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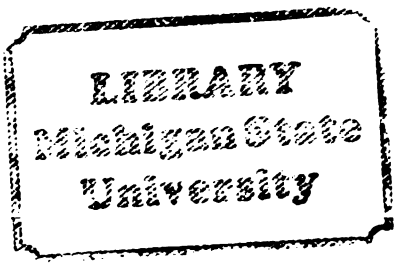


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Melvin C. Buschman

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# HISTORICAL CRISES AND THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY IN AN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL STATE -- A CASE STUDY: EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND INEQUALITY

By

Gwendolyn M. Taylor

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

HISTORICAL CRISES AND THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY IN AN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL STATE -- A CASE STUDY: EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND INEQUALITY

By

Gwendolyn M. Taylor

This research examines patterns of inequity present during and after particular economic and social crises within the United States, an advanced industrial nation-state. This study emanates from a broadened definition of crisis which encompasses economic, social, and political forces and its applicability to selected historical periods of inequality.

Focusing on the impact of declining energy resources, this study includes a discussion of, and an argument for, alternatives to the present structure of education/training and employment in capitalist development and production. The impact of declining energy resources is examined not as an autonomous factor, but as an analytical element in determining what structural, social, and economic changes follow in the wake of new technologies, and what problems society and its political system must attempt to solve.

To my son, Che' Michael-Justin Ghods,

and my daughter, Bri Karis-Dustin Ghods.

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I have had the most fortunate experience of having had Dr. Melvin C. Buschman serve as Chairperson of my graduate education. His wisdom, scholarship, and foremost, his sense of fairness and unwavering support have always been above and beyond any expectations I could have ever had. As I am among the last of the many, many doctoral candidates that Dr. Buschman graduates, as he is retiring from years of service to the students of

Michigan State University; on behalf of all his graduate students, thank you and God bless.

To my mother, Mrs. Lucille Taylor Lewis, and to my father, Mr. Garnie L. Taylor, Sr., I love you . . . and I love you ever more for your faith in me.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study presents an analysis, from a social-forecasting perspective, of the extent to which historical crises affect various forms of inequality. The key dimensions discussed are education and employment. Included is an analysis of the formulation of public policies surrounding these social and economic variables.

Within an advanced industrial nation-state, a crises is that set of forces which interrupt the relative stability of political and economic conditions within a society. Crises often cause relationships within and between groups and institutions to become fluid. Change may occur in a positive or negative direction; inequality may be decreased or increased.

### Historical Background

Educational institutions have historically been an integral part of the change process. Educational processes during the American Revolution for European immigrants and during the Reconstruction period for freed blacks are important examples. Although involving two

very distinct populations, they shared two common elements. First, the education provided to both populations was used by advantaged industrialists and professional educators to maximize economic production while minimizing social disruption. Second, such education served to formalize a hierarchical system based on class and race.

Under pressure from educational reformers who represented the views of a growing bourgeoisie, the movement for public education in the United States began in the industrializing Northern states (Bowles, 1972; Carnoy, 1974). Northern industrialists saw schooling as a means to offset the disruptive social conditions of factory life; furthermore, educational institutions could provide the moral guidance and control which the family and church had supplied in precapitalist society (Katz, 1970; 93-112). Schooling was imposed on a working class which viewed schooling, accurately, as largely serving the children of higher-income groups (Katz, 1970; 48-50). The South did not participate in the public-education movement until Northern capital took control of Southern institutions.

Public education, as it developed in the United States, was the reformers' answer to the crisis in the traditional social structure caused by the growth of industry. Schooling was seen by reformers and industrialists alike as promoting their common vision of

an ordered, purposeful, and progressive society. In this view, schooling also helped preserve a class structure in the face of economic and social change.

In addition to the system of public schooling, church groups organized public-school societies for educating the poor. Similar to groups in England, these societies formed the model for American and British missionary efforts in Africa and Asia. The purpose of these societies was clear, as noted by Katz (1970; 93):

> With minimal administrative expense, scrupulous financial integrity, and a commendable efficiency, the [New York Public School] Society maintained for decades an extensive network of schools that taught thousands of children a year.
>
> But make no mistake about it: This was a class system of education. It provided a vehicle for the efforts of one class to civilize another and thereby insure that society would remain tolerable, orderly, and safe.

Although education was and is a dominant factor in American society, the institution has very often been inefficient, and has even decreased social opportunity for many Americans. This had been particularly evident in the case of black Americans. As the emphasis on education as a precondition for many occupations grew, groundwork was being laid for the education-based occupational stratification of 20th-century America.

Whereas capitalist "humanitarian" values ultimately prevailed over slavery, the treatment of native

Americans, blacks, and other nonwhite groups did not improve with the expansion of capitalism. Blacks moved from slavery to sharecropping; instead of belonging to the landowner, they belonged to the merchant. Even with emancipation, their political rights were short-lived and their economic rights were severely limited.

The emancipation of slaves created a large rural labor force whose experiences were predominantly agricultural. The Civil War had left the South in economic ruin. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, established in 1865, was the major form of aid offered to freed blacks.

The Freedmen's Bureau was set up to improve the economic and political position of blacks during Reconstruction. The Bureau distributed food, clothing, and other supplies and provided job placements, homestead land, and educational facilities. One of the Bureau's major successes was to provide schools and teachers for freed blacks. Most of the teachers were missionaries from the mission societies.

Increased political power accrued to blacks via the right to vote and federal occupation of the South. They were also benefited by legislation requiring the states to provide schooling. (Before the war, there was no state responsibility for schooling.)

Reconstruction was a revolutionary period in the South, particularly in education. Although it was brief,

it produced some black colleges, primarily for teacher training, and these colleges in turn produced a significant number of black American scholars (Newby & Tyack, 1971; 194). But education during Reconstruction depended on the support of the North if it was to foster radical social and economic change in the South. The reality was that Northern capitalists were more interested in exploiting Southern resources than in promoting black liberation. Although the education provided to blacks, especially by missionaries, did in part focus on liberating blacks from attitudes of slavery, it was also geared toward getting blacks to act as a political force against Southern conservatives in a period when Northern capitalists were using black votes to maintain control over the Southern political structure. Had the conservatives collapsed as a political force, it is unlikely that the missionaries would have turned to teaching blacks to struggle against Northern industrialist forces.

When conservatives regained political control in the 1870s, they consistently curtailed black schooling. Since education sponsored by missionaries was the outgrowth of an industrial society and industrial interests opposed to the interests of conservative whites, schooling for blacks was seen by conservatives as threatening the plantation system.

Mass schooling was dysfunctional for the planters.

Indeed, with the advent of the sharecropping system, previous arguments for the education of blacks lost their meaning. Schooling for blacks during Reconstruction was supported by the theory that they would be part of a new social order in which white and black would be equal and not socially stratified by race, but under tenant farming, an educated labor force which understood interest rates and simple accounting methods would be a liability to the system rather than an asset.

Thus, Reconstruction was an interlude during which Northern industrialists were able to make important inroads into what was left of the South's resources. It was not possible for Northern concerns to take complete political control of the South, so they accepted Southern administration of the South, and hence, Southern definition of the black role. Even where Northern industry determined black conditions, blacks remained at the bottom of the occupational scale.

The economic imperatives that led whites to define the black person as capable of only simple manual labor delimited the schooling provided to blacks. If blacks were manual workers, they were to be given the limited skills necessary to perform unskilled work functions. Thus, capitalist needs defined people's roles in industrializing America. Blacks were needed first as agricultural labor and later as unskilled labor. These functions (after the Civil War), defined largely by white

Northern industrialists, fixed the black at the lowest rung on the economic and human ladder.

## Social Costs of the Decline in Energy Resources

The impact of crises upon inequality is exemplified in the multifaceted contemporary issue of social costs related to declining energy resources. This study focuses on the impact of declining energy resources. Included are a discussion of, and arguments for, alternatives to the present structure of education, training, and employment. The impact of declining energy resources is examined not as an autonomous factor but as an element for analyzing structural, social, and economic changes that follow in the wake of new technologies, and attendant problems society must attempt to solve.

The study presents this conceptual analysis using the framework of social forecasting as a way of "ordering" the bewildering number of perspectives on macrohistorical change. An effort is made to empirically identify the substantive character of structural changes in society as these derive from the changing nature of the economy, and the role of theoretical knowledge in determining the direction of social innovation and change.

This study follows from a broad definition of crisis which encompasses economic, social, and political forces.

Selected historical periods are used to demonstrate the juxtaposition of two inimical segments of society. In the United States, blacks as a group represent the have-nots; the haves, by-and-large, are white.

The conflict between the two, although it has shifted from the open confrontations of the 1960s, remains active. Today, it is manifested in the struggle to control political processes, jobs, educational institutions, limited housing, better residential areas, and even quality food.

For the most part, minority racial groups are physically distinguishable from the Caucasian majority, and race has historically served as a barrier to full assimilation. Members of the majority disproportionately control the resources vital to minority groups' survival. In the world of work, this is well illustrated by the fact that while white males are only 56% of the total labor force, they are fully 80% of the managers and administrators, and 73% of the personnel and labor-relations workers (United States Census Bureau, 1970). It may therefore be unrealistic to expect that white "gatekeepers" will always hire, manage, and treat nonwhite workers in a color-blind fashion (which would necessarily erode whites' domination of higher-status positions).

As the economy of the country responds more fully to limits in energy resources, racial disparities become

even more pronounced: Race relations tend to deteriorate further with intensified competition for declining resources, including employment opportunities.

The great postwar era of American economic expansion -- fueled by military spending at home and the primacy of the dollar abroad -- placated domestic discontent with a cornucopia of consumer goods. That era appears to be drawing to a close. The prognosis for the remaining decades of this century is for slower growth, simultaneous inflation and unemployment, and occasional shocks to the system -- environmental crises, energy shortages, international monetary disorders, and periods of political and corporate discontent.

The expansionist philosophy which is so integral to American society and capitalism (which is predicated on growth and expansion), may be seriously challenged by such limits. As economist Robert Heilbroner (1978) notes:

> The constraints of the environment, which are the great determining element in the era into which we are moving, suggest that we will have perhaps 25 years of "safe," although increasingly difficult, growth, followed by curtailment that would promise to be more and more drastic . . . [and] would pose a truly historic challenge to capitalism.

Such challenges are especially evident in the current energy crisis. Not only must external conditions change for people in a way that makes them willing to develop new institutions, but also, people must reject

their relationship with existing structures and actively strive to change these structures.

