fill in below.

Place an (X) at one of the following:

-----I would like to join the United Klans of America.

-----I am a former member of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and would like to be reinstated.

My Name Is----- Age----- Sex-----

My Address Is-----

City----- State-----

I am employed by----- Religious Faith-----

Phone-----

Mail to the following address: (Over)

*Figure 4. 'Fight Communism'. United Klans of America membership card, recto.*

(196-?)

**JOIN A LOCAL UNIT NOW** in our efforts to maintain segregation of the races and fight communism that exists in America today.

**DO YOU KNOW:** Communism is being taught in some of our Public Schools and Colleges of America? That Communists are in key positions in some of our Labor Unions? That Communists have infiltrated many key Government positions? That Communist ideas are being fed to you and your children through T. V. and motion Pictures? Even some of our preachers are including Communist ideas in their sermons.

**THE UNITED KLANS** are fighting to protect the future generations and to uphold the kind of Constitution and Government given us by our FOREFATHERS.

**THE UNITED KLANS OF AMERICA, Inc., KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN,** is a Legally Recognized National Organization of the Original KU KLUX KLAN, and is absolutely Non-subversive with no criminal accusations against it. **THE UNITED KLANS** should not be confused with any so-called or self-styled Ku Klux Klan.

If YOU are interested in Joining a Legal, Constituted, Chartered Organization, Mail this card to one of the following offices:

National Office — Suite 401, Alston Bldg., Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

South Carolina Office — P. O. Box 4144, Spartanburg, South Carolina

North Carolina Office — P. O. Box 321, Granite Quarry, North Carolina (Over)

*Figure 5. 'Join A Local Unit Now'. United Klans of America membership card, verso. (196-?)*

This revived a long tradition of paramilitary terror in the US, originating with the post-Civil War Klans initiated by former Confederate soldiers, and surging in waves at critical moments when white supremacy was endangered. Klans were secret fraternal organisations dedicated to the combination of public spectacles and paramilitary actions against African Americans and their white allies who challenged white supremacy. In their original incarnation as apparatuses of counter-Reconstruction, they were rooted in defeated Southern planters and merchants, linked to the Democratic Party, profoundly undemocratic in ideology, and aimed against “the unprecedented spectacle of a state in which the Government is arrayed against property”. Beginning in locales of strength beyond the Black Belt, their modes of terror drew upon Southern traditions of political violence, from slave patrols to lynchings. Initially rooted among the propertied, its base began to shift from “the

better citizens" to "the pore no'count white trash".<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, they were cohered in part by a secretive, ritualised culture drawing on traditions of other fraternal organisations, such as the Freemasons. The Klans were able to effectively terrorise the South, up to and including the initiation of military insurgencies, and ultimately were only defeated by the deployment of Federal troops. Yet the tempo of their struggle also abated due in part to the retreat of Reconstruction, and the de-radicalisation of local states. When white-supremacy was re-asserted in the form of Jim Crow, waves of similar violence were instrumental in its success. (Foner, 1980: 147-149; Foner, 2008: 576; Roediger, 2008: 110-116; Newton, 2010: 11-12; Foner, 2008: 576-577; Schaefer, 1971)

The basis for the second Klan insurgency, begun with in 1915, signalled by the dissemination of the pro-Klan film, D W Griffiths' *Birth of a Nation*, was laid in this period. There had been, since the late nineteenth century, a reaction against racial equality, a turn to a new nationalism, and a drive to legitimise the South's return to white-supremacy in the context of a virulent anti-immigrant politics nationally, and new colonial policy launched from Washington. Presidents from Taft to Wilson gave expression to the new dispensations. The terrain was thus well-prepared for a national revival of the Klan. (Woodward, 1966: 70; Logan, 1954: 96; Taft, 1908; Allerfeldt,

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<sup>23</sup> Du Bois wrote of the Klan's popular appeal, and ability to galvanise mobs: "Back of the writhing, yelling, cruel-eyed demons who break, destroy, maim and lynch and burn at the stake, is a knot, large or small, of normal human beings, and these human beings at heart are desperately afraid of something. Of what? Of many things, but usually of losing their jobs, being declassed, degraded, or actually disgraced; of losing their hopes, their savings, their plans for their children; of the actual pangs of hunger, of dirt, of crime. And of all this, most ubiquitous in modern industrial society is that fear of unemployment. It is its nucleus of ordinary men that continually gives the mob its initial and awful impetus. Around this nucleus, to be sure, gather snowball-wise all manner of flotsam, filth and human garbage". (Du Bois, 1935: 678)

2006: 162) As McLean (1994: xv) put it, “the Klan of this era was both effect and cause of the reconciliation of North and South.” Like the first Klan, the second had roots in the South’s tradition of fraternal organisations. Its founder, Colonel William Joseph Simmons, was a member of the Woodmen of the World, the Freemasons, the Knights of Pythias, and the Odd Fellows. The ‘Klankraft,’ denoting a religious order and way of life and solidarity among members, signified by insignia and regalia, were similar, with the important addition of the motif of the ‘fiery cross’ introduced in Thomas Dixon Jr’s *The Clansman*, which became the basis for Griffiths’s film. (Newton, 2014: 19; Wade, 1998: 183)

The second Klan, however, had a different purpose, and extended well beyond the states of the South. In the context of a post-war radicalism on the one hand, and nativist, racist reaction on the other, the Klan articulated the nationalism, the white-supremacism, and the Protestant, patriarchal morality characteristic of “the broad middle of the nation’s class structure”. (McLean, 1994: xii) Another aspect of its mission – like that of other rightist vigilantes and nationalist groups such as the Minute Men – was to crush the spectre of ‘communism’ and other ‘foreign influences’<sup>24</sup>. How this threat manifested itself in Klan ideology was primarily in the

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<sup>24</sup> “The purpose of the Klan is to capitalize love – to promote goodwill and the spirit of kindness. In opposing to the uttermost the wrongs and evils which are the root causes of the woes of humanity, the Klan may seem, to the uninitiated, to be narrowly sectarian, but this is not true; its policy is generous, its viewpoint broad and liberal, its tolerance unmeasured, but it strikes without mercy or compromise at the pernicious foreign influences which are undermining liberty and seeking to dominate American institutions.” Imperial Knight-Hawk, 16th May 1923 (McVeigh, 2009: 196)

form of two types of class threat – one of labour militancy<sup>25</sup>, the other of the concentration and centralisation of capital as monopoly. Each menaced the classic liberal conception of property, and more particularly the property interests of the Klan's middle class base. Discursively, communism came to signify “all the levelling influences Klansmen perceived in the contemporary world”. In 1921, the second Klan exploded onto the national scene thanks to a Congressional investigation which gave Simmons a platform to air his “100% Americanism” while ultimately taking no action against him. By 1925, the Klan had grown from 85,000 members to an estimated 5 million, and involved itself in the electoral politics of both Democrats and Republicans. (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1923; MacLean, 1994: 78, 79, 82; Cunningham, 2013: 24-25; Lewis, 2013)

The civil rights era Klans were continuous in some respects with their forebears. Certainly, the specific articulation of white-supremacism and Protestantism inaugurated by Simmons were carried on in the new formations. They were ideologically as centred on anticomunism as the 1920s Klan, and as localised in the South than the Klan of the 1860s. However, they were much less coherent and centralised than previous waves. They were based among wage workers, small businessmen and the new middle class residing chiefly in the white, urban areas of the southern Piedmont, unlike the more rural Black Belt-based members of the Citizens' Councils. Ideologically, their members differed in their concerns about

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<sup>25</sup> “Out in California,” explained *The Imperial Night-Hawk* in May 1923, “the I. W. W.'s are threatening armed revolution and sabotage against the lumber companies while in St. Joseph, Michigan trials of communists, it is proved that the Russian Soviet government still continues its attempt to ferment [sic] revolution in America. So it looks as if there is a very real need for a hundred-per-cent-American organization after all.”

Jews, bankers and hate figures such as the liberal Republican plutocrat Nelson Rockefeller, but they were united in the insecurity of their class position and relative privilege, which racial integration would threaten. One consequence of the fragmentation of the Klans, was a divergence in tactics. Eldon Edwards's U.S. Klans was the best organised such outfit at the time of Brown I, but it was also the one least inclined to deploy night-riding tactics, whereas Asa Carter's outfit was as belligerently violent as its founder. The violence of the Klans was not always effective. A breakaway from the U.S. Klans set up in North Carolina by Rev. James W Cole attempted to terrorise the Lumbee Indians of the town of Pembroke one evening in 1958, only to find itself surrounded by hundreds of armed Indians, and for Cole to end up in prison for incitement to riot. Nonetheless, a study jointly published in 1959 by the Friends Service Committee, the National Council of Churches of Christ and the Southern Regional Council documented hundreds of incidents of racist terror in the preceding years, including murders, stabbings, beatings, bombings, and shootings aimed at homes, schools, Jewish buildings and a YMCA. (Vander Zanden, 1960; Chalmers, 2007: Loc. 6233-6264 & 6284-6410; Cunningham, 2013: 30-35)

One other point on which the new Klans differed from the previous wave was in their generally weaker and more regionally concentrated relationships to state power. The Klans were no longer a nationwide, mass phenomenon, and the balance of political forces at the Federal level had shifted drastically under the impact of Thirties radicalism and the war. Yet the regard in which the Klan was still held by elements within the state was illustrated starkly when the House Un-American Activities

Committee initially decided against investigating the Klan. HUAC member John Rankin remarked, “After all, the KKK is an old American institution.” Rankin dubbed an anti-lynching bill proposed by Truman “a bill to encourage rape”. The Ku Klux Klans even had friends in the upper chamber. Senator Bilbo, asked if he had been a member of the Klan, confessed that he was indeed a member of the Mississippi chapter. “No man can ever leave the Klan. … Once a Ku Klux, always a Ku Klux.” (Newton, 2010: 102-105) However, in the post-war era, with the Klans weak and marginal, and international press attention to Klan activity proved embarrassing for Washington. Eventually, the FBI’s Counterintelligence Programme, dubbed COINTELPRO, would be deployed against the Ku Klux Klan at the same time as it sought to disrupt the New Left. (Dudziak, 2000: 34; Cunningham, 2004)

There was, however, a long tradition of Klans having close ties to local authoritarian state apparatuses. Legal repression had often been outsourced to private firms and vigilantes, from mill-town strike-breaking to haut-Wilsonian anticomunism to anti-black lynch mobs.<sup>26</sup> Lynch mob violence was often organised in response to an infraction of white-supremacy, blamed on a subversive conspiracy. A 1933 study on the South’s lynch mobs attributed them to the region’s “consuming fear of Communism”. During the second Klan, Nancy MacLean writes, police departments, courts and municipal governments were “rife with Klan members and sympathizers”. (MacLean, 1994: 18) For example, leading member Dr John Galen

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<sup>26</sup> During a post-war wave of lynching, Senator Theodore Bilbo urged his supporters not to “let a single nigger vote”, hinting at “the best way to keep a nigger from voting”, something done “before the night of the election”, a reference which he assumed “red-blooded men” would understand.

Locke enjoyed such good relations with the local political authorities that he was able to select the candidate for chief of police in Denver, Colorado. Klan ‘detectives’ were used as a subsidiary police force in Madison, Wisconsin, while the NAACP claimed that many Detroit policemen were Klan members. The paramilitary-style ‘punishment beating’ of a man for neglect of his family was deemed by the mayor and chief of police to be a “kindness to the man and his family” and a “blessing to the city of Gainesville”. In Richmond, Virginia, the chief of police lauded the patriotism of the Klan. Even at this stage, however, the relationship was complicated by the propensity of Klan members to engage in often violent criminal activity and sometimes by the violent anti-Klan resistance of local communities, which the police were often powerless to defend against. (MacLean, 1994: 35-36 & 50-51; Newton, 2010: 98, 99 & 104; Chalmers, 2007: Loc. 2691, 3710, 4314, 4386, 4595, 4675-4702)

In the post-war era, this tradition persisted. For example, the Association of Georgia Klans acquired a long-standing Atlanta police officer and former head of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation as its leader in 1949. Local police chiefs, especially those in the still rural and less centralised states of the Deep South with large black populations, such as the notorious Bull Connor of Birmingham, Alabama, or Sheriff Julius Harper of Copiah County, Mississippi, were allied to the Klan. An example of police complicity is given by minister Ralph David Abernathy, a colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr.. During a stay at King’s house in Atlanta in January 1957, he received a phone call from his wife, Juanita, in Montgomery, Alabama. Their home had been bombed. While she was describing what had happened, a further blast was

heard in the distance. She asked an attending policeman what it was. The policeman, glancing at his watch, suggested, “That would be your First Baptist Church.” (Cunningham, 2013: 9-11, 15, 27 & 35, 38 & 42; Greenhaw, 2011: 33-34; Newton, 201: 105)

Even where it wasn’t a case of Klan violence supported by local legal/police networks, the presence of reactionary white power blocs in local states ensured that there was general tolerance of white-supremacist violence. For example, the murderers of Emmett Till walked free in large part because of the efforts of police chief Sheriff Clarence Strider to undermine the case, the voluntary labour of several white lawyers who worked to depict the entire case as an NAACP conspiracy, a defence effort funded by local white citizens, and ultimately the dispositions of an all-white jury. In the aftermath, Sheriff Strider expostulated on television that if “all of those people” who had sent him “threatening letters” ever “come down here the same thing’s gonna happen to them that happened to Emmett Till.” (Newton, 2010: 112-113) And even in those more industrialised and centralised states where local police forces were less imbricated with Klans, and were inclined to keep tabs on their activities, indulgence was often extended. Local police in North Carolina, for instance, could show tacit support for the United Klans of America by adopting a lax attitude to their activities, as they did for the greater part of their existence despite having informants in the group. Even where they claim to have taken Klan violence seriously, they also confessed to ignoring symbolic acts of terror such as cross-burnings as they “didn’t really hurt anyone”. Such decisions were of critical

importance. David Cunningham writes of the “central role played by police officials in shaping the klan’s fortunes and impact”. Where police forces did act to curtail the Klans, they were largely effective: only their “ambivalent and sometimes contradictory” pursuit of the Klans impeded their being shut down much more quickly. (Cunningham, 2013: 9-11, 15)

There was another, less direct sense in which the Klans were looped into the motive forces of state power. The dominant ideological theme of the Klans in the Sixties was the battle against communism. As Southern states capitulated, the Klans increasingly argued that behind the threat of integration were Jews and communists. Bob Kornegay of the United Klans of America was typical in arguing that the UKA “don’t hate the niggers, but we are afraid of Communists”. Klan leaders invoked J. Edgar Hoover to verify that: “the Communists are behind the race-mixing and agitation”. The Klans had been anticommunist since the 1920s, and had attacked organised labour in the Thirties as a communist-infiltrated insurgency. But here, their arguments were sustained and put into operation as repressive practices by an ensemble of state apparatuses. Ideologically, one thing distancing the Klan from the mainstream Right, was the emphasis they placed on antisemitism. While the place of Communism in Klan fantasies was identical with that of the Jews, so that one was indistinguishable from the other, mainstream anticommunists felt the need to enlist Judaism into Americanism. Yet even here, the Klan articulated in a direct and explicit way the common sense of Southern conservatism, as manifested in HUAC chair John Rankin’s antisemitic rants. Moreover, the basic fantasmatic framework identified in

the last chapter, in which African Americans are not agents of their own liberation but instruments of a subversive plot, provides a vital point of contact between the ‘unacceptable’ ideology of the Ku Klux Klan, and that of official counter-subversion. (Cunningham, 2013: 142, 145; Herzog, 2011: 69; Michael, 2005: 141; Quarles, 1999: 100-102)

In brief, the Klans of Massive Resistance were fragmented but not isolated. They were part of a wider stream of armed vigilantism, and acted as a paramilitary force within the movement which depended on the indulgence and connivance of state authorities. The involvement of elements of the state apparatuses, particularly those specialising in repression, in right-wing, counter-subversive social movements is common enough to merit some observations here. In Chapter Five, I have outlined an approach to the state which concentrates on the emergence of state formations as a form-determined condensation of the balance of political forces within a society. I stressed, alongside their centralised unity and hierarchised organisation, the necessary degree of fissiparousness and non-transparency of state apparatuses. What is evidenced here is that, particularly in weak and decentralised states with local traditions of vigilantism and lynchings, political forces organised around illicit codes of hierarchy and flows of information can colonise local state apparatuses without much friction. Where their actions are congruent with established ideological and political practices, and where they supplement the powers of the existing power bloc, they can be fused into the licit hierarchies through which their actions can be facilitated. This way of posing the problem avoids treating the Klan-police networks

as either the actions of a few bad apples, or as tools of a unified state project. They were as much part of a power struggle within state apparatuses as within the social formation organised by the state.