Historically, energy-resource crises have afforded opportunities for competing groups to vie for controlling advantage over natural resources. A major point of inquiry for this study is the relationship between declining energy resources and the persistence of stratification based on economic, social, and political factors.

Initially, patterns of inequality are examined on a global basis. Because of the significance of global networks in an interdependent world, patterns of inequality between developed and underdeveloped regions are examined to provide a global perspective.

However, the major focus of the study is upon the United States, with particular reference to black Americans. Selected national historical crises serve as a backdrop against which persisting patterns of inequality are examined. While data referenced apply specifically to black Americans, inferences are often drawn for other minority groups.

## Significance of the Study

Academic discussion and research on the decline of fossil fuels in the United States traditionally has been the purview of the natural scientist. Although natural

scientists allude to the social implications of effects of an energy decline, the particulars of social engineering/planning have traditionally not rated among their major foci.

Although a few social scientists have addressed how future lifestyles will be affected by energy-resource limitations, their theoretical frameworks rarely incorporate the dependent effects which would inevitably result from a decline of abundant, high-quality, cheap energy supplies in an advanced industrial nation-state. Inherent in such a void is inability to plan for the construction of future scenarios in a way which would maintain civil order in times of scarcity and/or of extreme inequality of distribution.

It is imperative that social scientists begin to actively involve themselves in social engineering and the formulation of public policy to deal with the limitations of certain kinds of economic resources and with changing values.

## Organization of the Study

Chapter II examines the relationship between development and underdevelopment within the framework of selected historical crises. The acquisition and control of energy resources is viewed as a global concern for both less developed and advanced industrial

nation-states. The decline of energy resources has a significant impact on each. The problems of unemployment/underemployment and inadequate education and job-skills training are inseparable from the problems of poverty. Conditions of uneven development are further exacerbated by the decline of energy resources. Industrial nation-states are being forced to drastically reorient themselves to develop alternative social structures, but as of yet, they have not significantly altered traditional patterns of inequality. Globally, the unequal distribution of resources is endemic to the capitalist economies of advanced industrial nation-states. This phenomenon tends to be accentuated by declining energy resources: Energy-resource disparities appear to be accompanied by unequal distribution of power and privilege. Thus, the resolution of energy-resource disparity alone may not significantly alter overall patterns of inequality.

Chapter III analyzes the evolution of distinct patterns of inequality within industrial orders, focusing specifically on the United States. During selected historical periods of economic crisis, patterns of occupational and educational inequality have tended to survive during and after turbulent upheavals. That is, certain groups appear to remain static in terms of relative social position during and after such crises. Why is this so? How and why have dominant groups managed

to consistently survive critical periods, in contrast with less privileged groups? What mechanisms of advantage have been at their disposal? How are these same groups managing to persist within the context of the current energy decline? Chapter III addresses these questions through the examination of selected historical crises.

Chapter IV considers the impact of declining energy resources on changing American lifestyle patterns in an era of "scarcity" rather than "abundance." Specifically, changing patterns of employment and education result not only in alterations of available employment opportunities, but also in changing qualifications (e.g., education/training) for jobs. The responses of employment and education structures to the decreasing availability of energy resouces are often accompanied by increasing inequality. There is a growing need for continuing-education efforts to actively retrain many displaced, unemployed, and underemployed adult workers. As the unemployment rolls increase in certain areas, and as certain jobs become obsolete, a disproportionate percentage of out-of-work adults will be members of minorities. Adding the factor of declining employment opportunities for the population as a whole, it appears that the current crisis again is disproportionately affecting minorities, particularly black Americans. Chapter IV analyzes the extent to which skilled and semi-skilled segments of the labor force are growing

during the current decline of cheap, abundant energy resources. At the same time, there appears to be a significant decrease in the availability of marginal employment opportunities. Already, new technologies whose production methods are energy intensive have eliminated many job positions. If the historical patterns are repeated, those disproportionately affected by the elimination of job categories will be the minorities and the poor. Many of the newly developing employment positions reflect familiar stratification patterns. As educational institutions respond to the need for training more semi-skilled and skilled workers, the qualifications and prerequisites for such positions tend to become stiffer. Training opportunities for emerging occupational positions within energy-intensive areas of the economy are so far disproportionately dominated by the majority group.

Chapter V synthesizes and analyzes various education and employment forecasts for adults derived from implications of current and projected public policies for the socially and economically disadvantaged in the United States, with its changing advanced industrial order. These implications also have significant relevance for the society as a whole. The more advantaged sectors of the population pay an economic cost when not all sectors of the population can contribute to the maintenance of society. Possible implications of social policies are

discussed, with major features salient to the social and economic conditions of black Americans identified. If such structural features remain unchecked, the results of uneven and disproportionate processes could have adverse consequences for the whole of American society.

# CHAPTER II

# GLOBAL PATTERNS OF INEQUALITY: AN APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION OF CRISES

## Introduction

Global inequality as a result of economic, political, and social crises in developed or underdeveloped countries does not evolve in isolation. These developments have global implications and global consequences. Therefore, before a specific discussion of inequality within the United States is presented, an understanding of how patterns of inequality have globally manifested themselves over time is developed to make the United States case study more meaningful. This is done by examining the relationship between developed and underdeveloped countries during the period from the rise of mercantile capitalism to the most recent "energy crisis."

The major organizing theme throughout this discussion will be the operational definition of crisis, which is: that singular force or combination of economic, political, and social forces which sets into motion a period of relative disequilibrium, during which existing

patterns of inequality can be either ameliorated or reinforced.

Specific crises to be examined within a global context are World War I and World War II. These crises sufficiently demonstrate that throughout periods of acute economic, political, and social disequilibrium, developed countries were able to perpetuate their dominant positions vis-å-vis underdeveloped countries. A major vehicle for the accomplishment of the domination process was education. The present chapter defines how the hierarchical structure of global inequality has persisted without significant change.

## A Crisis of Growth

There can perhaps be no more meaningful, nor more pragmatically necessary, change in the world today than toward a more just and humane world order. This is at once a great challenge and a great opportunity. Today, multiple crises in the global community leave many people feeling frustrated and powerless. However, rather than being a cause for despair, this situation can be analyzed as symptomatic of a crisis of growth.

This crisis can be interpreted as a result of the development of human institutions failing to keep pace with rapid evolution of global interdependencies. A period of crisis can be a period of imminent breakdown or

of imminent breakthrough. Beneath the surface discontent, confusion, and upheaval is an opportunity for the advent of a positive thrust forward in human history.

Today, conditions exist for choosing a positive direction in the making of history. There is a growing consciousness of global interdependence. Many critical economic, social, and political problems do not exist in isolation; the impacts of such problems often are distributive among various nation-states. Moreover, there is decreasing tolerance of domination by advanced industrial sectors over less-developed nations. In response to these changing perspectives, various alternatives are being explored, including education for changing world order systems.

According to Coles (1969; 14), "a country can only develop when due regard is given to the improvement of its human resources." Educated and informed citizens are essential to development efforts in an increasingly dynamic world. Concerns include the dramatic increase in the application of technology and the related need for trained personnel; the growing mobility of people; the impact of the urban community; inflation in the economy; and the need for continuing education. These factors demand increased emphasis on the capabilities of the educational enterprise.

Knowles (1970; 34) addresses the need for an educated and informed adult population:

> The society of our age cannot wait for the next generation to solve its problems. Time is running out too fast! Our fate rests with the intelligence, skill and good will of those who are now the citizen rulers. The instruments by which their abilities as citizen-rulers can be improved is adult education.

This urgency further compounds the complexity and global scope of contemporary crises. The rate at which problems such as population, hunger, and depletion of resources grow often appears overwhelming.

Developing countries often respond to the urgency of their national maladies via the education of their citizens. However, educational institutions provide only a framework to facilitate the achievement of goals. Although social and political structures are essential to the achievement of human goals, such interfering factors as greed, materialism, rising expectations, corruption, ignorance, and apathy are not likely to disappear simply because certain institutions are expanded.

Developing countries have traditionally invested heavily in education. Historically, their educational policy has been established by European countries for their own capitalist self-interests. European powers used education to effect changes that solidified their influence and control over the indigenous people. Although such policies were not always efficient or beneficial, they did reinforce conditions of economic and

cultural dependence. Patterns of modernization which evolved within this dependent context benefited few of the domestic peoples (Adams, 1971; Prosser, 1967; Bodenheumer, 1971).

There is a significant correlation between illiteracy and backwardness in knowledge on the one hand, and technological and economic development on the other. National progress is retarded when illiteracy and unskilled manpower abound, exacerbating conditions of inequality via inability to maintain or develop resources needed for development -- e.g., skilled labor.

## How Much Can People Change?

The greatest problem confronting the human species is not the hydrogen bomb, nor the population explosion. Rather, it is the question of how much change human beings can accept, absorb, and assimilate, and at what rate. As Smith (1970) notes: "To learn to live with change, to influence change so that it becomes social progress to humanize our institutions and our environment, would appear high on the list of future priorities." As society becomes more specialized and segmented, change becomes ever more closely equated with basic survival.

The developmental framework of Abraham Maslow is a particularly helpful paradigm in understanding the

historical growth of human society. Maslow's theory of human development postulates that human needs are basically hierarchical in nature. "Basic" needs must be reasonably met before meaning or "being" needs can be addressed. Deprivation at the level of basic needs almost always precludes actualization of the higher levels of potential. Concomitantly, the reasonable satisfaction or fulfillment of basic needs permits a resumption of growth (Maslow, 1968).

Based on Maslow's theory, the present research establishes four considerations for application in assessment of 20th-century human crises and the viability of the future:

1. With approximately two-thirds of the world's people struggling to meet minimal physical survival needs for food, shelter, and health care, and with the priority of almost all nation-states being security needs, a major proportion of world citizens exists at a relatively early stage of human development.

2. It is possible to view the present sense of global malaise and frustration as related to the deprivation of two basic needs on a mass scale. The potential for greater human development has been thwarted by the inability to identify and address basic <u>survival</u> and <u>security</u> needs (the first two stages in Maslow's human-development model).

3. The situation does not reflect shortcomings in

basic human nature. A concerted, cooperative effort to meet basic world needs can increase the potential for human development to higher stages of actualization.

4. The successful negotiation of the stages of human development is greatly affected by social institutions: There is a need for a healthy social framework within which to maximize human potential. The lack of such global infrastructures in an interdependent world presents the greatest obstacle to maximum human development.

A crisis of growth has been endemic to the process of global institutional change. This change has not kept pace with growing global interdependencies and competition. As the gap widens between the more-advantaged and less-advantaged sectors of society, factors of inequality increase.

## Global Inequality: Developed and Underdeveloped Nations

Most discussions of inequality focus on single nation-states. Increasing awareness of global interrelatedness highlights inequality among nations -- particularly between less developed and advanced industrial nation-states. International stratification refers to this inequality (Horowitz, 1974).

Nations differ dramatically in economic resources and productivity. Horowitz (1974) notes that there are

also severe status inequalities, compounded by racism, ethnic rivalries, and a sense of moral superiority. These attitudes have long been characteristic of the Western world. Additional factors are political inequalities among nations -- the division of the world into major and minor powers -- and unequal distribution of energy resources. The severe contrast between utilization of energy resources and advanced technology in developed versus underdeveloped nation-states reinforces historically persistent patterns of inequality.

The process of global stratification essentially began when European nations started their worldwide mercantilist expansion. During initial contact with Europe, the now-underdeveloped countries demonstrated sophisticated processes of development. However, they lacked the dynamism ostensibly inherent in the merchant and manufacturing class of Europe, and were therefore vulnerable to exploitation (Rodney, 1972). The technological stagnation of underdeveloped countries further limited their prospects for economic expansion, assured their military weakness, and exacerbated their inability to develop into strong nation-states.

Underdevelopment is very much tied to the fact that human social development has been uneven, from a strictly economic viewpoint. In a way, it is a paradox. Many parts of the world that are naturally rich are actually poor in terms of goods and services provided for their citizens;

and parts of the world that are less well off in natural resources enjoy the highest standards of living. Africa is illustrative of this paradox. Although rich in natural resources, the majority of citizens experience only marginal standards of living. For example, the United Nations Survey of Economic Conditions in Africa (1965; 13-15) says the following of natural resources in Africa:

> Africa is well endowed with mineral and primary energy resources. With an estimated 9% of the world's population, the region accounts for approximately 28% of the total value of world mineral production and 6% of its crude petroleum output.

In analyzing the role of capitalist domination over poor countries, it is useful to consider some economic characteristics of contemporary underdevelopment. Most poor countries are characterized by pronounced economic dualism. A modern, foreign-oriented, largely capitalist sector can be found in many of their major urban centers. These centers are located around important sources of raw materials; in contrast, the rest of the country remains dominated by a more traditional, wholly indigenous sector. The economic significance of the modern sector varies greatly among poor countries, depending upon their colonial history (a long history of subjugation that has transformed their social and political structures) and the impact of the postwar expansion of world capitalism. In any case, structural dependence on metropolitan

capitalist economics is characteristic of underdevelopment.

Related to these economic characteristics are several important sociopolitical features of contemporary poor countries that affect the growth and operation of capitalist institutions. Poor countries are typically characterized by a class structure in which power is highly concentrated among a small set of elites whose dominance had been accepted and strengthened, first by colonial rule and later by neocolonial administrations.

Obviously, there is an enormous gap between standards of living in poor and rich countries. The average per-capita production of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is less than one-tenth that of rich countries. Evidence suggests that in the poorest countries, a flourishing top 5% of the population receives an average of approximately 30% of the national income; the corresponding figure is approximately 20% in the rich countries (Beckford, 1972; Amin, 1974; Frank, 1971).

It is typical of underdeveloped economies that they do not concentrate on those sectors of the economy which generate growth and raise production levels. There are also very few ties between one sector and another (e.g., agriculture and industry) that could interact beneficially. In addition to suffering from internal disjunctures, developing economies are integrated into

the very structure of the developed capitalist economies in a manner unfavorable to them and which ensures their dependence on the industrialized countries.

Developed countries are industrialized. The greater part of their working population is engaged in industrial and technical processes. They boast a vertically integrated, highly mechanized agricultural sector.

Development may therefore be viewed as moving the great masses of people away from scarcity of food and malnutrition to balanced food intake; from sickness and disease to better health; from inequality of income to a more equitable distribution; from inequality in educational opportunity to more open admission (where economics, age, sex, and geographic conditions do not become barriers to educational opportunity).

Domination by inequitable institutions and inequitable social arrangements persists worldwide. The resolution of these conflicts and contradictions without too much difficulty for and loss to rich and poor nations is a pressing challenge.

## World War I: The Scramble for Power

Historically, crises have been a major conduit for maintaining an imbalance of power and have allowed dominant powers to push their advantage. Among the most important crises which served to alter the relationships

between developed and less-developed nation-states were World War I and World War II. Underlying these crises was a common history of exploitation by capitalist nations over nonwhite, less-developed nations.

Throughout the 19th century, the ability to make a profit and to acquire unending wealth had been assured by relative peace and security. Economic power provided dominant power structures the authority to exercise control over the masses. As economic disequilibrium exacerbated the crises of massive unemployment and political unrest, the interruption of conditions needed to produce wealth interfered with economic power and called this authority into question.

The combination of social, political, and economic forces set into motion a period of relative disequilibrium, and the contradictions of oppressive affluence on the one hand and proletarian poverty on the other became an impetus for the crisis of World War I. Despite the multiplication of European and world peace agencies, armed competition between the power rivals had divided Europe into two systems of alliance: the Triple Alliance, composed of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; and the Triple Entente, which included England, France, and Russia.

Armed competition between the two rival European coalitions for colonial markets, cheap materials, and cheap labor was well under way several years before the

actual outbreak of war. Germany and her satellites were determined to wield a controlling influence in Europe, Africa, and Asia, while Russia, France, and Great Britain were equally determined to effectively curb such ambitions. Confusion and antagonism grew, the game of intrigue became more complicated, and all semblance of international law broke down. Thus, World War I began in Europe in 1914 essentially over the acquisition of resources.

Serendipitously, it was a war of extraordinary importance in the development of Asian and especially African nationalism. As an example of the thrust toward black nationalism, the first global Pan African Congress was convened. Colonized peoples began to absorb more intensely than ever the political ideas of a rapidly changing Europe.

India's determined opposition to British rule increased under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, who sought to resist via peaceful noncooperation, not armed conflict. World War I resulted in the emergence of large, active political parties openly (and sometimes violently) agitating for national independence. In 1920, Gandhi launched a campaign of civil disobedience and boycott against the British government.

World War I had a similar influence upon Afro-Americans. The worldwide struggle for democracy not

only raised their hopes for social and political equality in America; it also gave them a new self-awareness.

Controlling Oil Resources

By the time World War I broke out, European powers -- notably the British -- were acutely aware of the growing importance of oil as a strategic military commodity. Oil was essential for motorized ground transportation, newly emergent air forces, and more efficient and powerful navies. Control of petroleum resources became an overriding focus of Western rivalry in Europe and a primary means by which Western powers could establish and maintain political and economic control over the region.

With World War I, the desire to control world oil resources became an important feature of Western politics in the Middle East as well. Extravagant and unrestrained use of domestic oil reserves, especially during World War I, had precipitated an "energy crisis" at the war's end. The United States had supplied approximately 80% of the Allied war requirements for oil. The United States naval fleet had also converted from coal to oil just before the war, and a program of naval expansion aimed at rivaling that of Britain was begun at the war's end (Jacoby, 1974). Jacoby (1974) quotes President Wilson:

> "It is evident to me that we are on the eve of a commercial war of the severest sort and I am afraid that Great Britain will

> prove capable of as great commercial savagery as Germany has displayed for so many years in her commercial methods."

With the emergence of the automobile industry, the domestic economy became increasingly dependent on oil and petroleum products. American and British competition in the Middle East intensified because of the race of major oil companies to secure foreign sources of oil.

The consolidated power of the United States' oil companies, with the ready assistance of the government, provided for American participation in exploiting oil from the Middle East. By the end of the war, the oil industry was a major part of America's industrial sector, with significant consequences for national economic stability.

This period in history laid the foundation for the modern capitalist corporate state in America. The oil industry was in the vanguard of this development. No other industry has ever attained quite the same degree of symbiosis with the government, reflected in mutuality of policies and exchanges of personnel. Under these arrangements, and "wrapped in the American flag," the oil companies were able to organize themselves into a cartel independent of government control, in the interest of eliminating "inefficient" competition.

The Allies achieved victory in 1918, but World War I in no way ended the idea of European world domination.

Rather, it served only to loosen the seams of imperialism. The Versailles settlement of the war (1919) left many of Europe's political and economic problems unresolved and created some new ones as well. The relative position of disenfranchised people remained unchanged. Boundaries were adjusted and new European nation-states were formed, but colonized nations remained colonized. Throughout this period of economic, social, and political turmoil, the dominant forces remained dominant. Structural inequality had again endured a historical crisis.

## The Between-War Years

After World War I, major oil companies became the most visible advocates of a foreign policy that stressed American national interest in gaining access to foreign oil resources. Much publicity was generated about dwindling domestic oil reserves and the alleged needs of the newly expanded American navy. Through a highly organized system of control, a series of imperialistic oil concessions and successful oil explorations took place. By the end of the 1930s, United States oil giants had accumulated a sizeable share of known Middle Eastern oil reserves, with no provision for relinquishing substantial concession areas, and had eliminated the threat of competing interests.

At the beginning of World War II, then, all the big players were on the scene. The "Seven Sisters," as the largest oil companies were later dubbed, were locked into joint production and marketing arrangements that virtually guaranteed the absence of significant competition.

In America, organized industry used its might to realize fantastic profits through domination of world industry. It fought labor unions and tried to nullify democracy by using the power of wealth and capital. In the midst of this effort, the magnificent structure of capitalist industry collapsed in every part of the world. DuBois (1946) states: "Make no mistake, war did not cause the Great Depression; it was the reasons behind the depression that caused war and will cause it again." The rumblings of World War II were heard.

## World War II: The Emergence of the United States as a Dominant Force

Although America had only limited foreign oil production before 1900, at the turn of the century more than 90% of the world's oil was dominated by the United States and Soviet petroleum industries (Blair, 1976). The experience of World War I had clearly demonstrated the strategic importance of the Middle East in terms of world conflict and the decisiveness of oil in the prosecution of a war. A clash ensued between the British and the

Americans for the fruits of victory, in the form of oil.