This nebulous space connecting and traversing institutionalised state power and civil society organisation is the parapolitical dimension of social movement action. And it is in this connection that the problem of anticomunism is posed most clearly.

*An anticomunist social movement: the place of parapolitics.*

Undoubtedly, Massive Resistance was a social movement. A movement which, just like civil rights, linked elements from diverse social classes in a complex “system of alliances” (Gramsci, 1971), a broad repertoire of tactics (including displays of ‘WUNC’, parliamentary actions, civil resistance, legal challenges, and terror), and some “common nuclei of meaning” connecting political campaigns and organisations situated in distinct “ideological-articulatory domains”. (Laclau, 1977: 160-162)

And yet it was also necessarily far from ‘non-‘ or ‘extra-institutional’. Its operations spanned the wide arc of practices from the ‘private’ terrain of civil society, fraternal organisations, councils and media organisations to the ‘public’ ground of political machines, sovereignty commissions, investigative bureaus and governing coalitions – and insinuated somewhere in all of this is the problem of parapolitics, that is of illicit flows of information and authority wherein the state-civil society opposition crumbles. For the Klans, while their *characteristic* mode of operation is

parapolitical, were not alone in occupying this obscure space. As we have seen, Council activity also depended upon extending both licit and illicit tendrils into and around institutions of state power. By the same token, state power was enlarged and extended insofar as civil society and paramilitary forces acted to supplement the strategies of state actors.

This a mode of action which is particular to counter-subversive, right-wing social movements. In a situation of social crisis, it is characteristic of conservative and repressive forces to blame an external, anti-social force: ‘outsiders,’ ‘troublemakers,’ ‘communists,’ ‘Jews,’ and so on. It is also typical for them to treat these forces as insidious, conspiratorial, masters-of-disguise. J. Edgar Hoover’s account of the communist menace in *Masters of Deceit* from 1958 outlines this logic: “The communist” may be “virtually invisible to the non-communist eye”, but nonetheless “he is in the market places of America: in organizations, on street corners, even at your front door. He is trying to influence and control your thoughts.” (Quoted, Melle, 2000: 2) The pervading fantasy of conservative and repressive political forces in such a situation is in the first instance total transparency, the better to ‘unmask’ the threat, and in the second instance total license, the better to neutralise it. Insofar as the flows of knowledge, resources and instructions necessary to such ends must reach behind the back of legitimate-illegitimate, licit-illicit, and legal-illegal behaviour, the parapolitical is a tendency inherent in this type of social movement.

## **Little Rock: classes, coalitions and state composition**

How could it be that the industrial capital of a ‘moderate’ border state became a frontier of Southern resistance to desegregation? How did a conspicuously Brown-compliant state become one of the states to close all of its public schools for a year?

When the Dixiecrats had mounted their revolt against Truman in 1948, Arkansas was one of their weakest states. The University of Arkansas had desegregated in 1948, while several school districts didn’t wait until the second Brown ruling in 1956 to begin desegregating. Governor Faubus’s predecessor, Francis Cherry, had stated blandly in response to *Brown* that: “Arkansas will obey the law”. When Faubus was elected governor in 1954, he was considered a leftist: Cherry had expended a great deal of effort trying to expose his ‘red’ roots, to little avail. With a small and historically disorganised African American population, Arkansas was not a prime candidate for frontline defiance, which tended to be localised in those areas where white residents feared being outnumbered and outvoted by black residents – the Black Belt. The Little Rock school board had met shortly after Brown and agreed to implement desegregation in a phased strategy beginning with the high schools, known as the Blossom Plan after the district superintendent Virgil Blossom. Attempts to kick-start a Massive Resistance movement had tended to flounder. The three Massive Resistance organisations in Arkansas – the Citizens Committee Representing Segregation in Hoxie Schools, White America, and the White Citizens’ Council of Arkansas – had faced local resistance when they attempted to agitate around school segregation. (Frederickson, 2001: 153-154; McMillen, 2007; Reed, 1997: 284; Kirk,

1997; Kirk, 1999: 57) So why did everything change with Central High? The answer lies in part in the way that class formations and the changing composition of the state structured the developing civil rights struggle and resistance in Arkansas, and in part in the way in which it was affected by the tempo of struggles within the federal state apparatuses.

The early bases of resistance to desegregation in Arkansas tended to be in the Delta. Part of the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain, and similar in many respects to the Mississippi Delta, this area was an expansive, rural, cotton-rich region in the east of the state, dominated by white planter-capital, with black sharecroppers at the bottom of the pyramid producing the agricultural surplus. The region has historically been considered ‘the deepest of the deep South’. Rural class relations, based on the plantation system, were protected against challenge through terror. The Delta had been the site of one of the twentieth century’s worst racist outbursts, the Elaine massacre during the race riots and lynchings of 1919, in which approximately two hundred African Americans were murdered. The immediate spur of the massacre was a moment of racialised class violence. Black sharecroppers, organising for a better price for their product from white planters, were meeting under armed guard to prevent white vigilante attacks. The arrival of white law officials resulted in a gunfight in which one of the officials was killed. This was interpreted as the beginning of a ‘Negro uprising’.<sup>27</sup> It prompted hundreds of whites to assemble in

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<sup>27</sup> Insofar as this involved fantasies of blacks plotting to massacre whites, this can be considered an example of the guilt projection discussed in the chapter on ‘Discourse’. Yet there is no doubt that a new politicised black movement was emerging, which threatened white-supremacy.

mobs – ultimately augmented by federal troops – to hunt and kill African Americans. (Whayne & Gatewood, 1993; Stockley, 2001; Krugler, 2015)

Yet, by the post-war period, Arkansas was changing rapidly. The same crisis tendencies which were working themselves out across the Southern economy (see Chapter Four) were producing a sharp fall in profitability for the Arkansas planters. Mechanisation, saving labour costs, was one response had combined with the Depression, and the debt crises of farmers to produce an exodus of black workers from the rural areas to the cities. The loss of low cost labour was partially staunched by wartime planning and federal support. But in the post-war economy, its rate was sufficient to cause a terminal crisis of the plantation system, and exacerbated the impoverishment of those workers who remained. (Wayne & Gatewood, 1993: 22; Woodruff, 1990; McMillen, 1971)

Nonetheless, the Delta was still more populated by black workers than any other part of the state, incorporating large areas of the South's 'Black Belt'. These were the areas where the white population was most frightened of 'racial amalgamation'. So it was that despite moves to desegregate in other areas of the state, in the Arkansas Delta there were few attempts to integrate the student body, and such attempts as were implemented met protests. This began in 1955 as the ramifications of *Brown I* fed into local decisions. In March, in the Black Belt county of Pine Bluff, a group named White America Inc. arose under the leadership of a local railroad official, L D Poynter, to protest desegregation. The group's leading spokesperson was a lawyer

named Amis Guthridge, who would go on to play a critical role in the state-wide Massive Resistance efforts. White America was, however, largely ineffectual until July when, in a small and overwhelmingly white village in the Delta part of Lawrence county, named Hoxie, school desegregation had been successful enough to gain national mediation. This prompted the local soybean farmer, Herbert Brewer, to co-found the Citizens Committee Representing Segregation in Hoxie Schools. (McMillen, 2007; Kirk, 1999: 65-66) Although the campaign was unable to mobilise more than a minority, it agitated sufficiently to cause the school board to suspend classes two weeks early, and engaged in such persistent disruption that the school board eventually achieved a permanent court order preventing them from interfering in school business. (Lewis, 2008: 8) A more successful campaign was later launched in a Delta school district named Sheridan. The subsequent protest from white parents resulted in an immediate reversal of the decision, and subsequent resignations from the school board. (Kirk, 1999: 58) This does not mean that segregationist agitators were necessarily always welcome in the Delta. In Star City, the attempt by the White Citizens' Council to organise a rally to oppose desegregation was blocked after local white citizens petitioned against it. (McMillen, 2007: 128) Nor does it mean that resistance was exclusive to the Delta region. One of the most significant organisations to be founded, in September 1955, was the White Citizens' Council of Arkansas, initiated by former state senator Jim Johnson in the central county of Hot Springs, in part building a base for a gubernatorial challenge. It does, however, mean that the “common matrix of contradictions” (Castells, 1983: 49) underlying the fabric

of the rural Delta and increasingly parts of the capital, skewed the geography of resistance.

Importantly, Little Rock was close enough to these Delta areas that, as workers migrated from the crisis-ridden rural geo-economy, new socio-demographic dynamics began to change a previously tightly segregated city. Thus, for example, the south and east of the city closest to the Delta were also the working class areas with the highest black populations. (Williams, 1997) And in the post-war period, for the first time, black Arkansans started to become organised. Poor blacks in the east of Little Rock were the targeted demographic for the East End Civic League campaign, while veterans from the war who were determined to gain full citizenship founded the Veterans Good Government Association. The NAACP, which had previously neglected the state, was given new life by militant activists such as Daisy Bates. The campaigns began to accumulate small, symbolic victories, such as desegregating the Library – gains made easier by the state leadership's desire to avoid federal intervention. Most significantly, with the Bates leadership, the NAACP pushed for and won the principle that black candidates could not be excluded from Democratic Party primaries, and forced the University of Arkansas to accept its first black student since Reconstruction. (Kirk, 1997) As such, while the earliest signs of local Massive Resistance backlash were to be found in the rural Delta areas, the civil rights movement quickly established the capital as the key battleground. Massive Resistance, being a counter-subversive movement, tended to follow the patterns established by the civil rights movement. Where African Americans were

demographically weak and politically disorganised, the support for Massive Resistance strategies was limited. To the extent that they enjoyed success and seemed to genuinely threaten the segregated structure, Massive Resistance made advances.

The key year signalling the acceleration of this dynamic in Little Rock was 1956. The NAACP had, having attempted to reach agreement with the Little Rock school board, concluded that its stance was effectively obstructionist, and that minimum compliance was a means of staving off desegregation rather than implementing it. As such, they initiated a legal process, taking on Little Rock school district for having barred entry to white schools for 33 black students. The first decision in the case, of *Aaron v Cooper* in August 1956, was a victory for the school board, whose plans were considered prompt and reasonable. An appeal was rejected in April 1957. However, this outcome had by no means been guaranteed and was susceptible to reversal (as indeed it was effectively reversed in the 1958 *Cooper v Aaron* ruling). The failure of the case had resulted chiefly from the fact that the NAACP had argued against the principle of “with all deliberate speed,” which the Blossom Plan upheld, whereas successful NAACP cases had been won on the basis of concrete. State-wide developments suggested that change was still underway, as four school districts drew up plans to desegregate in September 1957. Public transport had already been desegregated in several municipalities. And there were many for whom even the slow pace of change allowed by Blossom was already too much, and the prospect of acceleration induced profound anxiety. The NAACP’s action had demonstrated that African Americans were organised and that the balance of legal forces, even if the

letter of the law was not always interpreted in their favour, at least favoured some degree of integration. (Kirk, 1999: 67-68) These developments encouraged the unification of Massive Resistance efforts. In September 1956, the main organisations joined under the rubric of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Arkansas. Even unified, they were lacking in resources, numbers and even a publication. Perhaps the largest and most vibrant group within the Association was the Capital Citizens' Council based in Little Rock, originally an offshoot of White America, Inc., and it had at most 500 members, of whom 200 were not based in the city. And their demonstrations, though noisy, were small. (McMillen, 2007; Kirk, 1999: 66) Nonetheless, the nucleus of a resistance movement had been formed, linking forces in the capital to those in the rural Delta.

The second decisive factor was the regional solidarity summoned by *Brown*, and the consolidation of a broad Southern front both at the federal and state levels. The subsequent string of successes for segregationist candidates across the South maximised the leverage of the southern caucus in the Senate, and put pressure on 'moderate' administrations. Massive Resistance strategies in the federal government were conducted on the basis that the North was once again on the march to subdue the South. Such had been the persistent drumbeat in the period leading up to the Little Rock crisis. The Southern Manifesto (1956) issued by Southern congresspersons in March 1956, deploying just these theynamics, enjoined resistance by all lawful means. It was unclear, at this stage, precisely what 'lawful means' might include, although already Georgia was readying the privatisation of schools. The Eisenhower

administration's attempt to press ahead with moderate civil rights legislation, in the form of a bill launched in April 1956 known as H.R. 6127 was regarded, in the words of Virginia Senator Harry Byrd, as a humiliation of the South for the sake of "collecting Negro votes".(Finley, 2003: 180) Among the bill's provisions were Title III, allowing the Attorney General to deploy federal troops in order to enforce compliance with civil rights laws – which would, Georgia Senator Richard Russell complained, "place black heels on white necks" (Finley, 2003: 201) – and Title IV, which authorised the Attorney General to institute civil actions in the name of the United States government to remedy denial of suffrage, thus ensuring that such cases would not be tried by white Southern juries. The southern caucus in the Senate, knowing it could not defeat the legislation, acted effectively to blunt its edge by removing the, for them, problematic aspects of Titles III and IV. They did not foresee, in doing so, that Eisenhower already had the legal right to deploy federal troops.

As Southern states began shifting to the Right, partially under electoral pressure, and initiated a range of strategies intended to help circumvent or defy the *Brown* ruling, Faubus was perceived as the weak link in the chain. He faced the contumely of local Massive Resistance groups, and criticism from other Southern Democrats. By the summer of 1957, they were using their position to intervene against Faubus and support local Massive Resistance efforts. Decisive in this context was the Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin and former Georgia house speaker Roy Harris, who spoke at a meeting of the Capital Citizens' Council and let locals know that Georgia would not meekly comply with a court order to desegregate. (McMillen, 2007: 133) Faubus

had come to office as a New Deal liberal and a ‘moderate’ on race. For some of his segregationist opponents, this meant he was both a “rampant integrationist” and concomitantly a “communist” (Reed, 1999: 90-91) In fact, Faubus owed his victory in large degree to the AFL-CIO’s mobilisation of a biracial working class campaign, and pledged to support the agenda of organised labour, including the abolition of the poll tax. (Pierce, 2009) He had carefully cultivated black voters, appointed African Americans to the state Democratic central committee, and refused to intervene in the Hoxie battle to defend segregated schools. He was reviled by Massive Resistance groups precisely because his line of peaceful compliance with desegregation set an example which countered that of other state leaders, and because it weakened the solidity of the Southern front. (McMillen, 2007)

The third factor in the breakthrough for the segregationist coalition in Little Rock was the class dimension which was inscribed in the state administration’s business-friendly development strategies, and concomitantly its education policies. The Blossom Plan for responding to *Brown*, involving minimum compliance the court’s decision, was structured by precisely these class divisions. The superintendent had moved slowly, with a view to alighting on a plan that would be acceptable to Little Rock elites. He waited until 1956, after the second Brown decision had qualified the first with the phrase “with all deliberate speed,” before articulating his plan of minimum compliance. While canvassing opinion, he spent most of his time wooing capitalists and professionals who resided in the wealthier north-west, ensuring their cooperation. He had planned for compliance to begin in 1957, after a new high school

had been built in the wealthy west end of town, servicing the rich and politically dominant fifth ward. (Jacoway, 1982: 21) This meant that Central High would service exclusively working-class neighbourhoods, while the new high school would not have to worry about integration. (Kirk, 1999: 69-70). Blossom was distrusted by civil rights leaders (Jacoway, 1976) and by Massive Resistance figures. The distrust among working class whites in the city was made worse by the perception – inaccurate but potent (Williams, 1997) – that the new schools being built in the wealthier areas were intended to further shield the rich from integration.

This meant that, whereas in previous episodes of Massive Resistance agitation the protests had been mounted by middle class notables, in this case there was a large, conservative and segregationist contingent of white workers who were outraged and ready to join the political battle. The school board, largely elected by middle class constituents, appeared to be oblivious of the growing sentiment. The elections to the school board that summer saw the success of ‘moderate’ candidates aligned to the Blossom Plan. The school board was aware that its plan was opposed by the NAACP as too minimal, but was convinced that the Blossom Plan would be implemented with the governor’s support. (Jacoway, 1982: 21-22; Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 37-38) Faubus, however, had been subtly adjusting his stance in response to the opposition for some time. In public, he cleaved to ‘law and order’, endorsing integration right up until the beginning of September 1957, but he also began to drop hints that he would. The account of Representative Brooks Hays, a racial ‘moderate’ with a track record of negotiating compromises, held that decisive for Faubus’s reversal was the

resonance that he feared the criticisms from Southern leaders were were finding among Arkansas whites. He believed that the “overwhelming sentiment” in both Little Rock and the wider state was against the integration of the school. Increasingly, he complained of a lack of public support form the business class in winning a consensus for ‘moderation’. “His political future might well be at stake” if he did not pursue a similar course to that of hardline segregationists in other states. (Hays, 1959) Thus it was that on 4<sup>th</sup> September, as the new school year began, Faubus deployed National Guards to prevent compliance with the court ordered desegregation of Central High.

The fourth decisive factor in enabling a Massive Resistance movement to cohere was the recomposition of the state apparatus, and the enabling role of anticomunism in securing this. Despite the successful crushing of this momentary insurgency on the part of the Arkansas governor by President Eisenhower, and despite the considerable opposition to Faubus’s posture from relatively progressive forces, including teaching professionals and the *Arkansas Gazette*, the balance of political forces within the state shifted decisively to the Right. This inaugurated a period of more entrenched and bitter Massive Resistance, which has often been overlooked. (Gordy, 2009) Faubus’s move to the right, embracing a populist combination of measures to favour the poor and anti-union, segregationist politics (Pierce, 2009), began to be visible in 1956, just as former Governor Francis Cherry’s campaigner, Jim Johnson, was building an effective base through his leadership of the Arkansas White Citizens’ Council. At the beginning of the year, Faubus had told the New York Times that according to his own

polling, some 85% of Arkansans were against school desegregation. He was unwilling, as a result, to “be party to any attempt to force acceptance of a change to which the people are so overwhelmingly opposed.” In fact, the figures were taken from an unrepresentative poll of people in eastern Arkansas, where opposition was strongest, but the Governor used it as a basis for beginning a shift toward resistance. Faubus and Johnson nonetheless began to compete for the segregationist vote. The Association of Citizens Councils of Arkansas reported approvingly on the suggestions from both Johnson and Faubus, exhorting the General Assembly to oppose desegregation, proposing an amendment to the US Constitution preventing the exercise of federal power over public schools, and tacitly allowing school boards final legal authority to impose segregation. (Kirk, 1999: 66-67; Association of Citizens’ Councils of Arkansas, 1956)

In their earliest manifestations, and unlike the Citizens’ Councils of the Deeper South, Massive Resistance groups in Arkansas did not foreground the battle against communism. Their most persistent and vociferously expressed argument was that the integration of schools was – as Jim Johnson claimed, using a faked tape of an NAACP speech to illustrate his point – the means to “integration in the white bedroom”. It was the threat of ‘miscegenation’, often portrayed as the corruption of white daughters, which galvanised the earliest activities of white parents against integration. In the softer public relations spiel, integration was depicted as a worthy but wholly misguided effort to abolish the entire structure of segregation, against human nature, and against the interests of “the Southern Negro” who was “the one

who will be blown away” by the “racial dynamite” being deployed. (McMillen, 2007: 128; White Citizens Council, 1955; White Citizens’ Council, 1956) It was in this case the reorganisation of the state which put anticomunist teeth on the movement. While to the outside world, Faubus’s tilt only became visible after Little Rock, the organisation of elements within the state for a counter-subversive thrust against civil rights, with anticomunism providing its sharp edge, was apparent in the months before. The Attorney General, Bruce Bennett, had been elected in 1956 on a segregationist ticket. He was the most active red-hunter in the state, and was grooming himself as a potential successor to Faubus. By the spring of 1957, he had already persuaded the Governor to sign off on a State Sovereignty Commission, a mini-HUAC which was to engage in investigations of civil rights leaders and expose ‘communism’. In March, Artie Gregory, senator for Pulaski county, attempted to introduce a bill to root out ‘subversives’ in the teaching profession. Faubus vetoed it, but it made a comeback the following year. By August, the Arkansas General Assembly had already implemented a series of measures intended to help obstruct desegregation. (Woods, 1997; Woods, 2004: 72-73; Gordy, 2009: 99)

The shift, decisively entrenched by the governor’s intervention at Central High, was further consolidated in the Extraordinary Session of the legislature held in 1958, which resulted in the passing of the bills, Act 10 and Act 115, which among other measures implemented state senator Artie Gregory’s law targeting ‘subversives’, required that state employees declare their political affiliations, and prevented NAACP members from being employed by the government. Governor Faubus,

having previously vetoed Gregory's bill on the grounds that it was impossible to force people to become "patriots" by legal diktat, performed a full volte face on this after Little Rock, when he embraced a "blend of coded white supremacy and McCarthyism". Having been red-baited by his predecessor for, among other things, his attendance at Commonwealth College, designated by the US Justice Department as a communist front, he became a leading Southern red-baiter. Reaching out to state conservatives, including Massive Resistance groups such as the Capital Citizens' Council, he sought to solidify his re-election campaign by calling an Extraordinary Session of the legislature to pass a series of measures aimed at obstructing integration, and outlawing civil rights tactics such as sit-ins. (Woods, 1997; Woods, 2004: 72-73)

It was the appearance of a successful black political leadership which the rulers of Little Rock understood to be the most palpable evidence of communist conspiracy. During the legislative hearings, Bennett suggested that Little Rock had long been one of a number of "predetermined trouble areas" identified by the Communist Party "to be developed for trouble purposes". He argued that: "from 1928 to 1958 an intensive communist conspiracy climaxed in Little Rock". While leading black activists such as Thurgood Marshall and Daisy Bates were identified as among those having "an almost incredible tie-in with Communist and Communist front organizations," Bennett stipulated that the point of such trouble-making was to "attract and use the Negro – not to help the Negro". Key witnesses also suggested that several educational institutions, up to and including the University of Arkansas, had been

penetrated by communist conspirators, while civil rights groups such as the Southern Regional Council, and activists such as Lee and Grace Lorch, were identified as having ties to communism. Beyond the hearings, leading state politicians began to bang the anticommunist drum. State Council leader James Johnson asserted that there was an “active Communist cell” pulling the strings throughout the Little Rock crisis and that he would even produce the “card numbers” of “Communist Organizers”. (Dudziak, 2000: 124-125; Woods, 126-127; McMillen, 2007: 128)

Communism was positioned, then, not as a comprehensible politics of black resistance to segregation, but as a racially obscure ‘outside’ element of which blacks are the unfortunate instruments. As we have seen in the previous chapter, such arguments are structured around a kernel of white-supremacist fantasy, in which the impossibility of the desire for limitless, lawless enjoyment of and disposal of black lives is symptomatically embodied by communism. Yet the major target of the new laws was not the Communist Party, but the NAACP: they, the Massive Resistance right argued, were subversives who posed a security threat. It was their members who were first priority in being denied state employment. (Woods, 2004: 74-77) With the local state deploying anticommunist techniques to break up the civil rights movement, the Massive Resistance organisations began to echo the same concerns. In October 1957, Reverend Wesley Pruden of the Capital Citizens’ Council placed in advertisement in the local newspapers asking “Can a Christian be a Segregationist?” He answered: “Race-mixing in our schools is a Communist doctrine. . . . Segregation has Christian sanction, integration is Communistic.” (Goddard, 2004) What was

specifically ‘Communistic’ about integration was that it threatened to destroy the southern way of life and produce a deep racial impoverishment, “mongrelization”. The CCC, following the lead set by the Attorney General, the governor and the general assembly, began to make assiduous efforts to link the NAACP and desegregation to communism. The more that the state administration’s repressive policies, particularly the purge of ‘subversives’ in the teaching profession, provoked civil society opposition, the more the Massive Resistance groups had recourse to anticommunism – all those opposed to the purge were nothing other than “left-wingers”, “fellow travellers” and “Communists”. Even the mild business opposition from the Little Rock Chambers of Commerce was put down to their being “communist fronters”. (McMillen, 2007: 137 & 139-140; Jacoway, 2007: 274) Such indiscriminate charges seem crude, but aside from the fantasmatic kernel which enables such discourses to persist, they perform a useful function in enabling the counter-transformist, reactionary social movement to function.

Ultimately, judged in terms of its avowed goals, the Massive Resistance movement in Arkansas was a failure. It did not prevent desegregation, and even Faubus’s move, modelled on similar proposals in neighbouring states such as Georgia, of closing the public schools for a year in 1958-59 rather than allowing them to be integrated, was soon overcome by federal legal intervention. Ultimately, although the opposition within Arkansas to Faubus’s extreme move was widespread and significant, the balance of political forces within the central, federal state was determinant. (See Chapter Five). However, what had begun as some scattered

fragments of embattled resistance, had fused into a powerful social movement, linking elements of the ‘white working class’ to some well-placed state elites and businessmen through the articulating leadership of a core of middle class notables using the techniques and resources of middle class protest movements. The geo-economic and class dimensions of the struggle had worked to their advantage at key moments, and had helped to shift the balance of class and political forces condensed within the local state apparatus from a cautiously centrist position to the hard segregationist right.

Anticommunism had worked, not in the initial framing of the struggle, but in giving it a precise fantasmatic projection against which the aggression of the social movements and the state could be directed, in articulating efforts within and beyond the state apparatuses, and in providing a repertoire of political practices and significations through which the civil rights coalition could be weakened, divided and placed on the defensive.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **Social Movements II: Civil Rights, Communism and Anticommunism.**

*This chapter concludes the substantial core of the thesis, by examining the role of anticommunism in dividing, disrupting and disorganising the civil rights movement at key points. It addresses directly the ongoing problem which is usually confronted in an historiographical register, but which has been the problem addressed in this research in a sociological register: did Cold War anticommunism do more to advance the cause of civil rights, by providing an unprecedented political opportunity structure, or restrain its development, by disabling its most committed and precocious organisational expressions? Here I use the sociology of social movements already developed in the previous chapter to draw out and evaluate what I regard as the underlying assumptions of the historical debate. Ultimately, I contend that anticommunism worked in the period from 1945 to 1954 to disrupt and roll back an incipient civil rights movement. I argue that the Communist-led elements of the civil rights struggle, however problematic the politics of the Communist Party in relation to civil rights, cannot be segmented off and reduced to the influence of the 'long arm of Moscow' or even the imperatives of the party leadership, but had similar socio-structural origins to the remainder of the civil rights movement. I argue that anticommunism was then redeployed, with some limited success for a period of time, against the new Southern civil rights movement emerging from Montgomery, before*

*the breakdown of the national anticommunist consensus and the effective neutralisation of anticommunist legislation enabled a successful civil rights upsurge, driving the anticommunist hold-outs back to a few core, Deep South states. I conclude by examining these dynamics in relation to the movements in Montgomery, and Selma.*

### **Civil rights: the long and the short of it.**

Thus far, this research has focused on the extent to which anticommunism enabled the cohesion and co-ordination of responses to civil rights. Anticommunism, I have argued, was more strongly a factor in the unity and preservation of the Jim Crow coalition, as it began to come under attack, than it was a solvent. Yet what is the relationship between the civil rights struggle, and anticommunism?

As far as Southern segregationists were concerned, civil rights was not a real issue, but a trojan horse for communists intent on weakening the American polity for ultimate downfall. Yet many leading civil rights organisations vehemently rejected this association. The NAACP, for example, adopted a strongly anticommunist liberalism. In doing so, it broke with the communist Paul Robeson, purged one of its founding members W. E. B. Du Bois who was at this stage a ‘fellow traveler’, and adopted measures to neutralise any influence of communism in their own organisation. Leaders of organisations from the National Urban League to CORE vociferously exonerated themselves of any connection to communism. (Horne, 2010:

154-155; Berg, 2007; Lieberman, 2005: 9-11 & 30) The dominant discourse of mainstream civil rights organisations attempted to exploit the democratic elements of American anticommunist nationalism. Martin Luther King Jr. argued in 1955 that: “If we were incarcerated behind the iron curtains of a communistic nation – we couldn’t do this. ... We are here because of our love for democracy”. (Quoted, Laville & Lucas, 1996: 568)

Did the anticommunism of civil rights organisations harm their ability to organise? Much in this argument appears to depend on the framing of civil rights. In broad and schematic terms, the debate ranges between the ‘Montgomery to Memphis’ timeframe, and the ‘Long Civil Rights Movement’ timeframe. The earlier frame is ‘King-centric’, in that it focuses on the period of Martin Luther King Jr’s prominence in the movement from 1955 to his assassination in 1968, while the latter adverts to a deeper social-structural logic, lasting roughly from 1930 to 1970. The earlier focuses on the spontaneous, discontinuous emergence of civil rights as a *national* movement in 1954, and attributes its successes largely to communicative, ‘non-violent’ means. The latter embeds civil rights in a process of black mobilisation which is always necessarily *local* rather than straightforwardly ‘national’, in which civil rights is continuous with black power, and in which there is a diversity of complementary tactics ranging from non-violence to armed self-defence. (Kirk, 2004; Fairclough, 1990; Lawson, 1991; McAdam, 1982; Hall, J. D., 2005; Cobb, Jr., 2014; Korstad & Lichtenstein, 1988; Bloom, 1987; Theoharris & Woodard, 2001; Cha-Jua & Lang, 2007)

The ‘Long Civil Rights Movement’ timeframe has the advantage, for this research, that it is consistent with the temporalities already described earlier in the thesis (Chapters Four and Five) in terms of the structural transformations of the Southern economy and state beginning in the 1930s, as well as the wider national changes initiated in the period of the New Deal and the associated social movements. But what is the evidence of a germinal civil rights movement taking shape in the 1930s? There is certainly little evidence of either of the two mainstream parties adopting civil rights themes in that decade. Insofar as black voters settling in the urban areas of the north began to vote Democrat, it was because of the economic benefits of the New Deal – although even these were structured in such a way as to disadvantage black workers in the South. (Lowndes, 2008: 13-14; Katznelson, 2006; King & Smith, 2011: 63-64) Nonetheless, the legal battle for equality in education which culminated in *Brown* was launched two decades before in 1935. This was also the period in which the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) emerged, initially representing a more radical and less racially exclusive form of unionism than the traditional American Federation of Labor (AFL). (To some degree, the difference was made by the presence of communists and leftists in CIO unions. See Goldfield, 2006: 80-81; Goldfield, 1993). The March on Washington Movement was launched in 1941 with the involvement of A Phillip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, which pressured Roosevelt into signing Executive Order 8802 creating the Fair Employment Practice Committee, supposed to end racist discrimination in federal employment practices – thought it was barely enforced. The NAACP experienced a near tenfold surge in its

membership during the first half of the forties, rising from 50,000 to 450,000 between 1940 and 1946. (Horne, 2010: 148; Korstad & Lichtenstein, 1988: 787) By 1944, a Supreme Court re-composed for the New Deal era had outlawed ‘all-white’ primaries in *Smith v. Allwright*, resulting in an increase in the proportion of black southerners registered to vote from 3% to 20%. (Klarman, 2004: 236) Civil rights had emerged as a national issue for the first time, and it was this which produced the Dixiecrat breach with Truman. (Sitkoff, 1978; Frederickson, 2001)