During World War II, the Middle East assumed a new role in the relations between the Great Powers. While it was imperative to hold the area for the Allies, it had been even more important not to let it fall into the hands of the enemy, for the Middle East could supply Germany with not only a strategic position but above all, a supply of oil necessary for the prosecution of global war. Thus, while peacetime objectives dictated control of the sources of the Middle East's wealth, war objectives dictated sacrifices to guarantee a solid front against possible enemies. Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union cooperated in the Middle East against the common enemy. When the hostilities were over, all realized that the oil resources of the region would have to be shared by the victors on the basis of new arrangements.

The crisis of World War II, perhaps more than any previous crisis, marked the beginning of the breakdown of Western hegemony over developing countries. The war caused economic, social, and political disequilibrium. Moreover, it triggered a monumental surge of nationalism leading to a series of revolts and a move to end Western colonialism. However, outright colonialism was only to be replaced by a system of neocolonialism.

World War II brought the downfall of Western Europe as the center of world power. The major European nations,

weakened by the war, lost control of almost all of their African and Asian colonies within 15 years. The Soviet Union and the United States emerged as the dominant world powers.

The postwar economic reconstruction of Europe and Japan required unprecedented amounts of petroleum. Whole national economies were built anew. Economies once based on domestic coal resources were transformed at every level so that petroleum would provide a larger share of basic energy needs. With the rise of the automobile and the conversion of railroads from coal to diesel fuel, transportation came to depend almost exclusively on petroleum products. In contrast to the United States, Europe and Japan were almost totally dependent on foreign oil, the bulk of which was controlled by United States companies. The predominant source of oil for Europe and Japan was the Middle East. (Western-hemisphere production was consumed predominantly by the United States.)

Economic and social inequality had become even more visible by the end of World War II. Moreover, governments increased their official sanction of inequality. Specifically, in the United States, with the most ethnically mixed culture in the world, the most advanced industrial base, and consumption in excess of two-thirds of the world's energy resources, inequality has been exacerbated by economic and social discrimination.

## United States Hegemony

At the end of World War II, the United States was in a particularly fortunate position. While the economies of the other advanced nations, victors and vanquished alike, had been devastated by the war, the economy of the United States managed to flourish. The fruits of this flourishing economy, however, were not enjoyed by black Americans, who continued to occupy the lowest level in the economic hierarchy of the United States. Chapter III will show how this stagnation, juxtaposed against benefits reaped after periods of crisis by the privileged portion of the population, is a characteristic pattern.

# CHAPTER III

# THE IMPACT OF SELECTED HISTORICAL CRISES ON AMERICAN PATTERNS OF INEQUALITY

## Introduction

As previously stated, crisis is operationally defined as that singular force or combination of political, economic, and social forces which sets into motion a period of relative disequalibrium, during which existing patterns of inequality can be either ameliorated or reinforced. In this chapter, six selected periods of crisis in American history which fit this operational definition are analyzed within the context of inequality. These periods are as follows:

Crisis 1: The American Revolution

Crisis 2: The Civil War/Reconstruction Era

Crisis 3: World War I

Crisis 4: The Great Depression

Crisis 5: The Civil-Rights Movement

In discussing these periods, this chapter chronicles key factors impeding or enhancing the protracted struggle for social and economic equality. The historical plight of black Americans is used to demonstrate the impact of

factors of inequality on a racial minority group. However, processes of discrimination impact upon the quest of other minorities for social, political, and economic equality in an equally devastating manner.

This chapter will also illustrate the need for a sustained commitment to the eradication of generations-old gross inequalities which perpetuate systemic discrimination. The legacies of slavery, segregation, and racism remain an integral part of contemporary America.

## Crisis 1: The American Revolution

In revolutionary America, there was essentially no species of liberalism dedicated to securing the rights of man or woman or the emancipation of the masses. The Revolution was, rather, a battle to secure independence from what had become an oppressive foreign power. The emerging bourgeoisie had grown envious of this power, for economic reasons. The ideology of liberalism ensuing from such a situation is basically illegitimate, and deserves reevaluation. The history of the American Revolution and the country's past as a colonial territory of Britain is not analogous with the colonial and then neocolonial domination of developing countries. Too often, such a distortion of history, under the guise of liberalism, has been used to further the cause of imperialist domination

over other parts of the world by Americans.

The American Revolution had nothing to do with any of the fabrications which were devised to further the cause of America's ideological penetration of the Third World. The American colonies up to the time of the Revolution had been regulated by the mercantilist system -- the same system utilized by Europeans in their overseas colonies, which had brought about the decline of feudalism and had fostered overseas extension of the national economies of Europe (Mashood, 1974). This system of economic considerations spurred not only the regulation of commerce and navigation in the American colonies, but also the colonization of Asia, South America, Africa, and innumerable other territories.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, slavery in the United States had become an integral part of a burgeoning economic system. Although various religious groups, notably the Quakers, had questioned in a limited fashion the right of one man to hold another in bondage, there essentially had been no frontal attack upon the institution of slavery. In the Northern colonies, where use of slaves was not extensive, the majority of colonists paid little attention to slavery as an institution. However, like the colonists of the South, the Northerners enacted into law, without precedent in English jurisprudence, a recognition of blacks as different and inferior (Degler, 1959). Perhaps it was the

colonists' preoccupation with their economic and political relations with England that accounted for the widespread indifference with which they regarded slavery. A more timely concern during this period was that blacks not conspire to rebel or offer aid to the French or the Indians. However, close association over generations between the degradation of slavery and black color would result in the spread of prejudice against the black to the North as well as in the South.

The general unconcern with slavery prevailed to the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. The British victory had exacerbated the conflict between Great Britain and the colonies. The British ministries felt the colonists should bear a larger portion of the tax burden of the war and should help to support the large garrison force British military authorities were bent on keeping in America. The colonists, on the other hand, argued that a Parliament in which they were not directly represented had no right to tax them, and they believed they no longer needed the protection of His Majesty's armed forces.

Basically, the roots of the American Revolution may be traced to a series of Parliamentary measures whereby England attempted to regulate the economic activities of her 13 colonies and to exercise controllng political authority over them. For example, the British Navigation Acts had secured and guaranteed Great Britain's shipping

monopoly in American colonial waters. It had also established a system of commerce and markets preferential to Great Britain (Faulkner, 1950). Because of various restrictions which usurped commercial trade rights from the American colonies, especially in the slave trade, colonial resistance increased. Such impositions eventually produced the Revolution.

At the same time, the struggle of blacks to secure freedom was growing. When James Otis delivered his protest in The Rights of the British Colonies, he also affirmed the Negro's inalienable right to freedom; concomitantly, blacks were petitioning the General Court of Massachusetts for their freedom on the grounds that it was their natural right (Beard, 1913; Quarles, 1961).

At the end of the French and Indian War, the British increased taxes on the 13 colonies and sent officials and soldiers to collect these taxes. Boston became a center of resistance to both the taxes and the British soldiers. Irritation grew on both sides. Finally, on March 5, 1770, confrontations between British soldiers and a group of Boston patriots led by Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave, ended in bloodshed. Attucks became one of the first martyrs to American independence.

Attucks' martyrdom demonstrated the incongruity between the colonists' quest for freedom and the black slaves' quest for freedom in America (Franklin, 1974). Here was a fugitive slave willing to resist England to

the point of giving his life for freedom -- as a nationalist, and as a slave.

The "Boston Massacre" in which Attucks died was the first battle of the American Revolution. Before the War of Independence ended at Yorktown, 5,000 more American Negroes would fight to help build the new nation.

Declarations of independence advocated a principle irreconcilable with a concept of men as property. These slogans had a more immediate effect on the slaves themselves, particularly in New England, where slaves began "suits of service," asking the courts for freedom and for compensation for past labors (Aptheker, 1974). In addition, New England Negroes sent petitions to the legislative assemblies urging them to proclaim liberty throughout the commonwealth. Such requests were invariably tabled, since they required the freeing of slaves en masse (rather than individually, as in a suit of service).

A more direct route to freedom emerged with the war effort: Becoming a soldier gave a slave a path to freedom. Blacks served in every phase of the war and under every possible condition. Some volunteered, others were drafted, while still others were substituted for white draftees. They saw clear implications for their own future in the fight against England: They wanted human freedom as well as political independence.

However, the early use of black soldiers was

short-lived; a pattern of exclusion set in as the Continental Army and others became forceful advocates of a "no-Negroes" policy. The armies did not want their ranks populated with runaway slaves.

The policy of excluding Negroes from the armies was based on the mistaken supposition that the war would be short. By the close of 1776, grim necessity forced the states and the central government to recast their thinking. As it became increasingly difficult to raise volunteer forces, and Congress (in 1777) began to fix quotas for each state, local and state recruiting officers became inclined to meet their quotas by sending Negroes to Washington's army. Quietly reversing its policy, the Continental command accepted all Negroes sent by the states.

The recruiting of Negroes was further stimulated by the system of substitution, through which a draftee could avoid service by producing someone to take his place. A black soldier was a common sight north of the Potomac after 1777.

In breaking with England, the colonists evoked a philosophy of freedom -- a philosophy incompatible with slavery and other forms of discrimination. Groups of American citizens viewed as inconsistent the condemnation of England for curtailing liberties, on the one hand, and the oppression of blacks in America, on the other. The beginnings of a humanitarian movement were among the

unforeseen internal changes resulting from the war.

Despite their efforts, anti-slavery leaders were unable to abolish slavery after the War of Independence. Southern states had much capital invested in slavery, and already a new economic importance was becoming attached to the institution. It was therefore only natural that slavery was to become an important consideration in the Constitutional Convention. In the heated debates over Congressional representation, the question arose as to how slaves should be counted. Because the majority of Northern delegates regarded slaves as only property, they considered it inappropriate to count slaves.

The three-fifths compromise that was finally written into the Constitution demonstrates clearly the strength of the pro-slavery interests at the convention. Inserted into Article I, Section 2, it reads as follows:

> Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons (Franklin, 1976).

A series of political and economic manipulations and trade-offs resulted in the legal sanctioning of institutionalized slavery. With the end of British domination, America had accepted the challenge and

responsibility of its new political freedom by establishing the machinery and safeguards that ensured the continued enslavement of blacks. "The Constitution," notes Faulkner (1950), "was drawn up by the wealthy element in a distinctly commercial and agricultural society, and it was not intended to be a democratic document."

While the American Revolution did not change the status of indentured servants, enslaved Africans, or Indian labor, it did win for the bourgeoisie political independence from the feudal mercantilism of Great Britain. It also shifted the right to exploitation of the slave-labor economy from a foreign feudal mercantilist state to the emerging local bourgeoisie, which consisted largely of wealthy plantation owners and merchants.

Through this most turbulent period of disequilibrium, social and economic oppression became a mainstay of the American system of development. De jure and de facto rulings regarding inequality were to follow, ensuring this situation.

## Crisis 2: The Civil War/-Reconstruction Era

### The War

The decade preceding the Civil War was dominated by crises related directly and indirectly to slavery. By the year before the opening of the Civil War, it appeared

from a set of resolutions adopted by the United States Senate that the slave status of blacks was established long-term. Resolutions sponsored primarily by Southern leaders and adopted on May 24-25, 1860 held that

> slavery is lawful in all the territories under the Constitution; neither Congress nor a local legislature can abolish it there; the federal government is in duty bound to protect slave owners as well as the holders of other forms of property in the territories; it is a violation of the Constitution for any state or any combination of citizens to intermeddle with the domestic institutions of any other state "on any pretext whatever, political, moral, or religious, with a view to their disturbance or subversion"; open or covert attacks on slavery are contrary to the solemn pledges given by the states on entering the Union to protect and defend one another; the inhabitants of a territory on their admission to the Union may decide whether or not they will sanction slavery thereafter; the strict enforcement of the fugitive slave law is required by good faith and the principles of the Constitution. (Fishel & Quarles, 1976)

Intersectional legal issues surrounding slavery, specifically the Missouri Compromise of 1850, were a preliminary battleground for the Civil War. The significance of these matters had just become apparent when the Supreme Court, in 1857, handed down a decision in (Dred) Scott v. Sanford that widened the breach between North and South. With the Dred Scott decision, the highest court in the land openly expounded a proslavery doctrine, creating an atmosphere conducive to political and social revolution.

Two critical precursors to the war that granted freedom to the slaves were the raid of John Brown on slaveholders for the purpose of liberating their slaves (1859), and the 1860 election of President Abraham Lincoln, which, from the Southern point of view, was revolutionary and destructive. The economic benefits of slavery, then, severed the United States into sections and forced them to settle the question by war. The belief that blacks were rightfully subjected to extreme injustice and persistent inequality constituted a rationale for war, as opposed to a rationale for equity.

On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. It declared freedom for all persons held as slaves within the states in rebellion against the United States. The emancipated blacks were admonished to abstain from violence and to accept employment at reasonable wages.

## Reconstruction

The post-Civil War era was when white Americans attempted to decide a place for former slaves in American society. Slavery's stabilizing influence was gone; the Civil War had let loose upon the South millions of freedom-seeking blacks. What to do with them was a critical issue for the nation.

Blacks found themselves in a neo-slavery system when the Civil War ended. Plantations still needed laborers,

and menial labor was required for the industries of the South. Sharecropping, debt peonage, and convict leases were used to again subjugate black labor. The South sought, through Jim Crow practices, night riders, and lynch law, to nullify the civil and political rights guaranteed to blacks under the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.

The belief that the newly emancipated slaves were inferior and unable to fend for themselves was widespread in the white North and the South after the Civil War. An outgrowth of that belief was the establishment of the Conservative Bureau of Freedmen, Abandoned Lands and Refugees--the Freedmen's Bureau. It was ostensibly established to aid and protect freed slaves. This sympathetic interpretation, however, overlooks the role of the Bureau as a conservative force against black assertion. As the dominant authority over black destinies at the end of the Civil War, the Bureau clearly indicated with its actions that the new black freedom was to be severely circumscribed. Directors of the organization like Samuel Chapman Armstrong were more concerned with "reestablishing order and stability" in the South than with helping to uplift blacks.

Armstrong proposed to educate blacks with industrial schooling: "education which would advance reconciliation between North and South and at the same time secure . . . order between the races." The founder of the Hampton

Institute and ideological father of black industrial education, Armstrong essentially attempted to resolve the race problem through "education." He believed that blacks should be taught to remain in their place, stay out of politics, keep quiet about their rights, and work. The educational theme that he emphasized was the need for blacks to be good, subservient laborers (Armstrong, 1882).

Such a philosophy is endemic to the basic premise that the history of black people in America is primarily a labor history. Africans had been brought to America for their labor; the death of the formal institution of slavery did not vanquish this role.

Although the Freedmen's Bureau facilitated the education of blacks, it could hardly compensate for hundreds of years of deprivation. The high expectations of the freed men far exceeded the low level of actual support. Then, the federal government abdicated its responsibility for the education of blacks via the Hayes-Tilden Compromise in 1877, which in effect told the South that the "Negro problem" was a regional concern. Thus, by default, the education of blacks was left primarily to the states, where the burden fell heavily upon the shoulders of blacks themselves (Flemming, 1976).

The most important contribution to educational opportunity during the Reconstruction era was the establishment of free, publicly supported schools in the

South, due in large measure to the great appreciation and desire of black people for an education. As they gained political power, the freedmen concluded that the key to their advancement was education, and saw the acquisition of knowledge as the remedy for their social and economic ills. Freed blacks preferred integrated education; they believed segregation violated the 14th Amendment and made them unequal.

W. E. B. DuBois (1964) suggests that in most Southern states, public schooling began with the enfranchisement of blacks. In South Carolina, for example, the 1868 Constitution, drawn up by blacks and radical white allies, mentions education for the first time in the history of the state. While white property owners resented a possible tax burden, public-school attendance was made compulsory.

Although blacks did much toward the foundation of public education, they were not its primary beneficiaries. More and more Southern state constitutions were changed to allow state taxation for support of schools, but monies intended for the education of blacks were often diverted. Whites considered the education of blacks useless and even dangerous to society.

The turn of the century marked the political nadir of black people in America and the re-emergence of the persistent patterns of inequality. The effects of post-Civil War and Reconstruction crises were reinforced

by efforts to make blacks second-class citizens, officially sanctioned by the federal court in the infamous 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision.

The years between 1890 and 1915 were crucial to black people. This was the period when white Southerners, with Northern acquiescence, relegated blacks to the lowest level in the caste system. Although W. E. B. DuBois and other progressive black leaders began to attack discrimination and violence against black people, they made little progress against the ramparts of racism.

Once again, patterns of inequality persisted during and after a period of crisis. Violent manifestations of hostility to blacks in the North and in the South, common from the beginning of the black's presence in the New World, were a marked feature of the last 16 years of the 19th century: More than 2,500 lynchings occurred during this time, and the majority of these had black victims.

Few regarded these manifestations of violence as an inherent part of the industrial imperialism to which America was committed. But it was an integral part of the imperialist ideology, and the subjection of blacks to caste control and wage slavery was an essential component of this system.

## Crisis 3: World War I

Armed competition between two rival coalitions in Europe for markets, cheap materials, and cheap labor was well underway several years before the outbreak of World War I. Germany and her satellites were more determined than ever to wield controlling influence in Europe, Africa, and Asia, while Russia, France, and Great Britain were equally determined to curb such ambitions.

In April of 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany, black men responded not only to the call to military service but also as volunteers. The majority of black soldiers were assigned to service regiments; even those blacks with more than a high-school education were assigned to menial duties. Blacks protested this systematic discrimination and segregation, especially their exclusion from officer training (Logan, 1970; Meier, 1966).

With the beginning of the war, demand for war materiel and supplies led to a vast expansion of industry and an increased need for labor. As the volume of immigrants from Europe declined due to quotas imposed on the entry of aliens to the United States, and as white industrial workers joined the military, utilization of the black migrant in industry intensified. Enhanced employment opportunities brought increased wages. (Wages

of blacks in the North were often substantially more than those paid in the South.)

In the past, the immigrant masses had provided the industrial North with a cheap, readily available labor supply. The war not only drastically curtailed the flow of immigrants -- from 1,218,480 in 1914 to 110,618 in 1918 -- but 500,000 immigrants already in the United States left for Europe between 1915 and 1918 to serve in the armed forces of their native lands. With more than 4,000,000 men drafted into the United States armed services when war was declared, the need for skilled drafters and unskilled workers became acute (Shonfield, 1945).

In the half century between emancipation and the outbreak of World War I, blacks, with few exceptions, had been unable to get work in the North except in domestic and personal occupations. However, with the nation's usual labor force depleted, Northern industrialists turned to Southern black women as well as men to fill jobs. American firms had employed labor recruiters for work among European peasants for decades, but for the first time, intensive recruitment campaigns were aimed at Southern black laborers. Serendipitously, the ravages of the boll weevil and the disastrous crop failure of 1916 had left thousands of black agricultural laborers and sharecroppers without their usual means of subsistence.

With the improving economic situation after 1916,

Southern landowners began to fear that the mass Southern black migration northward would deplete their labor supply. Thus, local and state legislation was enacted to protect the cheap labor supply. Recruiters were charged prohibitive license fees and subjected to strict regulations, with heavy fines and imprisonment for violators. To stop the migration, DuBois (1964) notes, the South "mobilized all the machinery of modern oppression: taxes, city ordinances, licenses, state laws, municipal regulations, wholesale arrests, and of course, the peculiar Southern method of the mob and lyncher." However, such measures came too late to be effective, and they were easily circumvented.

The decade of 1910 to 1920 saw a larger increase in the number of Southern-born blacks living in the North than did the preceding 40 years. Even more impressive was the opening of industrial jobs for the first time to blacks. Thus, with the outbreak of World War I and the great migration of 1915-1918, the first black industrial working class in the United States came into existence. By 1920, one-third of all gainfully employed blacks were working in American industry.

Then came the postwar demobilization. It led to heavy unemployment among black industrial workers. Blacks' disillusionment and frustration increased. They had met with discrimination and segregation while fighting for the Nation, and upon returning home they

were faced with intensified Jim Crow practices and soaring unemployment.

At the end of the war in 1919, black forces seeking employment were confronted with crowded cities and virtually no job opportunities. In essence, the economic situation for blacks after the war was worse than before the war. As the nation's war industries, which had depended heavily upon cheap, unskilled black labor, were dismantled and reconverted to peacetime production, mass discharges of black workers took place. As millions of whites returned from the armed forces to the ranks of industrial labor, employers replaced black workers with white ex-servicemen. Former black servicemen were not so lucky. In April 1919, the Division of Negro Economics announced that 99% of Chicago's black veterans were still unemployed, with little prospect of work in the immediate future (Welsey, 1967). The same situation faced black ex-servicemen in all large industrial cities. Those black veterans fortunate enough to find work at all were shunted into the most menial and lowest paid jobs; even black veterans with college degrees ended up as common laborers.