What are the implications of this historiographical debate for present purposes? In brief, the ‘Long Civil Rights’ argument, by situating the period of mass struggle bracketed between 1954 and 1968 as a movement within a movement, opens up a critique of the anticommunist consensus that would otherwise be occluded. Even if, following Cha-Jua & Lang (2007), we end up problematising the ‘Long Civil Rights’ argument for downplaying the fractures in this historical approach – or, following Fairclough (1990: 388), we say that the “seamless web” of history risks becoming “homogenized mush” – its far more expansive account of movement-building, its account of the structural conditions in which the movement emerged, allows us to escape a restrictive view of civil rights struggle as a Cold War phenomenon. In fact, it allows one to argue that the de-radicalising impact of the Cold War so de-fanged the institutions of the civil rights movement that it delayed its maturation and altered the social basis of what did eventually emerge. Thus, left-wing critics of McCarthyism such as Marable (2007), MacLean (2006) and Horne (1988, 1991) argue that an infrastructure of civil rights, embedded in a progressive left milieu, was developing

well before the Montgomery bus boycott, but had been deformed and broken up by Cold War anticommunism. As Marable explained, most of the important Supreme Court decisions barring Brown had already been taken, and black electoral registration was surging in the South, but little capital was made from this. Efforts to get a disobedience movement going were thwarted by the civil rights leadership terrified of repression. (Marable, 2007: 17-23) These authors echo the views of some in the civil rights movement who were themselves targeted by anticommunist apparatuses. (Braden, 1964; Braden, 1980)

The argument has some weight. The anxiety that civil rights could be overcome by red-baiting was in evidence early on. The President's Committee on Civil Rights, reporting in October 1947 at the inception of the Cold War, worried that in the “state of near-hysteria” about communism, “genuine democrats” risked being crushed between the “hysteria and repression”. Nonetheless, and despite Truman’s endorsement of the findings of the Committee and recognition of changes that needed to be made, the imperatives of repression often came first. Thus, the staunchly anti-racist Progressive Party’s presidential stance in 1948 was vehemently denounced as a communist or ‘fellow traveling’ mobilisation. In the early 1950s, the US government confiscated the passports of leading African American intellectuals and celebrities such as Paul Robeson, W E B Du Bois, and William Patterson of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), on the grounds that their propensity to speak against American racism overseas was “contrary to the best interests of the United States”. Caribbean communists Claudia Jones and CLR James were deported, and leaders of the CRC

and the Council on African Affairs (CAA) were placed under investigation. The effect of this was to encourage civil rights leaders and organisations to fight hard to detach themselves from the communist stigma in a way that weakened the most radical and internationalist wing of the movement, particularly those who were inclined to be critical of Washington's foreign policy, or to align with anticolonial movements. In the case of the NAACP, this meant not only driving out Du Bois under pressure from Eleanor Roosevelt, but also launching a ferocious broadside against the CRC for its 1951 petition, *We Charge Genocide*. In this, it was pressured by a Board member who had been appointed to the President's Committee on Civil Rights, Channing Tobias, who – asked to intervene by the State Department – condemned the “traitorous” petition for trying to “discredit” the US government without discussing genocide in the Soviet Union. By 1955, the CAA had collapsed under the pressure, and the following year the CRC and the National Negro Labor Council also folded. The same fate befell the Southern Youth Negro Congress, subject both to red-hunting and terror threats from the Klan and Alabama's Sheriff Bull Connor, and the National Negro Labor Council. Even those who acquiesced in the anticommunist crusade were stigmatised by Federal and especially Southern state forces as communists, while the FBI devoted considerable resources to sniffing out supposed red influence in the civil rights movement, including King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). (Ceplair, 2011: 87; Dudziak, 1995: 546; Horne, 2010: 156-157; Anderson, 2003: 191-193; Lieberman, 2005: 10-14, 28-32; McDuffie, 2009: 92-93; Braden, 1980: 113; Von Eschen, 1996a & 1996b; Hall, S., 2005: 7-8; Munro, 2015)

Nor was it just the civil rights movement that was directly affected by Cold War imperatives. The culture of anticommunism ensured that the radical elements of the CIO who had played a critical role in assailing racism in the union movement were driven out or disciplined. The CIO's capitulation to anticommunism is particularly tragic in this respect. The same red-hunting theatics which the anticommunists of the Organization had helped themselves to in their war against the left-wing of the union movement redounded against them in their attempt, known as 'Operation Dixie,' to build an organisation in the South. It was logical that they should do so, since the South was industrialising and populous. Moreover, employers often used the regional disparities to their advantage, shifting production facilities to the South in order to exploit lower cost labour. However, while its stand should logically have involved supporting biracial unionism, its desire to avoid being tainted by communism meant that it used white male organisers, refused integrated meetings, and explicitly framed its arguments in an anticommunist idiom. This did not protect them from red-baiting. The Southern States Industrial Council baited the CIO by claiming its initials stood for "Christ is Out – Communism is On," while opponents ranging from the AFL to belligerent local press agreed that it was indeed a "communist" campaign – accusations which were given some sustenance by the activities of HUAC and other red-hunting bodies. Local Klans and other anti-union vigilantes were unleashed to terrorise and kill union activists. Taft-Hartley deprived union organisers of protections they had hitherto enjoyed, allowing southern states to pass 'right to work' laws which inflicted a series of defeats on organised labour. The CIO's anticommunism also resulted in the excluding of African American workers

from its campaign, which meant that it missed the opportunity to build on the changing structure of work and production and forge a new mass, biracial unionism. (Marable, 2007: 18-19; Levenstein, 1981; Genry, 2003; Honey, 2004; Zieger, 1995: 375)

In the wider context, the civil rights issue was travestied in an attempt to win the global anticommunist struggle. Consider, for example, a worldwide propaganda tour funded by the State Department, aiming at countering the appeal of communism. The organisers, aware that they needed a black woman on the panel, chose a lawyer named Edith Sampson. Sampson was no political organiser, but a skilled advocate who quickly became a celebrated anticommunist figure in the US media. During the tour, it became evident that the major reason the US risked losing the Cold War in the Third World was not necessarily the profound appeal of communism, so much as the evident racism in the United States – above all the wave of lynchings in the South. Sampson could not deny that such oppression existed, but her commitment to anticommunist nationalism led her to downplay it. Speaking to an Indian audience, she explained that while African Americans did not “have equal rights in all parts of the United States” they nonetheless had “advanced further in this period than any similar group in the entire world”. This, being addressed to an audience just freed from British colonial rule, could be described as hubristic. Sampson went on to explain that she “would rather be a Negro in America than a citizen in any other land.” The performative implication of such a statement, that being an African American conferred more advantage and less disadvantage than being – say – a white

European, can only make sense in the context of Cold War propaganda. In a speech in Germany, she was quoted as asserting that the condition of African Americans was “wonderful,” and that they were “happier in the United States … than they would be any place else in the world”. Such comments were not exhaustive of Sampson’s interventions, which also called for the US government to take expedient action to end segregation. Yet, her ferocious defence of ‘the American way of life’ became “a salve for American conscience” and an occasion for the national press, from the *New York Times* to the *Reader’s Digest* to gloatingly exonerate the United States. (Laville & Lucas, 1996: 572-575; Cox, 1951: 362n; Dudziak, 1994; Lentz & Gower, 2010: 75-76).

Certainly, this is not the end of the story. As Dudziak (2000), Delton (2013) and Laville & Lucas (1996) have argued in different ways, the Cold War context also provided a novel political opportunity structure. Delton argues that anticomunism, far from being a source of conservatism and reaction, produced a liberal political climate that was intolerant of extremes and favourable to social reform. “Far from quelling the civil rights movement,” Delton argues, “the Cold War provided persuasive justification for its demands” and “provided blacks with real political leverage” without which “it is not clear that *any* reforms would have occurred”. (Delton, 2013: 96) Delton’s arguments, though partially framed as a critique of Dudziak’s, can be seen as complementing the latter’s contention that the Cold War helped liberate African Americans by adding to the pressure on reluctant administrations to implement reforms. Laville and Lucas meanwhile point out the

framing opportunities provided by the Cold War. “If the government used the anti-Communist argument to seek [the NAACP’s] cooperation, the NAACP employed the same logic to further its program.” And “if African American leaders suspected a lack of government support for their agenda, then Americanism could be translated into dissent.” (Laville & Lucas, 1996: 585 & 590) As such, even if anticomunism divided the civil rights movement and marginalised the radical left, it strengthened the mainstream leaderships and improved their leverage. This representation is not totally inaccurate. And even radical left scholars whom one would expect to be opposed to such a perspective acknowledge elements of it. Thus, for example, Horne suggests that: “the agonized retreat from Jim Crow … was an essential component of the effort to shore up U.S. national security”. (Horne, 2007: 143; see also Skrentny, 1998)

However, while it is useful to make space for the productive aspect of the Cold War in shaping civil rights, once again the premises upon which this analysis is founded need to be clarified. There are good reasons, for example, to think that Delton overstates the role of Cold War anticomunism producing a liberal consensus among state actors. For example, she maintains that it was the Cold War context which led to the perpetuation of a non-segregationist Supreme Court in the 1950s. (Delton, 2013: 114-116) In fact, the recomposition of the state apparatuses began under the ‘New Deal’ in response to labour militancy and left-wing mobilisation – and it was precisely these mobilisations that anticomunism helped break up. (Klarman, 2004; Bell, 2004: 24) However, underpinning these arguments are a

number of more fundamental assumptions, not always explicit, which are worth spelling out: i) the Cold War was more or less straightforwardly a struggle by a democratic United States to ‘contain’ communism and thus protect a liberal world order; ii) the African American population’s only major strength resided in its ability to persuade white power centres of the justice, or necessity, or inevitability, of the changes which it sought; iii) civil rights action was thus fundamentally *communicative*. I have already problematised the first assumption in Chapter Three. The term ‘Cold War’ refers to many complex and discrete processes which, while ideologically coded in anticommunist language, could only by certain leaps of fantasy, be considered relevant to ‘containment’. As such, it is a mistake to see the Cold War as unambiguously providing a useful political context. The US attempt to develop an informal empire sustained by unprecedented military power necessitated a degree of political centralisation and the redeployment of terror/consent, in ways which led to the repression of civil rights organisations. It also positioned the US government against the anticolonial movements from which the civil rights struggle was to draw sustenance. I have also cast doubt on the second and third assumptions in the previous chapter. In this respect, I have stressed the role of ideology in coalition-building, securing the unity-in-difference of heteroclite elements. In this perspective, it is not obvious that the advantages of ideological opportunities (those of ‘Vital Center’ liberalism) binding mainstream elements of civil rights to slow-moving, conservative institutions of the state and media outweighed the disadvantages of those opportunities arising from a context in which the civil rights movement’s radical wing was systematically crushed.

Finally, I have stressed the role of social reproduction, and the questioning and disruption thereof, in the formation of social movements. A social movement often involves the systematic deployment of what Piven (2006) calls ‘disruptive capacity,’ and this was certainly true of the civil rights movement as it developed. African Americans were not simply a disposable population, but rather were integral to the labour force and productive processes that sustained American capitalism. By the post-war period, black workers had been assimilated into unions, and were becoming a larger voting bloc in northern cities, while a sizeable and potentially influential black middle class had also grown, capable of funding civil rights activism. Their disruptive capacity was not minimal. It is at best tendentious, and at worst dismissive of black agency as well as the details of history, to proclaim that no civil rights reforms were possible without the Cold War.

What needs to be stressed here is that anticommunism has no positive content in itself. If the anticommunist discourse of the Cold War contained liberalising elements – of the ‘Vital Center’ variety – this is in part because a particular balance of class and political forces had already been established through previous, successful social struggles. Insofar as Cold War anticommunism incorporated elements of New Deal liberalism, it also worked to restrain its further radicalisation and hold up the pace of change. It armed repressive forces, divided and scattered their previously well-organised opponents, minimised the problems of racial oppression and thus deprived civil rights of its normative force, and closed down political opportunity structures for

black liberation. However, to fully appreciate the role of anticomunism in the movement is to have some appraisal of the complex situation of communism, and particularly the Communist Party (CPUSA) in and around the civil rights movement.

### **For and Against the Communist Party USA**

Just as the civil rights movement did not spring from Montgomery, *ex nihilo*, in 1954, so anticomunism in the movement was not freshly minted in 1948. The NAACP had long had a difficult relationship with the CPUSA. A Phillip Randolph, the radical socialist who vocally denounced communist ‘conspiracy’ in the postwar years, had as early as 1941 been happy for the Dies Committee to “destroy every vestige of foundation for Trojan Horse and Fifth Column conspiracies against the American government.” This was quite a striking stance for someone who had himself been the subject of the FBI’s red-hunting, as indeed so many black Americans were from the very inception of the Bureau’s existence. Nor was this purely confined to the liberal black intelligentsia and leadership. The anticomunist register would be heard in the radical black voices of Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, George Padmore and Max Yergan, all of whom had experience of the Communist Party, either as members or as ‘fellow travellers’. (Marable, 2007: 20; Luff, 2012; Schmidt, 2000: 181; O’Reilly, 1987; Anthony III, 2006; Wright, 2005; Marable, 2011)

As Berg (2007), Arnesen (2012a) and Aldridge (2003) have argued, black anticomunism had a basis in the practical experiences of attempting to work alongside, within or against the CPUSA. The Communists had played an often productive role in leading a Popular Front left and fighting racism. They had built up considerable respect in fighting the Scottsboro Boys case, and organising black textile workers during the Depression. (Solomon, 1998; Kelley, 1990) Yet, their swerving policy on the struggle against the Third Reich, an anfractuous loop from Popular Front antifascism, to the anti-imperialism of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, to the patriotic antifascism of the war effort, showed that they were too invested in the interests of Russia, the ‘socialist state,’ to respond effectively to the desires of American workers, black or white. For example, this meant that Randolph’s ‘March on Washington Movement’ was opposed by the CPUSA, on the grounds that it encouraged US participation in the war. Then, by 1941, when the Nazis invaded Russia, the CPUSA abandoned their militancy on the race question in favour of a patriotic front. (Arnesen, 2012a; Arnesen, 2012b; Janken, 2006)

Berg (2007) and Arnesen (2012a, 2012b) have done a great deal to substantiate the hypothesis that, far from anticomunism destroying potentially powerful “left-labor-civil rights coalition,” the coalition was never that strong to begin with, and the CPUSA deserves much of the blame for its downfall. Among the Party’s fatal flaws were: i) its tendency to anathematise opponents in the leadership of black organisations; ii) its prevarications on the race questions; and iii) its slavish devotion to the Moscow line. This included the flip-flopping on participation in World War II

and the subsequent swerving between the class peace and patriotism advocated by Earl Browder and the new militant dispensations demanded from Moscow, which led to Browder being ousted in favour of William Z Foster and the abandonment of patriotism in favour of a struggle against US imperialism and its Wall Street backers. Aspects of this narrative have already been well supported in widely read histories. (Starobin, 1972; Isserman, 1982; Ottanelli, 1991) As for the Party's civil rights activism, it had begun to use this to bolster its own base at the expense of the existing black leadership following its turn toward supporting the self-determination of the Black Belt in 1928. It waged an uncompromising and vituperative war against the existing 'bourgeois' black leadership, whom it alienated in the process, but did not scruple to abandon black liberation when, during World War II, it decided that protests against racist discrimination were contrary to the needs of a war they had recently derided as imperialist but now defended as antifascist. And such organisations as it was able to dominate, such as the National Negro Council and the Civil Rights Congress, were reduced to instruments of Party imperatives rather than of black liberation. Even the *We Charge Genocide* petition, which alleged that the perpetuation of Jim Crow and the brutalities involved constituted a government assault on the life of African Americans which would accord with the UN's definition of genocide, was intended to embarrass the US in favour of its Soviet rival. In the last analysis, what finished off the CPUSA was not anticomunist repression, but the invasion of Hungary and Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's crimes, both of which triggered mass departures from the Party. There are strong elements of truth in all of this, and the criticisms of the CPUSA are often well-founded.

However, there remains a few limitations to this type of approach. First, for all that Cold War black anticommunism did not emerge from a vacuum, nor is it safe to say that there was therefore no novelty in it, and no damage done therein. The truth is that there were not huge ideological gaps between the CPUSA and African American leaders in the pre-war period. Even Walter White supported the Party's reform programme, suggesting only that the NAACP was better placed to actually achieve it. (Janken, 2006) Second, it would be crude in the extreme to reduce the CPUSA's turn toward support black self-determination in 1928 to Third Period dogma or an attempt to instrumental black grievance. There was always a complex relationship between the CPUSA and African African freedom struggles, but as Lang (2009) points out, part of the Party's shift at that point owed itself to the influence of black members such as Cyril Briggs, Richard Moore and Otto Huiswood, as well as the wider milieus of black socialism and left-Garveyism. Third, while the NAACP had reason to be irritated with the Party's behaviour particularly during their management of the Scottsboro Boys case, it is difficult not to detect a whiff of sour grapes in some of their complaint about, in Roy Wilkins's words, "the Reds". Wilkins simultaneously accused the CPUSA of being instrumentally-minded, using the Scottsboro Boys as "martyrs," and of being sterile dogmatists obsessed with "abstract issues of Marxism" (Jonas, 2005: 139) The slightly more prosaic truth is that the Scottsboro Boys case came to the attention of the NAACP leadership after the CPUSA had already taken it up and demonstrated its potential as an issue. By the time Wilkins was appointed by the NAACP to intervene in the affair, the defence case was already being managed by

lawyers procured by the Communist Party. The CPUSA's intervention and organising around the case was a logical corollary of its militant anti-racist position. Fourth, it is reductive to treat organisations such as the Civil Rights Congress as nothing other than an auxiliary of the CPUSA's imperatives. The practical actions of the Congress, in defending African Americans and fighting civil rights cases pushed principles that, where won, were of *general* benefit to African Americans. (Horne, 1988)

This point segues into another theme, in both Arnesen and Berg, viz. that the anticomunist repression has been made too much of, and the misfortunes of some radical black figures was not such a terrible loss. Thus, Arnesen suggests that if Robeson and Du Bois were deprived of their right to travel, deprived of certain platforms that they'd hitherto held, and in Robeson's case deprived of income, "the actual content of the analyses ... and their sectarian tone suggest that the marginalization of these two iconic civil rights figures did not lead to any profound impoverishment of American political discourse." (Arnesen, 2012a: 28) This is crude, and emblematic of the problem with Arnesen's overall analysis, which is that it reduces the politics of the Communist Party and allied intellectuals to their least attractive manifestations – above all, their unjustifiably sanguine approach to the Soviet Union.

Berg takes a different route to essentially the same conclusion in that, having depicted socialism as being essentially extraneous to the African American freedom movement, he undertakes strenuous efforts to give the most benign possible

interpretation of the effects of anticommunism in it. Thus, in a discussion of the NAACP's anticommunist policy, he highlights Walter White's memorandum urging local chapters not to "call anybody and everybody a Communist" "just because those members disagree with the branch or its officers". "We do not want a witch hunt in the NAACP," White said, "but we want to be sure that we, and not the communists are running it." The existence of such a caution is significant, but precisely in what way requires careful unpacking. First of all, it was the duo of White and Wilkins who had helped push the anticommunist argument in the organisation, vowing to be "utterly ruthless in clean[ing] out the NAACP, and, making sue that the Communists were not running it". (Anderson, 2003b: 93) As Berg goes on to acknowledge, however, there was in fact precious little evidence discovered of 'Communist infiltration'. If there were not mass purges, it is in part because the anticommunist resolution was not based on real evidence of such infiltration, but was primarily a performative self-cleansing. White's warning attests, on the other hand, to a rational and well-grounded fear of anticommunism; as a form of politics which could work as well as any conspiracy to disrupt and disorganise the NAACP. As Leonard (2005) demonstrates, illegitimate claims of such infiltration served – despite White's injunction – as ideal material for organisational battles against individuals who could, with little evidence or thought, be accused of communism. Such paranoia in an organisation about a non-existent communist threat can hardly be explained away as simply a rational aversion to working with a party that had proved to be sectarian and dogmatic in practice. Moreover, it is difficult to sustain the claim that this anticommunism did little damage to the NAACP's struggle, given that it entailed

White and other NAACP leaders being eminently available to the Truman administration to effectively whitewash American racism in order to rebut “Soviet propaganda” – even going so far as to boast, in a manner resembling that of Sampson, that the quality of life for African Americans on key issues was rapidly approaching that of white Americans. Channing Tobias carefully downplayed the murder by a local Sheriff of four African Americans falsely imprisoned on rape charges, despite the victims being NAACP clients. It was left to organisations such as the Civil Rights Congress, which was obviously unafraid of handing the Soviet Union a propaganda coup, to assail the NAACP’s pusillanimity and prosecute the ideological war against American racism (Anderson, 2003b: 93-97) Another way to put this point would be to say that, contrary to what Berg and Arnesen assume, it is *precisely because black communists were pro-Soviet*, even to the point of glorifying an obviously oppressive state, that they had the potential to press home an advantage, by embarrassing the US in the international sphere – a crucial aspect of the civil rights struggle, and something that the NAACP had begun to resile from.

Many of the criticisms of the CPUSA hang on the actions and policy prescriptions of its leadership, and its adherence to the Moscow line. There is, as Janken (2006) argues, a danger here of overstating the cohesiveness of Communist practice. The implied premise of such an approach is that the behaviour of Communist Party members can be explained by the political line of the Communist Party leadership, which in turn can be explained by reference to the desiderata of the USSR. This is simply to beg the question concerning the conditions under which a political

organisation develops, finds recruits and reproduces itself. Certainly, the ‘long arm of Moscow’ explanations for CPUSA behaviour in traditionalist historiography are not particularly fruitful in examining local contexts, particularly in the South. As Taylor (2005, 2009) argues, the practice of the party in North Carolina was decided far more by local imperatives, such as the struggles against lynching and segregation, and the need for practical reforms than by national or even international affiliations. The involvement of party activists in what has been dubbed ‘civil rights unionism’ is evidence of local communist activists turning their practical ends to a radical assault on segregation in the labour movement and in the workplace. The history of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers (FTA) Local 22, which organised black and white tobacco workers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is a meet-exemplar of the kind of case that would be not be analytically well-served by such an indiscriminate approach. (Korstad & Lichtenstein, 1988; Korstad, 2003; Korstad, 2008) Here, local activists worked against pressure from the middle class black leadership, which was focused on ‘racial betterment’ through good relations with white leaders, to organise not just a militant unionism which enjoyed considerable success against management, but also a local culture and social milieu wherein the union hall provided entertainment, pedagogy and political agitation.

This was made possible because of a geoeconomic dynamic in which Southern urbanisation and industrialisation was drawing black workers off the plantations and sucking them into industries where they had previously only worked as a minority performing the most menial tasks. As Korstad (2008) puts it, a “predominantly

southern rural and small-town population” of African Americans became “one of the most urban of all major ethnic groups”. While the strikes of the 1930s had largely failed to make significant inroads in the South, particularly making little headway in the North Carolina textiles industry, the crisis of the South’s old geo-economy (addressed in Chapter Four) was providing an opening for new forms of militancy. And even though – or rather, *because* – the local Communist Party adhered closely to a union agenda in Local 22, the Winston-Salem branch was able to recruit strongly among African American workers, so that union militancy fed into a political radicalisation. This was part of a wider awakening which observers saw as the potential basis for a new mass movement. Yet, early Cold War red-baiting played an unmistakeable role in terminating the era of ‘civil rights unionism’. The Taft-Hartley rules, banning communists from holding union office, were used by the CIO as an occasion to instigate an internal war against communist-led unions, often relying on racist support in order to win. In Winston-Salem, the employers and rival, more ‘moderate’ unions, used red-baiting to divide the workforce, partially along racial lines, and ultimately displace Local 22. (Troy, 1958; Korstad & Lichtenstein, 1988; Honey, 1993; Korstad, 2003; Devinatz, 2005; Zieger, 2007: 162-163; Gentry, 2003: 51-83)

Communist-aligned organisations also addressed the problems of rural black workers in a way that the NAACP generally did not. It is not that the class dimension of African American oppression was lost on the NAACP, although it had not prioritised labour issues as such before the 1940s. Rather, its reticence stemmed in

part from the climate of the early Cold War, particularly since working on issues such as peonage would in many cases necessitate working with CPUSA organisations like the International Labour Defense – the organisation which had handled the Scottsboro Boys case. (Goluboff, 2007: 188) This was a missed opportunity on the NAACP's part. The crisis in the Southern geoeconomy that I've described in Chapter Four meant that the traditional structures of rural authority, which underpinned segregation, were shaken. Segregationist leaders such as Senator Eastland were terrified of the effects that this would induce. To secure economic rights for black workers in this domain would have accelerated the crisis of Jim Crow. The effective but narrow legal strategy focusing on issues such as lynching, voting and school integration, both expanded the political rights of African Americans, and severely restricted the possible extent of the gains that could be made on the legal terrain. (Goluboff, 2007) In particular, even as integration necessarily challenged the boundaries of the very notions of 'public' and 'private,' the strategy left the premises of the race management (Roediger & Esch, 2012) of labour intact. In this light, it is not useful to isolate the precocious forms of civil rights activism in which the Communist Party played a key role as a mere Moscow-driven instrumentalisation of America's 'race problem'. Rather, they should be understood in relation to many of the same socio-structural causes already adduced for the emergence of civil rights. These are: the crisis of agrarian production, the urbanisation of the population, the decline of authority based on personal relations, and the emergence of new forms of collectivity in the cities: in sum, the transitional crises of Jim Crow.

The red hunt did not leave the civil rights movement powerless, nor did it destroy the Left. Where the CPUSA fell, new activist cadres often came to take up the role, albeit on the basis of more conventional social democratic politics. (Taylor, 2008) NAACP lawyers such as Thurgood Marshall continued to work effectively in the legal terrain and, however narrowly it was pursued, the ultimate success in *Brown* was part of a wider contribution that the NAACP made to the formation of the ‘New Deal’ state. (Francis, 2014) The success of a new form of urban church-based activism in Montgomery, with NAACP activist Rosa Parks providing the initial spark of civil disobedience, indicated that alternative routes to struggle existed. However, while acknowledging the limitations of the CPUSA and its own contribution to its eventual marginalisation, and setting aside the significant effects of anticomunism on non-communists who were believed to be ‘soft’ on the issue, the erosion and destruction of existing organisations of black and radical activists prepared to challenge racism certainly weakened and retarded the incipient civil rights struggle. And insofar as it targeted communists, it helped prise apart a coalition centred on anti-racist class mobilisations which at least had the potential to play a constructive role in a mass civil rights movement.

### **The ‘red menace’ in the South: wounded in Montgomery, buried in Selma.**

In this concluding section of the chapter, I want to look at the effects of anticomunism within the civil rights movement that did eventually emerge, through the prism of two mobilisations which chronologically bookend the period I am

studying: Montgomery and Selma. I have gone into detail as to the extent of anticommunist ideologies and practices, as deployed in the formation of Massive Resistance organisations and state apparatuses protecting segregation, and conserving a flaking Jim Crow coalition. This coalition had been exceptionally broad, including: Southern and conservative Democrats, conservative Republicans, presidents, most members of Congress, most of the Supreme Court, most federal court and state judges, most civil service officials, most white businesses and unions, most white churches, most academic institutions, and a range of white-supremacist political organisations. (King & Smith, 2011: 65) Yet, by the 1940s, cracks were beginning to appear. The idea of a ‘white’ labour movement was being challenged. The Supreme Court ruled out white primaries. Some academic institutions began to timidly abandon racist barriers. By the 1950s, presidents tended to avoid explicitly opposing civil rights, while new businesses were quietly on the side of pragmatic reform.<sup>28</sup> So it was that by the time of Montgomery, it was not obvious that the Jim Crow system could survive, even if no one expected the sweeping changes that were afoot. Anticommunism had been deployed in the South to harry and contain civil rights activism well before Montgomery, and continued to be after Selma. But by the mid-Sixties, it had lost its potency. A staunch, well-organised region-wide resistance to desegregation had been collapsing, one state after another, resulting in Wallace’s well-known ‘last stand’ for white-supremacy in Alabama against the marching ranks of the civil rights coalition, protected by Federal forces. What changed?

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<sup>28</sup> In a 1963 survey, businesses were found to be no more open to integration than other Southern whites, but were more willing to make concessions for the sake of assuring the political stability needed to achieve economic growth. (Webb, 2004)

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, lasting from December 1955 to December 1956, represented the first major success of a grassroots, civil rights offensive. Overlapping with the Brown decisions, it followed years of successful anticommunist offensives which had broken down the alliances of the Popular Front left and left the mainstream civil rights institutions dependent on an alliance with elements of the Federal state, it pointed to the development of a new mode of organising. Among the conditions for this mode were: the urbanisation of the class structure among African Americans, as cotton collapsed and industrial development took place; the politicisation of black churches in their new urban environment, such that church leaders became outspoken civil rights leaders in themselves; the growth of black higher education institutions, linked to the emergence of a black middle class but also to the desire of Southern states and philanthropists to fund black education in order to avoid integration; the growth of the NAACP in the 1940s, mostly concentrated in the South; the growing possibilities for organisation as the Jim Crow coalition began to shed layers and the state began to accept initially limited civil rights reforms. This combination of factors enabled a new civil infrastructure based on the black churches, as detached from the mainstream and at times coopted civil rights institutions as from the old Left, and it also furnished a moral idiom which, though hardly at odds with dominant ideological traditions, was not simply subordinated to the liberal-conservative consensus. This was quite a reversal from the situation in the 1930s when Walter White could ask ‘Who owns the Negro Church?’ and answer: “the same people who own the factories”. Finally, there was a global context. The civil rights

struggle drew upon and was nourished by the anticolonial movements. King's autobiography stresses the distinctly American tradition of civil disobedience – that of Henry David Thoreau – in the formation of his own tactical repertoire, but just as important was Gandhi and his concept of *satyagraha*. (McAdam, 1982: 94-95, 98-99, 102, 103, 109-111; Selby, 2008; Dillard, 2001: 159; King Jr. & Carson, 1998: 46; Ansbro, 2000: 3-7)

In this context, another decisive condition for the success of civil rights struggles was the emergence of activist milieus in local, metropolitan settings. (Thornton III, 2002) This was important in part because national civil rights organisations, such as the NAACP, were often targeted for legal repression and even statewide bans; and in part because where they could operate, they only did so on the invitation and with the decisive groundwork of local activist cadres. These local groupings, the “levels of indigenous organization” facilitated by ongoing socio-demographic transformations (McAdam, 1983), also provide a context in which tactics, or repertoires of contention (Tilly, 2004) can be experimented with. This is where the novelty of tactics such as boycotts, and the particular ensemble of actors implementing them, ought not to be over-stated. The tactic had been used by the Southern Negro Youth Conference to try to desegregate buses in Birmingham in 1942, in much the same way that SSNC activists who tried to register black voters had antecedents in 1930s Alabama communists. One of those who had been impressed by the use of this tactic in the Thirties was a young Edgar Nixon, a future leader of the local NAACP chapter and leading activist in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. (McDuffie, 2009: 96)

Nonetheless, the ability to make such tactics effective is what needs to be explained. In Montgomery, a number of local factors helped. The demise of the old political machine of mayor William A Gunter, and the continued brutality of the police force, indicated the necessity of rationalisation and reorganisation in the repressive apparatuses. The mayor embarked upon a slow-moving reform agenda, pushed along by pressure from black community organisations, and middle class white allies such as Virginia Foster and Clifford Durr, for the hiring of black police officers. The populist mayoral candidate Dave Birmingham gave assurances to black organisations that he would respect these demands, and acted to implement them upon being elected in November 1953. Birmingham had been assisted to office by the growing political independence of white lower middle class voters which introduced a new element of class-populist politics to the city. On the other hand, the changes wrought by *Smith v Allwright* contributed to a steady increase in black electoral participation, despite state-level attempts at obstruction. Even though the black electorate only comprised 7.5% of the electorate in 1955, while blacks represented 37% of the population, they could wield the balance of power between rival voting blocs, be they business-led or populist. As a result, they were able to achieve what in retrospect appear to be mild reforms, but which in the context may have given evidence that change could be won through persistence. In addition, while the local NAACP branch had been predominantly middle class and male, there was a growing organisation of the city's black poor, in which Edgar Nixon played a key role, and of professional, college-educated black women, through the Women's Political Council

(WPC), which was often able to be more militant and confrontational than male-dominated organisations. These were the forces which, alongside black churches, provided some of the organisational infrastructure for the bus boycott, and which would be fused in the Montgomery Improvement Association. (Thornton III, 2002: 20-41; Robinson, 1987: 22-29; Robnett, 1997: 55-60)