Despite the demand for black labor in the South during the post-war months, very few blacks left the industrial centers of the Midwest and Northeast to take jobs offered by Southern employers.

The 1921 economic depression made the situation even

worse for black workers. Welsey (1967) observes that in Detroit, the black unemployment rate was five times as high as for native whites and twice as high as that of foreign-born whites. Furthermore, Southern black workers continued to migrate northward.

Economic recovery, and the gradual elimination of foreign immigrant competition due to the passage of restrictive immigration laws in 1921 and 1924, brought a second wave of migration out of the South in the years 1922 to 1924. This workforce was unskilled. "Everywhere," wrote Roger Baldwin (1920), "the Negroes had the hardest and most disagreeable jobs." Employers in both South and North reserved for blacks the work usually shunned by whites.

The confinement of blacks to the most menial jobs was more often than not supported by government. For example, the railroad lines and railroad brotherhoods had worked out unwritten agreements confining blacks to low-level railway work. When the federal government assumed control of the nation's rail network in December 1917, it prohibited the hiring or advancement of blacks to positions they had not occupied in the past (Aptheker, 1951). In shipyards around the country, employers and unions -- again with government sanction -- agreed to restrict blacks to common labor. Skilled blacks were forced to accept jobs as helpers to white craftsmen or as "fillers" in tasks demanding few or no skills. The door

to semi-skilled and skilled occupations remained closed to black workers. Among the reasons for this was the racism of white employers and the economic and racial prejudice of the white trade unions dominating most skilled occupations. As discrimination against black workers by employers and unions became a pervasive policy, the familiar patterns of inequality extended into the depression era and beyond.

## Crisis 4: The Great Depression

The Great Depression of the 1930s had really begun for black workers by the end of 1926. Because of the "last-hired, first-fired" phenomenon, blacks experienced widespread unemployment as early as 1927 (Foner, 1976). In the early months of 1929, a supposedly flourishing period, approximately 300,000 blacks, or one-fifth of all blacks employed in industry, had already lost their jobs. Moreover, employment areas open to blacks were shrinking.

The crisis of 1929-1932 was a disaster for all American workers. From the stock-market crash of October 1929 to the economic low point in 1933, the number of unemployed rose from three million to approximately 15 million (with some estimates as high as 17 million). Wages dropped 45%, and the percentage of the population living at or below the bare subsistence level rose from 40% in 1929 (the year of greatest prosperity) to 75% in

1932 (Sternsher, 1969).

However much white workers suffered, blacks suffered even more. The Depression of the 1930s wiped out many of the few black small businesses which had developed hand-in-hand with the growth of black organizations and institutions to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding urban population. It created even greater miseries for the large black lower class. In some Southern cities, approximately three-fourths of the black population was on relief. White workers replaced urban blacks in almost all jobs, including the most menial jobs. Throughout the Depression years, the percentage of unemployed blacks was higher than that of either native or foreign-born whites. Even in periods of extreme economic and social disequilibrium, inequality was maintained.

The New Deal policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration brought some relief to impoverished blacks and contributed to occupational differentiation within the black community. Blacks were employed, albiet in very small numbers, as statisticians, lawyers, engineers, architects, economists, office managers, case aids, librarians, and interviewers for the first time. Lower level white collar positions for secretaries, clerks, and stenographers also became available. Though many of these jobs involved administering governmental programs for blacks, they represented the first real breakthrough in a racially segregated labor market (Foner, 1976).

The passage of protective union legislation during the New Deal era created a stable climate for collective bargaining and precipitated a change in organized labor's relationship with black workers. The importance of changing union attitudes and practices toward blacks is perhaps best conveyed in Bayard Rustin's (1975) observation:

> Although the new industrial unions were certainly not free of the prejudicial attitudes and policies which permeated the entire society, they made a practice of organizing black and white workers as equals wherever possible. Today, this may not seem important, but at that time it was a gesture of revolutionary significance. No other mass institution in American society was so fully open to the participation of blacks; for the first time, Negroes could play an active role in an institution which vigorously sought to change the direction of society.

Increased black participation in labor unions was probably one of the major reasons for the increase in the proportion of blacks in semi-skilled and skilled positions -- from 17.2% of black workers in 1940 to 29.1% in 1950 (Rustin, 1975). Notwithstanding this increase, it would take World War II to substantially change the economic and social position of blacks in America.

## Crisis 5: World War II

World War II was exceedingly important to the economic recovery of not only the United States but the

entire Western world. The New Deal had not achieved full utilization of the existing productive capacity, and consequently, unemployment remained a critical problem. The need to strengthen the armed forces was pressing: The numbers of officers and soldiers were below World War I levels, and the count of black army soldiers had diminished significantly. By 1940, the United States Army consisted of 230,000 enlisted men and officers, but there were fewer than 5,000 blacks (Schonfield, 1945).

The building of the United States defense forces catalyzed economic recovery. Full employment of the labor force and increased opportunities for blacks resulted from the utilization of idle industrial plants in defense and in war-induced spin-offs. However, as preparation for, and finally involvement in, World War II increased economic stability, a sociopolitical contradiction surfaced. While Hitler's ideology of racial hegemony evoked revulsion on the part of many whites, the irony was not lost on blacks that the supremacy espoused by Hitler was rooted in the same principle as were discriminatory practices in United States civilian and military society -- to wit, racism.

Once again, a United States defense build-up soon absorbed the available white male laborers. Although demand was high for workers in the expanding war industry, the color bar remained: blacks who applied were often informed that they would be considered only for

janitorial or like positions.

Blacks as well as a significant number of whites lacked the skills required for many defense jobs. The government established training programs to remedy this deficit. However, government-financed programs discriminated against black trainees, and those few blacks who did receive training did not readily obtain jobs.

In An American Dilemma, sociologist Gunnar Myrdal (1964) points out that "blacks made even less headway during the boom following the outbreak of World War II in Europe than during World War I." In October 1940, only 5.4% of Employment Service placements in 20 selected defense industries were non-white; and this proportion had declined by April 1941 to 2.5%. In September 1941, it was ascertained that the great bulk of the war plants employed no blacks.

There were many interrelated barriers to black employment in the war industry. Many labor unions would not admit blacks. Management of closed shops would turn down black applicants because they were non-union. Training schools would not accept black candidates either because they could not join labor unions or because they had no job offers. Even in open shops, management would not make offers to black job applicants because, without training, they were not qualified. Thus, while unemployment was declining among whites, among blacks it

steadily increased. Meanwhile, the official ending of the Depression (for white America) led the federal government to drastically curtail welfare appropriations, further injuring the majority of the black population which remained unemployed or underemployed.

Black protests gained various paper concessions. The United States Office of Education announced a non-discriminatory policy in the use of funds for vocational training in defense work. CIO and General Motors officials called for an end to discrimination in special defense industries (Spero & Harris, 1931; 29). But these pronouncements were never enforced.

One of the most prominent protest actions against discrimination in the 1940s was the threatened "National Negro March on Washington" for equal employment opportunity which A. Phillip Randolph planned for July 1, 1941. When the war mobilization began and blacks were excluded both from war-related jobs and from full participation in the armed forces, jobs became the focus of the black press, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, and a host of organizations and individuals nationwide. After Randolph announced the planned march, President Roosevelt attempted to have it called off. Bringing so many angry black Americans to a still very segregated Washington, D.C. was no small threat. The marchers would find too few public facilities (drinking

fountains, bathrooms) near the White House, and too few restaurants would serve them. There would be virtually no hotel accomodations. Thus, Roosevelt had good reason to fear the march.

On June 25, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which essentially outlined a government position of non-discrimination in employment and created the first Committee on Fair Employment Practice (FEPC) (Meier & Rudwick, 1973). Under that order, federal loans would be awarded only to firms that would hire black and white workers on an equal basis.

Executive Order 8802 marked the first positive Presidential action in direct response to organized black protest. Getting the words on paper proved to be only a beginning; implementation was the true test. During the five-year life of the FEPC, blacks filed nearly 14,000 complaints against continued discrimination (Franklin, 1974).

The executive order, the persuasion powers of the FEPC (which had no enforcement power), the continuing struggle of black organizations and individuals, and an urgent need for workers converged to promote expansion in the range and quality of jobs for which blacks were hired. Blacks made relative gains during the war. However, they substantially lost these gains immediately after the war. White workers were not laid off or demoted proportionately to blacks.

The crisis period of World War II, then, provided blacks with employment within a war economy, but the prospect of real and enduring progress was illusory.

## Crisis 6: The Civil Rights Movement

The dream that World War II would bring permanent improvement in the economic status of the black worker faded even before the end of the War. As war industries began cutbacks in production, blacks, being among the most recently hired in many industries, were the first to lose their jobs. Although progress had been made in upgrading some blacks to semi-skilled and skilled jobs during the war, the vast majority of black workers had not risen above the unskilled category, and unskilled jobs were most immediately eliminated. Additionally, industries with large numbers of unskilled jobs had the least potential for reconversion to peacetime production (e.g., shipbuilding, aircraft, munitions, explosives). In general, economists estimated that, as unemployment reemerged after World War II, black workers were affected 2½ times as severely as were white workers. In 1945, more than 93% of the professional, managerial, and foreman groups remained predominantly white, a relatively consistent pattern throughout American history (United States Department of Commerce, 1979).

Among the reasons for declining employment

opportunities for blacks in the period immediately after the war was that the FEPC was reduced to impotence by President Harry S Truman. When the FEPC expired in 1946, the employment of black workers on equal terms with whites no longer had even "lip-service" support from the federal government (Spero & Harris, 1971).

Blacks have steadily fallen further behind in the economic race since the close of World War II. Most employment gains for blacks occurred between 1942 and 1945; retrogression set in as soon as the war ended.

Data from the 1950 census report (United States Department of Commerce, 1950) reveals that the median annual wage of white workers in the United States was $2,481. For the black worker, the median annual wage was $1,295. The average black woman earned only $650 a year -- $13 a week. One out of ten white families had an income under $1,000 per year ($20 a week), whereas 28% of black families were at or below this level. More than half of all black families received under $2,000 a year; only one in ten earned more than $4,000 a year. Only 0.3% of all black families received as much as $10,000 a year. Black families had an average income of $1,869, just 54% of the average for white families, despite the fact that in black families, generally, a larger number of members worked. Perlo (1975) elaborates on the discrepancy of black earning capacity:

> Since World War II, there had been a sharp widening of the income differentials against Negro workers both in the North and in the South. By 1949, most of the wartime gains in the South had been lost, while the situation was no better than before World War II. Since World War II, the living standards of Negro people in cities have been reduced about one-fourth compared to a cut of about one-eighth for white urban working people.

Job opportunities for blacks, in either numbers or status level, failed to grow with the increasing demand for labor following the dispatch of armed forces to Korea in the middle of 1950. The majority of blacks who had worked in defense plants during World War II were not recalled for employment, although the majority of white workers were recalled.

An Urban League study (1952; 22), Discrimination in Defense Hiring, discovered that

> in almost all of the thirty key industrial cities investigated, discriminatory policies and practices robbed blacks of the chance to earn a living; that in no area was there hiring without bias; that nowhere was there integration of blacks into the skilled or even semi-skilled jobs; and that, although there was a trickle of employment of blacks, in most cases even those who had been employed during World War II were being bypassed in favor of new white recruits.

The report further observed:

> Discrimination against Negroes follows a uniform pattern in plants located in Northern and Southern industrial centers. As the work force expands, a few Negroes

> have been added to the maintenance and common labor group of workers. Negroes are rarely accepted for in-plant training programs in any of the communities studied by League personnel. The employment of Negroes in white-collar, administrative, and technical jobs in these expanding industries is practically unheard of.

In the same report, Julius A. Thomas, director of the Urban League's industrial-relations department, warns, "Unless drastic steps are taken to curtail discriminatory practices in the majority of the nation's industries having defense contracts, there will be very few Negro workers in the manpower mobilization program."

To add to the difficulties of black workers, a technological revolution was underway in the areas of automation and cybernation. This transformation greatly accelerated the elimination of the menial, unskilled, and semi-skilled jobs that had for so long been the mainstays of black employment. Meanwhile, the introduction of technological innovations in Southern agriculture -- tractors and herbicides right after the war, followed during the 1950s by mechanization of the harvest -- was driving tenants and sharecroppers out of the cotton fields. Heavy unemployment in the countryside led to mass immigration of displaced blacks to the cities. Thus, while the need of basic industries for unskilled labor was declining, the influx of unskilled blacks from the agricultural regions of the South to Northern and Western cities was increasing. Between 1940 and 1950, some

608,000 black men and 125,000 black women left farm employment, and the percentage of blacks living in the South declined from 77% in 1940 to 68% in 1950 (Foner, 1976).

This most recent group of blacks to migrate into urban areas once again joined the labor force at the lowest rungs of the ladder, and the institutionalized system of racism permitted only a very small percentage of this group to attain skilled occupational status. Racist wage and job classification differentials suppressed the earnings of black employees even further. Discrimination in Defense Hiring (1952) referred to a government study that found that white men earned $4,458 on average while black men averaged $2,831; the average income for black workers was only 52% of the average for white workers. The income and unemployment gaps between whites and blacks had been increasing since shortly after World War II.

Thus, black workers remained confined to the worst jobs at the lowest pay. They were forced to live in the most inferior housing, most often in overcrowded conditions, and they paid higher food prices. Franklin quotes the National Negro Congress:

> In the U.S., in 1940, there were 3,292,406 dwelling units for Negroes. Of these over one million (1,082,128) "needed major repairs," and almost two million (1,908,000) had no running water. Over twice as many Negro homes as white (35.1%

> and 16.3%) needed major repairs, and almost three times as many Negro homes as whites' (62% and 26.6%) had no running water. Twice as many white homes as Negro homes (82.9% and 43%) had electricity. All of these figures, of course, are much worse in the South. . . . Well over 70% of all Negro homes in that area have neither electricity nor running water.

The postwar years were marked by growing black reaction to this disenfranchised status. World events, together with black demands, forced the federal government to respond via the creation of a Presidential Committee on Civil Rights. The committee's report, To Secure These Rights, condemned racial segregation and the general denial of blacks' civil rights. Though integration of the armed forces had begun during World War II, the report noted, Truman's Executive Order 9981 was the first step toward eliminating segregation (albeit not discrimination) in the armed forces.

Stimulated by the Cold War, the United States geared up as a modern imperialist leader of the Western world. The United States could no longer afford to project a worldwide image as a racist country which discriminated against its minorities, particularly as African and other colonized countries began to demand their independence. In the ideological struggle with communist countries, such perceptions would put the United States at a disadvantage. The paradoxical United States position vis-å-vis minorities was readily apparent as the

United States claimed to be the leader of the "free" world.

The end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War seemed to have brought a revitalization of black awareness. Although blacks had consistently protested against racial discrimination, the postwar years created a sense of urgency. The GI bill provided black men with the opportunity to pursue education, although opportunities remained limited due to discrimination and segregation.

In the period from 1946 to 1950, considerable skepticism about the economy's capacity to continue its war-level performance prevailed. At the highest levels of government, this skepticism was expressed by the Congress in the form of the Full Employment Act of 1946. The bill included no specific machinery to accomplish its purpose; it was merely a moral commitment.

A number of factors combined to abruptly dissipate the economic doubts inherited from the Great Depression: the monetarization of the debt; the backlog of unfilled needs from the War; the high rate of capital investment (especially in the West); the dramatic increase in military outlays associated with the Korean War; and, last but not least, the development of the Marshall Plan, an aid plan that assured extensive market opportunities for United States capital. All these factors converged to generate and sustain a high level of aggregate demand

relative to the system's supply capabilities. By the early 1950s, the shadow of the Great Depression was finally beginning to fade.

Throughout the 1950s there appeared an intensive striving toward a democratic state. The extremes of the Red Scare movement of the McCarthy Era substantially aided in bringing Americans into line -- i.e., more like the "average American." Although the mood was very conservative, there was a constant awareness of brewing discontent. The era of prosperity following the Depression led to a push for new urbanization and concomitant secular values; a push for higher education came in retaliation for the Soviet "Sputnik" space launch. This all took place against the backdrop of middle-class American democracy (Rozwene, 1973). The economic and social plight of black Americans during this period continued to deteriorate.

The black struggle in the 1950s was dominated by two powerful civil-rights strategies. One was very old; the other was new to the American polity and dramatic in form. The first was a series of lawsuits begun in 1938 that finally resulted in the outlawing of racial segregation in education in 1954. The second was the nonviolent mass protest that began with the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1955 -- a most important precursor of the mass protests of the 1960s (Newman, 1978).

The legal strategy focused initially upon the South. This strategy was directed by the NAACP against the legally couched but blatantly discriminatory practices and policies that resulted in denial of the vote, of equal education, and of equal access to public transportation and a host of other public accomodations. In case after case over the years, the NAACP waged before state and federal courts the struggle to establish the legal rights of black Americans.

The most important legal victory was the federally sanctioned end of Jim Crow segregation in the South. The case arose in the field of education. The historic 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education, was the product of a systematic and carefully orchestrated legal assault carried out over 20 years by the NAACP (Kluger, 1976).

Between 1934 and 1954, the NAACP argued five higher-education cases before the Supreme Court (Kluger, 1976), systematically whittling away at "separate but equal" until little remained of the once-powerful tenet. By the time of Brown v. Board of Education, the Court had conceded too many other points in the preceding cases to back off.

The May 17, 1954 Supreme Court ruling held that state-instituted "separate but equal" public educational facilities were "inherently unequal." It was a dramatic blow not only to the dual school system but to the whole

legally structured Jim Crow segregation system in the South. The "separate but equal" doctrine that had governed the lives of black Americans for almost 60 years had provided legal justification for keeping black Americans in the worst schools, at the back of the bus, away from lunch counters, and out of the mainstream of society.

It soon became clear to black Americans that the legal battles won by the NAACP would become living realities only when blacks took a more direct hand in exercising the rights they had won. The first thrust toward direct action to make the accumulated legal rights meaningful came in 1955-1956, when the black population of Montgomery, Alabama, was successful in a boycott to end segregation on the city's buses under the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The boycott was intended to last only one day, and began when Rosa Parks, former state secretary of the Alabama chapter of the NAACP, was arrested for refusing to give her seat to a white rider who had boarded after she had. The boycott lasted an entire year, and became a full-fledged movement that integrated the racially segregated bus company of Montgomery. More significantly, it foreshadowed a new era.

In the North, "separate but equal" had never had the force of legal doctrine. Here the struggle for jobs remained a central issue throughout the postwar period.

In 1950, the NAACP organized a march on Washington with the support of some 60 organizations in a new civil-rights coalition. More than 4,000 delegates from 33 states came to Washington to lobby Congress on behalf of civil rights in the North and the South. For the South, the coalition sought anti-lynching laws and voting-rights legislation. For the North, it sought permanent fair employment practices legislation (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1974).

FEPC legislation passed the House in 1950, but failed to make it through the Senate. Organized pressure was then focused on state legislatures. Between 1945 and 1958, 16 states passed fair employment practices legislation with enforcement provisions, and several others enacted FEPCs that relied on voluntary compliance. Augmenting their lobbying with symbolic action, the civil-rights forces in 1951 held a 10th-anniversary service for the wartime FEPC at the grave of President Roosevelt. (Evidence suggests that this public event helped convince President Truman to establish a Committee on Government Contract Compliance to oversee fair-employment practices in federally supported production contracts.)

Newman (1978) notes that the struggle for jobs received support from an array of civil-rights forces. A. Phillip Randolph, the NAACP, the Urban League, and various black labor groups called for an end to

discrimination by employers and unions. The NAACP went to court against both employers and organized labor. Both the NAACP and the Urban League issued periodic reports on the employment status of blacks in industry and labor unions.

Many factors stimilated the resort to more drastic direct action to secure the rights of black Americans. Few, if any, were more important than the massive resistance to the extension of these rights. Wilhelm (1971) indicates that in many communities, economic sanctions were invoked against blacks active in civil-rights movements. Dismissal from jobs, denial of loans, and foreclosure of mortgages were some of the tactics used to persecute "aggressive Negroes." A cruder and more direct method was violence; in 1957 and 1958, blacks were murdered with impunity in South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and other Southern states. Such incidents were disheartening to those who hoped for an early and peaceful extension of civil rights to all.

As blacks' concern with the violence of civil-rights opponents grew, blacks became more aggressive in their tactics. The Montgomery bus boycott set an example that was followed in other communities, especially in the South. It was in the cities that blacks most clearly began to manifest their impatience, since blacks were becoming increasingly urban.