That a largely middle class black leadership chose to target bus segregation may seem counterintuitive. The majority of those affected by the segregation ordinances ruling that bus conductors had to organise seating so as to ensure a separation of the race, were working class blacks who, Rosa Parks estimated, comprised anything between 75 to 90% of the passengers. It was they who had to stand *en bloc* if a white person desired a seat, they who suffered routine abuse from white bus drivers. Most whites and more affluent blacks owned cars. Nonetheless, many of the core activists including not only Parks but Jo Ann Robinson, had experienced humiliation and threats of violence on the buses. Moreover, the long-term goal was progressive integration, through carefully graduated reforms. With a political environment amenable to cautious reformism, the minor act of civil disobedience on the part of the trained NAACP activist, Rosa Parks, allowed Nixon, the WPC, and the young Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., to plan a campaign for what at first was an extremely modest goal: reorganising the plan of seating segregation in a way that would be less disadvantageous to blacks. (Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 19-21; Robinson, 1987: 19-22; Robnett, 1997: 56-57) So it was that Montgomery initiated a dynamic subsequently repeated in several locales: “a handful of black ministers helped

initiated the boycott, then secured the support of most of the city's remaining black clergy, who, in turn, actively solicited the cooperation of their congregations". (McAdam, 1982: 132)

Another important condition for the emergence of an effective civil rights movement, however, was the weakening of anticommunism at the national level. The Senate's decision to censure McCarthy in 1954 had reflected not only the Senator's own particular talent for finding enemies, but above all the fact that McCarthy's particular form of anticommunism was often aimed at elites, members of the military and political establishment, and particularly Democrats. In using the same logic of guilt-by-association-at-whatever-remove against Senators as against those unfortunates called before SISS during his tenure as chairperson, he incited the ire that would end in his being censured and subsequently losing control of SISS. (Mills, 2015; Griffith, 1987)

Moreover, in the year that the SCLC was formed, the red-hunters lost a vital weapon in their arsenal. The shifting balance of politico-legal forces condensed in the Supreme Court did not only result in the *Brown* decision, but also in the important breakthrough of *Yates v United States*. This decision reversed the convictions of fourteen leaders of the CPUSA under the Smith Act, while also interpreting the law in such a way as to make it practically impossible to secure future convictions. The Smith Act, as it had been interpreted, was effectively neutralised. In the logic and letter of the ruling, it was almost a precise reversal of the previous decision in *Dennis*

*v United States*. This was just one of a series of decisions by the Court reversing the trend of anticommunist repression. These included: *Jencks v United States*, wherein the conviction of a union organiser under Taft-Hartley anticommunist laws was reversed; *Mesarosh v United States*, in which the Court ordered a retrial of someone convicted on the evidence of a prosecution witness who had perjured himself; and *Watkins v United States*, wherein the Court sharply criticised the conduct of HUAC. (Lichtman, 2012: 91-92, 94-96)

This general decline of anticommunist efficacy did not stop HUAC from functioning, nor did it necessarily blunt the SISS offensive, as the chair passed from McCarthy to the belligerent Southern segregationist, Senator James Eastland. Eastland, often working on information provided by the FBI, moved to ensure the pressure remained above all on black activists – and was a far more terrifying and bullying inquisitor than McCarthy was. Eastland's techniques and choice of targets suggests an acute awareness of the potential socio-demographic sources of revolt. As both a planter-capitalist and a segregationist, he was particularly concerned to target those elements of the labour movement who tried to organise black workers. This was compounded by the well-grounded fear that, as black workers migrated from the plantations to the cities, they would be freed from the forms of authority wielded by the planters and find new forms of collective struggle in the cities. Eastland was convinced that the highest levels of the US government were penetrated by communism, and that African Americans were 'dumb' tools of red conspiracy. As such, he was concerned to prove that Communism intended not merely to overthrow

the US government, but – recalling the old CPUSA commitment to Black Belt independence – the establishment of a black-ruled communist state in the South.

Civil rights organisations, even relatively timid outfits such as the Southern Council for Human Welfare (SCHW) and its offshoot the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), were dragged before HUAC and SISS in order to rebut claims that they were involved in Communist subversion. Affluent middle class civil rights leaders such as Virginia Foster Durr, who had previously experienced the red-hunters' wrath over her opposition to the Korean War, were brought before the Subcommittee to contend with a paid informant's claims as to her secret communist agenda. And even as the power of these committees waned, and the anticommunist initiative shifted to local State Sovereignty Commissions, attorney generals and media, the HUAC and SISS files were mined for evidence of communist conspiracy. Such was the case when hearings in Mississippi used old HUAC claims to dub the SCHW 'communist, or when local media in Atlanta targeted SNCC campaigners as 'communists' in 1964, using claims already circulated by HUAC. (Asch, 2008: 137-141, 144-145; Braden, 1964: 12, 23-26; Castledine, 2012: 75; Hanson, 2011: 62-63)

Nonetheless, as McAdam (1983) argues, the kinds of tactical innovations and disruptive capacities activated by the civil rights movement, depended for their success on there being "a political system vulnerable to insurgency". The old modes of rule had to be weakening. Certainly, the Jim Crow coalition was experiencing a

crisis irrespective of what anticommunists had to say about it. However, had the nationwide anticommunist consensus held firm, had the committees retained their old power, and had the legal situation not changed, it is reasonable to infer that many of the leading organisers behind civil rights might have been more effectively shut down, hustled before tribunals, subject to more effective organisational crackdowns, if not prosecuted under legislation such as the Smith Act. It was also helpful that in the local context of Alabama, the state had not yet, by 1955, swerved to the Right under the impress of red-baiting and race-baiting. The recently elected governor, 'Big Jim' Folsom, was still seen as a racial moderate and a class populist. And the city of Montgomery was cautiously open to reform, with the *Montgomery Advertiser* generally supporting this position and denouncing the hardline segregationists.

Yet, this did not prevent a backlash from forming. As ever, white resistance politics was formed in response to manifestations of local African American organising. Membership in the local White Citizens' Councils "exploded from eight hundred in the entire state of Alabama before the boycott to fourteen thousand in Montgomery alone after the boycott began". It was only a few months after the beginning of the bus boycott, as white conservatives began to cohere in opposition to *Brown*, that the city of Montgomery hosted the launch of the Alabama Association of Citizens' Councils, at which Senator James Eastland expostulated against the NAACP, and a circulated leaflet invited genocide against black Americans. Although the Councils represented a hard-right minority for the time being, they had the effect of helping tilt the balance of political forces, applying considerable pressure to the

local administration, the editor of the Montgomery Advertiser, and Governor Folsom. The mayor of Montgomery, at first inclined to offer minor concessions such as instructing the bus company to treat black passengers more courteously and allow them to enter the bus through the front door rather than the back, cleaved under pressure to the segregationist right, and tried to break the boycott by urging that all black domestic workers be sacked – something that many white women who depended upon this labour were unwilling to countenance. Folsom presented himself as rejecting both the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Citizens' Councils as two equally undesirable extremes. The parity, of course, was absurd, particularly given that Folsom knew that his police force that was harassing civil rights activists, as well as ordinary blacks participating in the boycott by using black-run taxi services rather than the buses, and not Council members. Yet, police harassment and arrests, the opposition of Mayor Gayle and Council pressure were not sufficient to seriously disorganise the activist core – and even had the counterproductive effect of drawing national attention to the situation. An Alabama district court, supported by the Supreme Court, ruled that the state's segregation laws were unconstitutional, and the city administration passed a new ordinance. The ruling explicitly drew upon the change embodied in *Brown*, stating that in this legal context it was not possible to uphold *Plessy v Ferguson*. (McMillen, 1994: 49-50; Phibbs, 2009: 58-60; Hampton & Fayer: 27; Parks, 2001; Robinson, 1987; Green Jr. & Cheatham, 2009: 72-73)

One of the major fruits of this civil rights success, which went much further than the initial cautious demands, was the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, launched in 1957. The Conference was predictably baited by Southern critics as a communist organisation, as increasingly was King. Indeed, King had expected this, which is one of the reasons why he chose to insert the word ‘Christian’ into the name. (Lewis, 2004: 67) The fact that he did so, and took care to pitch the civil rights goal in an emphatically American and non-communist idiom, indicates his awareness of the potential power of such accusations – only recently demonstrated with great vividness. There were arguments within the organisation about whether to keep certain groups which had been systematically targeted by HUAC and SISS, like the SCEF, at a distance. Nonetheless, despite King’s care to distance himself from communism – which Virginia Foster Durr considered to be recycled red-baiting – the SCLC did not constitute itself as a specifically anti-communist organisation. In fact, at its core were leftist activists such as Bayard Rustin and Stanley Levison, for whom the bus boycott had broken the isolation and despair of the early Cold War years. So while the organisation, and King in particular, needed to protect themselves against red-baiting, they were not prepared to capitulate to the culture. (Fairclough, 2001: 30-31, 69-70)

The remainder of the Fifties was a period of slow and cautious struggles. There was an accumulation of successes, mostly taking place at the level of the courts and the Federal state, such as the 1957 civil rights legislation and Eisenhower’s forced integration of Little Rock Central High, but in the context of a furious Massive

Resistance backlash, there were few major initiatives from the grassroots akin to Montgomery. McAdam's (1983) analysis of the pace of insurgency in this period demonstrates that the scale of actions initiated by civil rights activists, having slowly declined through the latter half of the Fifties, as the activity of Massive Resistance crested, suddenly peaked in 1960. This was the year in which the tide began to turn decisively against Massive Resistance. (See Chapter Seven). It was also the year of a wave of anticolonial successes in the African continent – Congo, Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Somalia, Niger, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Chad, Gabon, Senegal, Mali and the Central African Republic were among the states liberated that year, making a total of twenty-five – and of sit-ins at segregated businesses. And in the same year, the SCLC supported the formation of a new civil rights body, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, to draw and implement the tactical lessons of the successful sit-ins. Initially, its statement of purpose expressed a purely Christian doctrine of love and nonviolence, but increasingly dominant elements of its young leadership moved sharply to the left in the ensuing years. The link was not merely coincidental. The civil rights movement's organisers moved in a global anticolonial milieu, where the major axis of struggle was quite other than the febrile battle against communism. The Cold War context continued to structure both civil rights and anticolonial struggles and, for example, King did not hesitate to invoke the struggle against communism to argue for an anticolonial policy on the part of the US. Nonetheless, in some ways, the ex-Communist Richard Wright had observed of the 1955 Bandung Conference, it moved the argument to a different realm. Participants often expressed sympathy with some of the basic goals of communism, but they had

their own modernising agendas, and they were sharply critical of the American obsession with fighting communism when, as they saw it, colonialism was the main danger. The US strategy of appearing not to take sides on colonialism while using anticommunism to divide the emerging Third World pole was largely ineffectual in this context. Thus, the rising arc of anticolonial struggles began to displace anticommunism both globally and in the United States itself. In 1962, Students for a Democratic Society, a tributary of the moderately social democratic League for Industrial Democracy, proposed a new basis for radicalism by invoking the anticolonial freedom struggle against which American society stood in “embarrassing contrast”. (Horne, 2008; King, 2005: 143; Wright, 1994; Fraser, 2003: 127; Westad, 2007: 206)

This did not mean that anticommunism had run out of countersubversive uses. President Kennedy, having been elected on a moderate civil rights agenda, invoked communism in order to belabour civil rights activists, exclaiming that Freedom Riders were “embarrassing” him by provoking white-supremacist violence: this was “exactly the kind of thing the Communists used to make the United States look bad around the world.” He urged his civil rights advisor to intervene and shut it down. Opponents continued to bait King in particular as an agent of communism. In an interview on ‘Meet the Press’ for NBC in 1960, King was asked by journalist Frank Van Der Linden of the *Nashville Banner* about his purported sympathy for Marxism. In his book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, King had criticised Marx for positing “a metaphysical materialism, an ethical relativism, and a strangulating totalitarianism”

but also granted that: “he pointed to the weaknesses of traditional capitalism”. King was to repeat these arguments in his autobiography, adding the clause that he considered communism to be “basically evil”. Van Der Linden took this to be a confession of faith: “I’d like to know just where does communism or collectivism fit into your program of resistance here?” He went on to link this to King’s support for integration and his dismissal of irrational fears about racial intermarriage: “is it correct to say that you don’t oppose racial intermarriage?” Former president Truman also weighed in to claim that sit-ins were inspired by communism, prompting King to note with sadness that this reflected the “McCarthy-like” campaigns that civil rights activists were faced with in the South. The growing internationalism of the civil rights campaign, and the emergence of a new militant leadership in Malcolm X, who in his later years built alliances with Trotskyists at the expense of coalitions with those to his right, also attested to the weakening of the anticommunist fervour. Civil rights activists adopted as a logical extension of their own activism an antiwar stance on Vietnam, despite the fact that the official enemy was communist, and antiwar activists would often deploy the same tactical repertoires which had been tested in civil rights. Certainly, this did provoke the familiar red-baiting vitriol. Roy Wilkins hinted to President Johnson that King had a communist agenda, and publicly speculated that King’s antiwar stance was something he was being influenced in by nefarious “aides” and that it was an abandonment of civil rights to “enter into a *foreign policy matter that seems to be of more than passing interest to Communist China*”. [Emphasis in original.] (Dudziak, 2000: 158-159; King, 2005: 428-432, 438; King, 1998: 57-59; Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 73-74; Marable, 2011; Zaroulis &

Sullivan, 1984: 27-32; Small, 2002: 5-6; Neale, 2004: 127-129; Hall, S., 2005: 96-97)

Nonetheless, the growing inefficacy of anticommunism had already become evident in the fact that neither Kennedy nor Johnson were able to bring the civil rights movement to heel in the way that the Truman administration had been able to both through its influence in the NAACP and the prosecutions of communists.

In fact, had anticommunism been effective enough to undercut the Freedom Riders, either by scaring them off or isolating them from allies, it would have had a disastrous effect on the future development of the civil rights movement. The tactic emerged from frustration at the deathly slow to static pace of integration of public transport since the Supreme Court's decision in Montgomery. The statutes were against Federal law, so the Court had decided, and yet the government was declining to enforce the law. This gave activists not only a powerful normative argument in the American context, but also a highly effective tactic. This entailed a relatively small number of people, hundreds in total, embarking on the 'integrated' use of public transport in defiance of the segregation statutes. Operating against threats, police repression and Klan violence, this sort of tactic – while innovative – could only have been enacted by cores of committed and trained activists. This was a powerfully formative experience in the political development of a new layer of activists, who learned how to cope with violence and intimidation, and even to use it as a weapon in their struggle by over-stretching municipal police forces and drawing media attention to Southern brutality, rather than being put off by it. These were activist cores who participated in SNCC and SCLC campaigns in to register voters and desegregate

public facilities in Albany, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama, albeit they were dependent in each case upon local activist organisations. (Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 73-96; McAdam, 1983)

The ongoing thawing of the Cold War climate and the collapse of Massive Resistance contributed to the opening of a new political opportunity. The 1964 presidential campaign of Lyndon B Johnson, while many of its hopes were to be disappointed, was won on the themes of civil rights, peace and mild redistribution against a candidate of the free market, anticommunist Right. Johnson had steered the passage of a Civil Rights Act which went much farther than previous legislation in outlawing all segregation in public facilities. Although it built on previous legislative efforts, the impetus behind its implementation was the SCLC's Birmingham campaign, to force the desegregation of public facilities. The campaign had produced a violent reaction, helping drive the city's politics farther to the racist, anticommunist Right. The state's Klan was already bombing churches and attacking homes of civil rights activists on the premise that Red manipulation was behind the insurgency, while Commissioner of Public Safety 'Bull' Connor justified his use of violent suppression of the civil rights demonstrators by claiming, just as George Wallace had, that these protests were organised by Communism. Indeed, Connor's actions made him a hero to local white-supremacists, whose vote ensured that he won election as president of the Alabama Public Service Commission. However, it had also built on the success of the March on Washington, which inspired global solidarity protests from Berlin to Cairo, and earned global press admiration, particularly in the Third

World nations whose esteem Washington sought. The passage of this legislation, Johnson's re-election, and the new liberal majority in Congress, suggested that even if the Deep South states continued to move to the right, evidenced in George Wallace's Alabama gubernatorial campaign, the country as a whole was moving to the left. For Bayard Rustin, it was a chance not only to advance civil rights, but also to remake the Democratic Party, break the power of the Dixiecrats and create a new machinery based on a genuinely popular coalition. (Thornton III, 2002; Isserman & Kazin, 2008: 87-90; Dudziak, 2004: 192-198; Horton, 2005: 171)

In the opening produced by this national context, the Selma campaign was launched. Selma, in the rural county of Dallas, was the most rigidly segregationist city in the state of Alabama, one where the black population at 14,000 was almost equal to the white population at 14,400. The city was also small enough, and its electorate even smaller at less than six thousand, that politically active whites could be tied together in a single milieu. Dallas County was also subject to many of the same socio-demographic transformations that were shaking the rest of the region, above all urbanisation accompanying a sharp decline in the level of black tenant farming, and a migration to the cities, including Selma. A growing minority of the County's black population had some education and were thus in a position to follow public affairs – and, as importantly, wanted to be involved. In the decades leading to the Selma to Montgomery march, the city had been ruled by a small, conservative political machine dominated by Lucien Burns, and subsequently Chris Heinz. The state apparatuses, from the courts to the mayor's office were the exclusive preserve of

a section of the white population. In this context, the Supreme Court in 1957 delivered a shock to the city population even more astounding than that of Brown. In the case of a mentally unwell black man, William Fikes, charged with carrying out a home invasion and attempting rape on the daughter of Mayor Heinz, Jean Heinz Rockwell, local law enforcement and public opinion had been expecting the suspect to be executed. But an unusually lenient jury only sentenced him to 99 years in prison, and this gave NAACP lawyers a window to get involved. Fighting a combative campaign that stunned whites and gave confidence to blacks, they drove the case to the Supreme Court, which determined that the confession which the police had extracted was unreliable.

This infuriated both the mayor and local whites, but it also set a precedent for black activists in Dallas County. By this stage, a local White Citizens' Council had already emerged and engaged in an economic terror campaign against NAACP activists who tried to petition school boards to desegregate. Among its supporters was James G Clark, who fought a successful campaign to be elected as County Sheriff on the basis that he was a Council member who knew "how to handle our racial problems" – his prowess would later be on display at Edmund Pettus Bridge. Police and local white activists engaged in threats, kidnapping, arson and terror against potentially influential blacks. One thing that these reactionary milieus all agreed upon was that Selma would not be like Montgomery. The state capitol had showed weakness and lack of white unity in the face of the civil rights offensive, whereas Selmian whites must be, or appear to be, united. This necessitated that the

intimidation of African Americans must also extend laterally to ‘moderate’ whites. Another thing on which they agreed was that the civil rights movement was a communist infiltration. Both circuit judge James Hare, an old-hand McCarthyite<sup>29</sup>, and Sheriff James Clark expressed a desire in 1965 to testify before HUAC about the communist nature of the movement, a subject on which the judge kept a hefty file. Even the country’s Republican Party considered that any offensive against segregation was evidence of “totalitarianism”. (Thornton III, 2002: 380-420; Isserman & Kazin, 2008: 134; Carson, 2005; Lewis, 2000: 98-99)

This was, then, an especially recalcitrant city, and one which – because of the potential demographic power of African Americans – depended upon terror. It was an extremely brittle power structure. It was also one in which the old Burns-Heinz machine was breaking down. The election of Joseph Smitherman as the city’s mayor in 1964 was the clearest evidence of this. Heinz, alongside the Citizens Council and the political machine, had sustained a hardline policy of white-supremacism for a decade since Brown. But by 1964, a coalition of local businesses, the Committee of 100 Plus, had endured enough. Like similar coalitions in Birmingham, and in other states, this coalition was more concerned about economic efficiency than social justice – nonetheless, insofar as it sought rationalisation and reform of the municipal state apparatuses, it placed itself on the side of racial progress. The Committee’s efforts, alongside the votes of hitherto successfully silenced moderate whites and the

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<sup>29</sup> In 1953, as a solicitor, he claimed to have been privy to a document proving that the Alabama Teacher Tenure Act of 1939 was a Communist plot to implant red teachers in the school system. (Thornton III, 2002: 424)

few black voters, helped put Smitherman in the mayor's office. This meant both that the political system was susceptible to pressure for reforms, and that the repressive apparatuses were susceptible to overreaction. Finally, there was the germinal development of a black civil rights infrastructure. For a long time, the Dallas County Voters League had been waging a cautious struggle for voting rights, virtually alone. The NAACP had been prevented from operating in the state of Alabama by a Montgomery Circuit Court judgment after it refused to turn over its membership lists to the Attorney General – one of a wave of crippling legal actions that drained NAACP capacities. This was only reversed by the Supreme Court in 1964. The SNCC first sent activists into Selma in 1963, but initially made little progress. It was only when the League and the SNCC coordinated their actions that they were able to put together the first mass meeting of local civil rights activists, on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1963. Sheriff Jim Clark wasted no time in organising the crackdown.

Jerry DeMuth of the SNCC described a police attack on a meeting of 160 civil rights workers at a Catholic mission in July 1963: "Turning, I saw possemen charging through the crowd, nightsticks swinging. Among the possemen's first targets were my photographer-companion and myself. He was beaten and shot at. I was clubbed over the head – seven stitches were required to close the gash – and struck and shoved with night sticks." Nonetheless, the movement had been placed on the map. All prior calculations were rendered moot. And on this basis, the SNCC was able to begin organising local high school students who had been expressing discontent with the segregated system. In fact, the willingness of the youth to get involved in direct

actions which sometimes resulted in their being jailed often shamed their elders into taking part. (Thornton III, 2002: 414-440; Corley, 1982; Vaughn & Davis, 2006: 207-217; Lee, 2008; Isserman & Kazin, 2008: 134-139; Carson, 2005; Dudziak, 2000: 231-237; DeMuth, 1964; Hampton & Fayer, 1995: 209-214)

Local state capacity to handle this insurgency was not, however, thoroughly depleted. The first major setback for the movement took place in July 1964, when Judge James Hare issued an injunction identifying forty-eight people and fifteen organisations, and banning them from further participation in protests. This immediately stopped all local meetings of the League, which were the source of information, contacts and nourishment for the movement's participants. It also resulted in a sharp drop in black applications to vote. In the years prior to the movement's emergence, black voting applications averaged 3 per month. They rose to 47 per month once the meetings began, only to fall back to 10 per month when the ban came into effect. By winter, the movement had reached a stalemate, unsure and divided over how to proceed.

This was the context in which the SCLC was invited to come to Selma and collaborate in developing new tactics. The SCLC was considerably more top-down in its mode of operation than the SNCC had been, and this had been what gave the SNCC the advantage in being able to work with local activists. But in the negotiation between the two organisations, with their distinctive political styles, the tactical concept of a march from Selma to Montgomery was evolved. This was a classic

SCLC tactic, in that it was what Tilly (2004) would describe as a ‘WUNC display,’ which wielded a fundamentally *communicative* approach in a strategy of disruption through provocation, and which also exploited the ambiguities in American ideology, and the splits within the power bloc in Washington DC and the business class as to how best to contain the threat to social order. The SNCC were reluctant to commit to this approach, and critical of the leader-based mode of operating. Their tactics were intended to build a local black leadership, while King’s was intended to spark a confrontation. ‘Bloody Sunday,’ which took place at Edmund Pettus Bridge on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1965, changed that. As approximately two thousand civil rights marchers approached the Bridge on the outskirts of Selma, police deputies and state troopers under the command of Sheriff Clark and Major John Cloud, and supported by Governor Wallace, attacked the marchers with billy clubs and tear gas. The resulting furore produced a ferment of angry, emotional, well-attended meetings and protests. The militant mood at these protests sufficiently agitated government officials, and tilted President Johnson’s calculations, that once again Federal forces were sent into a Southern state, to override the white defiance. And Johnson took the occasion to lean his weight behind Voting Rights legislation long demanded by the civil rights movement. This stage of Governor Wallace’s ‘last stand’ against communism and Federal ‘tyranny’ was concluded. (Vaughn & Davis, 2006: 217-219; Thornton III, 2002: 450-452; Carson, 2005: 27-34; Isserman & Kazin, 2008: 134-139)

Paranoid accusations of red infiltration continued to be voiced from the lowest to the highest reaches of the state. The Senate Judiciary Committee heard from a

Louisiana state judge that the Voting Rights Act was in fact “a Stalin Communist plan for the takeover of the Black Belt”. Governor Wallace alleged in pamphlets, speeches and even a state-made movie that the Selma-to-Montgomery marchers had participated in orgies, interracial sex and were linked to Communism. Vice President Hubert Humphrey was not alone in believing that the violence at Selma had been provoked by Communist agents operating in the civil rights crowd. FBI Director J Edgar Hoover was likewise certain that communism was responsible for the protests, and the Bureau’s Counterintelligence Programme continued to try to undermine civil rights and leftist groups. It had particularly targeted King, bugging his offices and telephones, searching for evidence of subversion or even tax irregularities, and briefing against him where possible as to his communism and sexual immorality. When Southern politicians had materials for a smear campaign against King, or the SCLC, or the SNCC, or CORE, it was usually provided by the FBI. Hoover finally targeted King for a public denunciation in a press conference shortly after the SCLC had arrived in Selma, and as the Selma campaign picked up, so did the FBI’s efforts to undermine the SCLC. (Borstelmann, 2001: 189; Flynt, 2004: 91; Dudziak, 2000: 237; Heale, 1990: 196-197; Fairclough, 2001: 217-219; Loewen, 2000: 745-752) Yet ultimately these measures were inadequate.

Cold War anticommunism had always been a form of crisis management, operating at various levels where transitional processes were underway. At its core was a fantasy, wherein the antagonisms and struggles that characterised American society, had to be the work of outside agents. Around this fantasmatic kernel clustered

a series of ideological thematics, ranging from Jeffersonian republicanism to Vital Center liberalism, and a repertoire of practices, from parapolitical mobs, neighbourhood spies, and red squads to investigative committees. The ideology operated on real experiences and fears, such as the USSR's overland expansion and despotism, or the militant role of the CPUSA and its tendency to toe the Moscow line. It cohered, for a period of time, an historical bloc, a basis for class rule oriented toward an historic mission – the defence of democracy against totalitarianism. It enabled businesses to thwart further gains on the part of unions and helped the right-wing of the unions to defeat and isolate the left and drive it out of its official positions. It enabled the United States government to make a transition to being the dominant global power, to centralise political power appropriately, and to extend its global reach in a series of often extremely violent interventions. And finally, it gave Southern politicians, acutely aware of the challenges that they faced, the means by which to shatter an emerging civil rights coalition, by attacking a militant, organised and yet sectarian and dogmatic core of activists. When a new civil rights coalition began to emerge out of Montgomery, anticomunism authorised the deployment of a series of countersubversive tactics and apparatuses, from prosecutions to investigative committees. Yet, as anticomunists gradually lost the means of legal repression, lost the ideological battles, and lost control of the dominant state apparatuses, they were no longer in a position to inflict decisive blows on the civil rights movement.



## **CONCLUSION: “The country’s turning conservative.”**

### **A counterfactual.**

The arc of Cold War anticommunism reached its terminus with the détente reached between Nixon and Brezhnev in 1969. Fifteen years previously, just as McCarthyism was cresting, no more than 5% of Americans were prepared to entertain even a mildly favourable opinion of the Soviet Union, while only 27% conceded that communists should have the constitutional right to speak in public. Only 23% of Americans believed that peaceful coexistence with the Russians was possible, while 61% held that a major war was inevitable. (Mayer, 1993: 47-55) By the late Sixties, HUAC had lost its terrorist potency. New Left provocateurs such as Jerry Rubin gave the Committee nothing but disrespect, and mock sieg heils. One youth, declining to invoke the Fifth Amendment as previous non-compliant witnesses had, simply offered: “I will not answer that question on the grounds that it nauseates me and I might vomit all over the table.” (Kopkind, 1997: 54-55) The basis for this shift was already being sedimented by the mid-Fifties, however, just as anticommunism seemed an indomitable force. The thawing of relations with the USSR was first engaged in by the Eisenhower administration, while the repudiation of anticommunist laws was undertaken by the Supreme Court in 1956-57. McCarthy’s over-reach cast a pall of disrepute over the hardest forms of anticommunism, and civil libertarian arguments became respectable once more. (Heale, 1990: 191-193)

What if that had not been the case? What if the international climate had remained frozen in a pattern of belligerent confrontation? What if no anticolonial wave had displaced that axis of struggle, and the narrative or ‘frame’ structuring it? What if the Supreme Court had cleaved to the Right? What if Senator McCarthy had been a more subtle prosecutor of the red-hunt? And what if, in this context, the balance of ideological forces in American society had continued to lean toward authoritarian nationalism? To answer that, I want to recapitulate the core claims made in this thesis:

- i. The Cold War was not just one process, but several. Insofar as it included a struggle by the United States government to expand its global dominion, which necessitated elements of hegemonic practice, this opened an opportunity structure for civil rights activists to internationalise their struggle.
- ii. However, insofar as the Cold War involved an anticommunist crusade, directed at anticolonial movements as much as domestic dissidents, it also weakened the international and domestic alliances upon which the civil rights movement depended.
- iii. The anticommunist moment in American politics secured a subordinate place for the segregated South’s embattled leadership in a national power bloc for a period of time (approximately 1945-1954).
- iv. Anticommunist politics helped Southern leaders to manage transitional crises in the Jim Crow structure during this period, by providing countersubversive mechanisms and ideologies through which to supplement

failing authority structures and break up the political alliances already made possible by new forms of urban collectivism.

v. Subsequently (approximately 1954-1960), anticommunist politics enabled segregationists in the South to respond to the civil rights movement by shifting the balance of forces within the state institutions to the Right, developing and deploying a range of countersubversive apparatuses, cohering a broad coalition of social forces integrated with the state which used a range of measures from economic terror to political violence, and thus effectively disorganising the incipient civil rights movement and significantly slowing down the growth of civil rights action.

vi. Yet, in the same period, anticommunism outside the South went into decline. Senator McCarthy fell out of favour, HUAC lost some of its prestige, the Supreme Court made significant decisions which undermined anticommunist legislation, and the national political climate shifted moderately to the left.

vii. By 1960, the legal strategies of Massive Resistance had begun to fail, rejected in the courts. Meanwhile, a new civil rights leadership had formed, one which was not decisively formed by the traumatic battles of the early Cold War, less deferential to anticommunism and more tactically adventurous. The year 1960 saw a sudden spike in civil rights activism, with sit-ins proving an effective tactical innovation, thus inaugurating a new, successful phase in the movement. Federal state leaders could not use their relationships with the anticommunist wing of the civil rights movement to compel it to moderate its tactics and discourse.

The broad direction of this argument is clear. Without anticomunism, segregationists would have been deprived of a vital means of protecting white-supremacy for as long as they did. Had the anticomunist consensus held, white-supremacy would have been sustained for longer than it was. However, this verdict must be qualified in an important way. The introduction of Lacanian psychoanalysis in Chapter Six, I have suggested, represents a disturbing element in the unfolding of the thesis. It is intended precisely as a counterpoint to the rationalising tendency wherein anticomunism is understood in terms of its strategic utility. The kernel of fantasy structuring the ideology of white-supremacist anticomunist consists schematically of two phases: first, the fantasy of total being in whiteness and concomitant enjoyment of, and mastery over, black life as inferior being; and second, the fantasy projection of this desire onto a racially ambiguous communism whenever whiteness is threatened and its historical basis exposed. The moral splitting and projection involved here segues into different phases of fantasy, involving violent repression and revenge. In this light, it is unwise to treat the tactics and even the strategic goals of Massive Resistance as being necessarily and thoroughly rationale. Segregationist violence was often counterproductive, drawing in Federal forces and escalating struggles in ways which gave the civil rights movement an advantage. Selma would not have been possible were such violence entirely rational.

Even the overall strategy of Massive Resistance, of uncompromising refusal of any abridgement of the status quo and the enforced presentation of a united front, can

be called into question. It ultimately led to defeat in the courts and, again, humiliating Federal interventions. The strategy of ‘practical segregation’ advocated by Governor Coleman of Mississippi, and the tactics of ‘token integration’ supported by the Sibley Commission in Georgia, ultimately proved to be more effective. Anticommunism had served the cause of white-supremacy well, on balance, and the strategies of Massive Resistance would probably have enjoyed more success if the nationwide anticommunist consensus had been maintained. But while Massive Resistance was effective for a while at blocking change, it is arguable that the broad lineaments of the system which Massive Resistance set out to defend might have been better defended, given the general balance of forces that then obtained, by the sort of conservative-adaptive strategy which ultimately did prevail. After all, many Jim Crow laws remained on the books and segregation, rather than disappearing, was effectively restructured along different lines. (Jim Crow Study Group, 2004; Massey & Denton, 1993; Massey, Rothwell & Domina, 2009) Moreover, had Southern states adopted a ‘practical segregation’ strategy from the outset, it is possible that the far more sweeping transformations wrought in the Sixties would have been averted. There is a risk, in stating this, of overestimating the extent to which what is now possible to know about the dilemmas facing Massive Resistance could have been understood at the time. To this extent, these conclusions simply underline that political situations are never fully transparent, that any choice is always to an extent a gamble, and that even insofar as agents are able to act on the basis of a strategic rationality, there is necessarily a non-rational core to such actions. Finally, even though the anticommunist countersubversive thrust did not prevent the overthrow of *de jure*

segregation, there is the possibility that it contributed to the attainment of another, seemingly tangential, objective.

### **Anticommunism (Slight Returns)**

At the close of an early rally of the United Klans of America, the right-wing evangelist Bob Jones was witnessed in conversation as the crowds left. “I can just feel it,” he said. “The country’s turning conservative.” (Cunningham, 2013: 142) This was the hope of many in the Massive Resistance movement in the 1960s. As one of the White Citizens’ Council leaders explained: “It is fundamentally the first real stirrings of a conservative revolt in this country”. (Bloom, 1987: 94) And indeed, the right turn was not long coming. By the mid-1970s, the broad lineaments of a New Right were already clear. At the elite level, it was represented by the neoliberal austerity project driven by the financial sector in New York City, which presaged ‘Reaganomics’. At the party-political level, it was represented in the emergence of ‘Southern strategy’ politics, and a militantly anticommunist neoconservative current in both Republican and Democratic parties. At the grassroots, it was reflected by the growth of a new activist Right, especially a Christian Right.

The contribution of the South to these developments has been examined from different perspectives by MacLean (2008), Crespino (2007, 2008), Jewell (2010), and Lassiter & Crespino (2010). There has been a tendency to overestimate the South’s role, neglecting the specific influences of the New York intellectuals who played a

critical role in the emergence of neoconservatism, and of Chicago-based neoliberalism. Nonetheless, the South was an important point of reference for the emerging Right, and also provided much of its social basis. I will suggest three specific contributions that the politics of Massive Resistance made to the emergence of a New Right. First, the social basis of the Christian Right was overwhelmingly southern and western. The anticommunist, pro-segregation crusades of the likes of Reverend Billy Hargis anticipated the emergence of a modern Christian Right with a mass, grassroots basis. The issue of segregation and remedial efforts aimed at overcoming it also provided the Christian Right with a vital spark, goading it into organising. Crespino (2008) shows that one result of the unsuccessful strategy of school privatisation to avert court ordered desegregation was nonetheless a network of private, effectively segregated schools often linked to the Christian church. When, under pressure from black parents, the IRS moved to withhold tax-exempt status from private schools effectively avoiding desegregation, it kick-started a national campaign. Second, in re-polarising the region's politics to the Right, it used race as the axis to break the grip of New Deal liberalism and mobilised new social coalitions which provided the basis for Nixon's 'Southern strategy'. Third, through the mediator of George Wallace, it helped shift the balance of national politics to the Right.

As Lowndes (2005) argues, Wallace began early in his segregationist career to position himself as a tribute of 'the common man' across the US, by arguing that the experiences of white workers, small business owners, and the suburban middle class had a shared experience of *powerlessness* at the hands of a culturally alien, super-rich

elite in league with protesters, subversives, criminals and welfare recipients. Having been a New Deal populist, he embraced a classically right-wing populist strategy, condensing a range of social antagonisms into a straightforward conflict of ‘the people’ vs ‘the elite,’ and linking race and nationalism to ‘free market’ discourse. This entailed a shift from the standard Southern complaint that the North had no experience of the South’s ‘racial problems,’ and the production of a chain-of-equivalents firmly placing the white South at the centre of American nationhood: “you are Southerners too, and brothers in our fight”. In this emerging articulation, anticommunism continued to be an important thematic, but as the battle over segregation was lost, red-baiting was increasingly subordinated to being simply one of a range of many lines of attack. It was not just the Reds now, and it was no longer simply a question of subversion: sections of white working and middle class voters felt disempowered and ignored. In fact, when the Nixon administration did attempt to turn to traditional McCarthyite red-baiting to counter the social movements and union militancy, even J. Edgar Hoover couldn’t see the use in it, since the Communist Party was marginal. Anticommunism began to disperse into a more generalised antipathy to liberalism and progressivism. Wallace’s campaigns taught the Republican leadership how to reach out to white workers especially on a right-populist basis, and laid the ground for the ‘Reagan Democrat’ in the coming years. (Crespino, 2010: 111; Lowndes, 2005: 152; Lowndes, 2008; Hall et al, 2013; Carter, 1996; Cowie, 2010)

Anticommunist white-supremacism, then, did not only consolidate opposition to the overthrow of Jim Crow for a period of time. It also played a role in birthing a

New Right. It changed the politics, culture and class coalitions of the South in such a way that, once the legal fight over segregation was decisively lost and the McCarthyite countersubversion campaigns gradually wound down, a new populist and ‘free market’ Right was able to emerge which would divide and frustrate the progressive coalition that civil rights leaders had hoped for, obstruct the further erosion of *de facto* segregation, and frame racially-laden policies in racially neutral ‘anti-government’ language. Anticommunism did persist in some formats, but it was largely on the terrain of foreign policy, in that it supplied the rationale not only for the continued maintenance of right-wing dictatorships in the ‘Free World’, but particularly for the administration’s defence of apartheid South Africa. As the neoconservative intellectual Jeane Kirkpatrick argued on being appointed US ambassador to the UN, “racial dictatorship is not as onerous as Marxist dictatorship”. Kirkpatrick would later defend Latin American death squads on the grounds that they were emanations of an legitimate national culture and political authority, and were preferable to totalitarian (communist) government. Pinochet was likewise, for the New Right, “a bulwark against communism”. Yet, even here, the Cold War rhetoric of countersubversion and antitotalitarianism ultimately gave way to a new ‘human rights’ lexis. (Crespino 2007; Borstelmann, 2001: 261; Kirkpatrick, 1979; Grandin, 2006: 106; Guilhot, 2005).

Such anticommunism as did persist was generally articulated concurrently with, rather than in direct articulation with, a new culturalist form of racism. Southern states had made an important contribution to this culturalism (Walker, 1998; 2009),

but here too the neoconservatives played a leading role. The ‘melting pot’ image of American society, popular in ‘colourblind’ liberal discourse, gave way to a neoconservative ‘mosaic’, in which America was a land of culturally distinctive immigrant communities each pulling themselves up by the bootstraps. (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970) The poverty and social distress of African Americans, Puerto Ricans and others was blamed not on the politics of white-supremacy and empire, but on cultural propensities which were contrary to American social forms, above all the family. One of the doyens of neoconservatism, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, was responsible for a report on the ghetto which blamed black poverty on a “tangle of pathology” antipathetic to American values, and perpetuated “without any assistance from the white world”. Central to neoconservative political thought was a Burkean conservatism, in which the longevity of institutions was evidence of their accumulated wisdom. In this purview, moderate attempts to remedy racial discrimination, in the form of Affirmative Action, could be interpreted – much as segregationists interpreted the Federal enforcement of Brown – as, in Moynihan’s terms, a “totalitarian” instrument forcing equality at the expense of freedom. Reagan’s later racially-loaded offensive against “welfare queens” drew from the same rhetorical stream. (Gerson, 1997; Ehrman, 2005; Briggs, 2002: 1-10; Buhle, 1999: 189)

Despite the brief revival of anticommunist fervour in the late 1970s, the end of the Cold War saw it ebb to the far margins of American national life. However, it was capable of sudden resurgences in a new format stressing free market and culturalist

thematics, as the instance of the Tea Party illustrates. Indeed, in the discourse of the far right which shaped Tea Party ideology, from the John Birch Society to the Klan, it never really disappeared. (Berlet, 2012) This specifically American fusion also continued to have a life in the European far right. The ‘manifesto’ of the neo-Nazi mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik condensed Islamophobia and anticomunism into a distinctive ideological format, drawing from – and in some cases simply cutting and pasting from – the discourse of the American far right. (Humphreys, Rundle & Tietze, 2011) It is likely that such ideological hybrids will emerge for as long as there are struggles over the meaning of race, property and government, and for as long as there is a Right for whom these struggles are evidence of subversion.

### **Further lines of inquiry**

In the Methodology, I described the anfractuous process of working through this thesis – the obstacles, adaptations, false solutions, further obstacles, rethinking, finding a fresh starting point, and then further obstacles. Ultimately, the only way forward was to treat obstacles as stepping stones. For example, the research in the archives did not yield the kind of information that I had hoped; yet it did give me something unexpected that I hadn’t been looking for. This required that I achieve a certain distance from my theoretical commitments, a certain freedom of movement which an obsessively coherent theoretical construction is almost designed to frustrate. Nonetheless, aside from the introduction of a Lacanian discourse analysis relatively late in the work, I did not decide to break with the broad theoretical lines that I set out

with. This approach came with a certain bias in terms of its focus. I was able to develop a theoretical approach to the organisation of classes, the state, ideology and social movements. This, however, leaves a great many areas still to be investigated.

In the first instance, this thesis is implicitly gendered in a way that I don't find satisfactory. That is, there is a relative lack of scrutiny of the specific role of women, of kinship, and of vivid and powerful sexual and gender fears, in anticommunist politics. There are several reasons for this silence, but space can be made for the possibility that it is symptomatic of a wider perplexity of the Left as 'fourth wave feminism' has challenged its inadequate praxis. So it remains as a problem to be explored that, at each stage in the struggle against civil rights, communism coded for some a fear that integration in the schoolroom would lead to integration in the bedroom. From the very beginning of the movement that became known as Massive Resistance, this concern was vividly spelled out. Judge Tom Brady, a founding member of the White Citizens' Councils, explained that civil rights was a drive by northern blacks in alliance with "Communist-front organizations" to "indoctrinate the Southern negro" with the objective of creating an "amalgam of the two races" through which the "American negro" would "ameliorate" his "inherent deficiencies". (Walker, 1999: 399-400) Although this problem has persistently arisen in my review of the material, I have not given a detailed consideration, much less a theoretical articulation, of this problem. And although I have stressed the role of black agency, and in particular black women, in displacing the anticommunist narrative of the Cold War, I have said relatively little about the attempts by black communists, and

particularly black communist women, to challenge the traditional forms of kinship. This would certainly be worth evaluating in relation to the anticommunist fears for traditional sexual morality. (See Jones, 2009; Lang, 2009)

There is a space for reflection on the complex relationship between gender, race and nation. There is a great deal in feminist literature which would provide a framework for interpreting the masculinism of Cold War anticommunism and segregationism from this purview. Yuval-Davis (1997) points out that the family and sexuality is the site of reproduction of race and nation. Women "reproduce nations, biologically, culturally and symbolically". This has been a persistent theme in nationalist and white-supremacist discourse. Angelika Schaser's (2006) study of the patriotic German women's movement in the 'Second Reich' remarks that for many Germans, national feeling was itself "an extension of family feeling". The familial trope, as McClintock (1993) points out, has several uses: it sanctions a national *hierarchy* as at the same time an *organic unity*, and it offers a "single genesis narrative" for the nation. It has also has its extension in the colonial metaphor of a "family of black children ruled over by a white father". Theodore Roosevelt's anguished complaints that the use of birth control by modern women was leading to "race suicide," can be taken as typical of white-supremacist masculinism. (Dyer, 1980: 143-167) The specific role of the family as a site of conservative hegemony, and of white women in conservative and white-supremacist politics, has been theorised by Blee (1991), Blee & Deutsch (2012) and Ware (2015). Clarke (2000) has theorised the role of masculinity in Cold War ideologies, while Spruill (2008) has

outlined the restoration of conservative gender ideologies after civil rights. There are, therefore, several potentially fruitful paths of inquiry opened up by a reading of gender, sexuality and race in relation to anticommunist ideologies. In particular, I would suggest that at times of social change and authoritarian reaction, the cultivation of what Faludi (2007) describes as “protection fantasies” can be productively related to the existential threat seemingly posed by communism.

There is also work to be done in the cultural key. I have theorised the white-supremacist anticommunist discourse and the fantasy life structuring it: what role did the culture industry play in perpetuating this fantasy, or rivalling it? It is hardly irrelevant that a major frontal focus of Cold War anticommunism was the interrogation of ‘subversive’ influences in Hollywood. The ‘dream factory’ of the world provided the imaginary experiences through which people lived their relationship to their social situation (Meeks, 2009), and cultural figures from Paul Robeson to Mohammed Ali played a vital role in shaping the discourse of black liberation. Lhamon (1990) has identified the rich and complex brew of modernism and rebellion which was – even while instrumentalised by the CIA for Cold War imperatives (Saunders, 2000) – pointed against the cultural and political freeze of the Cold War. How did these countercultures interact with the anticommunist consensus and the enduring structures of white-supremacy? What about other ideological fantasies? I have analysed the fantasy at the core of white-supremacist ideology, and specified some possible modulations, but what about the ideological structures associated with other racial projects? What about those of the organised Left, of the

labour movement, of the Communist and pro-Communist elements in the Left? It is clear from Chapter Eight that even communism is hardly innocent of race, and that there is a need to contend with the eurocentric and often colonial ideologies and practices embedded in the history of the Left.<sup>30</sup>

And what of religious discourse? The ‘mountaintop’ rhetoric and elevating oratory of King and the church-based civil rights movement (Selby, 2008), as well as that of the segregationist Christian Right (Newman, 2001; Haberman, 2000), is briefly touched upon in the thesis, but is given nowhere near the attention it deserves. Indeed, there is a fascinating ideological seam to be explored here, in both Gramscian and Lacanian registers. In particular, a study of the way in which the libido<sup>31</sup> is catheted to religious and political morality, to the valuation of certain social goals and the literal demonisation of religious and political enemies, would in my estimation potentially provide a powerful analysis of another layer of anticommunism, and another axis of civil rights struggle.

Finally, even in those areas which I have dedicated particular attention to, and attempted to provide some account of, it seems to me that there is a great deal of room for further development. I have referred to the discourse of ‘Americanism’, and

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<sup>30</sup> I have already made a detailed historical contribution to the study of this problem on the axis of colonialism. (Seymour, 2008)

<sup>31</sup> One of the more influential figures on the international Christian Right, the Reverend Ian Paisley from my home Six Counties, was fond of the metaphor of the Holy Ghost: to thunder against opponents was ‘Holy Ghost language’, while the Christian alternative to being drunk was to be ‘filled with the Holy Ghost’; to be filled with the Holy Ghost was to be alive; life without the Holy Ghost was death. (Paisley, 1969; 1976) This recalls Althusser’s quip that “the Holy Ghost is quite simply libido”. (Althusser, 1996: 127)

it seems to me that there is a great deal of material in this thesis which could be developed in order to advance a new understanding of that particular trope, and perhaps even to open up a new understanding of nationalism. The role of the State Sovereignty Commissions, insofar as the documentation can be obtained or participants interviewed, seems to be ripe for a general historical survey and theorisation. There is also room for the development of a distinctive theory of right-wing social movements. In relation to this, I have introduced two original concepts: ‘countertransformism’, and ‘parapolitics’. These require, and are undergoing<sup>32</sup>, further development.

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<sup>32</sup> A concrete instance of the strategy of ‘countertransformism’ is explored in Seymour (2015)

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