By the second half of the 20th century, there were

indications that the national government would attempt to improve the status of Afro-Americans. From the time of President Truman's civil-rights proposals in 1948, Congress had begun to consider civil-rights legislation. Between 1953 and 1957 the House of Representatives passed civil-rights bills several times, but none ever came to a vote in the Senate.

In 1957, President Eisenhower signed the first civil-rights act since 1875. It authorized the federal government to bring civil suits in its own name to obtain injunctive relief in federal courts when any person was denied or threatened in the right to vote. It elevated the civil-rights section of the Department of Justice to a division, headed by an assistant attorney general. It created the United States Commission on Civil Rights, with the authority to investigate allegations of denials of the right to vote, to study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws, and to appraise the laws and policies of the federal government relating to equal protection.

Congress was impelled to enact civil-rights legislation not merely in response to the President's suggestion or even to mounting pressure from advocates of civil rights. The status of Afro-Americans in the United States was playing an increasingly important part in the rapidly changing international scene, as well. On March

8, 1957 -- six months before the new civil-rights act was passed -- Ghana became the first former African colony to join the United Nations. Peeks (1971) notes that the emergence of independence of the sub-Saharan nations enormously changed the worldwide significance of the American race problem and provided a considerable stimulus to the movement for racial equality in the United Staes. As of 1957, diplomatic representatives of Ghana had taken up residence at the United Nations in Washington, a fact that could not be ignored by Congress. It appeared that black men from the Third World had arrived just in time to help redress the racial balance in the advanced industrial world.

As the domestic civil rights struggle intensified, blacks became more indignant over their condition -- not only as an oppressed racial minority in a white society, but as poor people in an affluent one. The civil-rights victories being won in the South would, after all, be of greatest immediate benefit to Southern blacks. By the early 1960s there were many rural counties in which blacks were finally winning the right to vote or to take any seat they wished on a bus. However, agricultural unemployment, together with punitive Southern relief practices which kept agricultural workers off welfare rolls, had compelled a migration that diminished the ranks of the rural black poor. In the cities, unemployment, underemployment, low wages, and relief

restrictions created new hardships. A civil-rights revolution was occurring, but poor urban blacks had little to show for it.

The 1960s saw a whirlwind of activity in the world of ordinary politics and more extraordinary protest. Political, economic, and social changes were occurring, and disequilibrium was exacerbated.

President Kennedy was encountering increasing opposition to civil-rights legislation in Congress. He had not stressed the issue of civil rights in his campaign for the Presidency; his main concern had been to overcome Southern misgivings about his Roman Catholicism. Late in the campaign, however, Kennedy made a personal and sympathetic phone call to Mrs. Coretta Scott King because her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had been jailed in Georgia. Kennedy's actions in response to Dr. King's plight have been widely suggested as the decisive factor in the 1960 campaign. After first calling Mrs. King to express his concern, Kennedy and his brother Robert intervened to get King released from prison. Martin Luther King, Sr. retracted his earlier endorsement of Richard Nixon (who had done nothing upon hearing of the jailing), and other black religious leaders soon followed his lead. Aided by Kennedy's publicists and word of mouth (one million copies of a pamphlet describing Kennedy's role were distributed), the story had reached black voters everywhere by election day.

Most political observers were aware of the significance of the black vote in the Presidential election. The civil-rights thrust of Kennedy's administration, with its historic Negro appointments, responded to this fact. Kennedy appointed five blacks as judges in federal courts, and named Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP's leading lawyer, to the Circuit Court. The number of black lawyers in the Department of Justice, headed by Robert Kennedy, rose from 10 to more than 70.

President Kennedy was less reluctant than Eisenhower had been to use executive power to enforce the protection of civil rights. He sent troops to Mississippi in 1962 to enforce a court order directing the University of Mississippi to admit a black student; in the following year, he sent troops to Birmingham, Alabama, to restore order when brutal police tactics against black demonstrators provoked violence.

Not until the Birmingham demonstrations in the spring of 1963 did Kennedy initiate bold legislative proposals. In June, he sent to Congress a comprehensive proposal designed to ban discrimination in all places of public accomodation -- hotels, motels, restaurants, retail stores, places of amusement -- and to strengthen the attorney general's authority to speed up desegregation of public education.

While the leaders of the NAACP could justifiably take great pride in the legal victory they had won in the

Supreme Court against segregated education in 1954, the practical results were disappointing. By 1961, only 775 out of 2,839 biracial school districts in 17 Southern and border states had achieved some form of desegregation (Spero & Harris, 1971). In the North, de facto segregation existed in most of the larger cities because of rigid patterns of segregation in housing. Everywhere -- in hotels, restaurants, and job opportunities -- humiliating patterns of discrimination persisted.

Increasing numbers of blacks, most of them young people, had begun to turn to more direct forms of action. In February of 1960, a small group of black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat down at a lunch counter in a local variety store where blacks had been denied service. They refused to leave until the store was closed. This "sit-in" tactic had a daring personal character that was particularly appealing to the younger demonstrators (Peeks, 1971). The new tactic spread rapidly. In 1960 and 1961, large numbers of blacks participated in similar forms of peaceful protest against discrimination in restaurants, hotels, beaches, and the like. Sometimes they were joined by white students who wished to share in the moral commitment of the sit-in movement.

In May of 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an interracial group founded in 1942, organized groups of "freedom riders" to go throughout the South

testing segregation practices in public transportation. Many of the young people who participated in these activities were arrested for trespassing or disorderly conduct, and often they were physically assaulted by racist whites. But the spectacle of well-disciplined sit-in students and freedom riders who conducted themselves with dignity and high moral courage in the face of violent reprisals touched the conscience of the nation and quickened the pace by which national chain stores began to desegregate their lunch counters and hotel owners began to open their facilities to use without discrimination. In response to the activities of the freedom riders, Attorney General Robert Kennedy used his influence to obtain an Interstate Commerce Commission ruling in September 1961 that banned racial discrimination in interstate carriers and interstate terminals.

Although the most visible activity was in the South in the first half of the decade, the North was by no means quiescent. Northern demonstrations focused on the areas of housing, employment, and education.

Cloward and Piven (1974) note that the Commission on Civil Rights reported that "agitation against segregation and discrimination Northern style is actively being pursued in 43 cities and 14 Northern and Western states," and that "it is doubtful that any single 18-month period has seen as much intensive activity even in the South. By

the fall of 1963, the NAACP reported significant activity was underway in 75 cities in 18 states."

Encouraged by the early successes, protest organizations with varying ideologies emerged. Their common concern was a commitment to basic human rights and equality. Protests soon touched virtually every city and town of any size with a black population. Armed only with the technique of nonviolent civil disobedience, the tactics of direct-action protest, and the determination to prevail, black America was on the march.

During the 1960s, numerous blacks participated in some kind of demonstration, and a significant proportion of those demonstrators were arrested at some point in time. Sit-ins, freedom rides, wade-ins, and even pray-ins in churches continued through the early sixties. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963 gave national prominence to black discontent.

All this activity dramatized the fact that large numbers of Americans had no opportunity to share in the new prosperity. These were the "new poor" who had been identified by John Kenneth Galbraith in The Affluent Society (1958) and more fully in Michael Harrington's indignant book on poverty, The Other Americans (1963). Thus, the objective of economic expansion and the proposed Kennedy anti-poverty program became linked to Johnson's omnibus war on poverty: The expansion of the technological society must be accompanied by measures

that would channel more human resources, especially from the impoverished underclass, into the mainstream of economic progress. On August 20, 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act, which appropriated funds for education and training programs, was signed.

It is difficult to select any single factor most responsible for winning the historic Civil Rights Act, finally passed in 1964. Demonstrations, public reaction to the senseless brutality against peaceful protesters, the March on Washington, and the presence of sympathetic individuals in high office all played a part. Nevertheless, passage of the Act was a solid affirmation that the country was being forced to acknowledge that blacks were willing to stand up for those "inalienable rights."

Legislative gains notwithstanding, blacks were continuously being confronted with the reality that obtaining real equality required more than the right to ride interstate buses, to sit down at a lunch counter, or even to vote. One urgent problem needing further attention resulted from the black flight to Northern cities in search of more equitable economic arrangements. Between 1960 and 1970, the black population of the 14 largest metropolitan areas increased 80%; large numbers of blacks were moving from rural areas into Southern cities as well. By 1960, 70% of the black population could be classed as urban, whereas 50 years earlier more

than 70% had still lived in comparatively backward rural conditions in the South (Cloward & Piven, 1974). Most of the blacks who lived in Northern cities were crowded into the blighted areas from which white groups had departed to the suburbs or to other attractive sections within the city. Ghetto blacks paid high rents to slum landlords, sent their children to inferior schools, and received the poorest share of public services (police protection, garbage collection, health services). By 1960, many were living in poverty -- 55.1% of all non-whites had median incomes under $3,000. In 1963, the unemployment rate for blacks was more than double that for whites; and of the blacks who were employed, 80% worked in unskilled jobs at the bottom of the economic ladder. The comparable figure among employed whites was 40% (Peeks, 1971).

The problem of black poverty was so massive and the disadvantages in education, housing, and employment were so severe that Whitney Young, then head of the National Urban League, urged the Johnson administration to take a "Marshall Plan" approach to the problems of poverty by spending up to $10 billion a year for housing, job training, and education. "Only by a crash program could blacks begin to acquire the education, the jobs, and the opportunity to take a greater share in the fundamental rights and privileges of American democratic life, including a share in the decision-making process" (Evans & Novak, 1966).

The appropriations for President Johnson's poverty program fell far short of the special effort Whitney Young and other black leaders had demanded; and, as the war in Vietnam began to take a larger portion of the national budget, there seemed to be little hope for any escalation of the war on poverty.

Then came an unleashing of black frustration, peaking in the urban riots of 1964. Black rage did not abate easily; in 1967, between June and August, street rebellions occurred in 67 cities.

## Since the 1960s

By the close of the 1960s, the black movement of the postwar period had made some modest economic gains. A large number of the unemployed and impoverished masses in the cities were receiving some form of government assistance. Others had benefited from the expansion of municipal payrolls, stimulated in part by federal programs inaugurated during the Great Society years of the Johnson Administration. The relative economic improvements of the 1960s enabled more blacks to gain employment, even in the private sector.

Overall, however, the rate of black unemployment remained high, and by the mid-1970s, the gains of the 1960s had been substantially eroded. As black protests subsided, federal concessions were withdrawn. With the

ascent to the presidency of Richard Nixon, the administration of subsidized programs by states and localities became more restrictive, partly in response to threatening rhetoric and restrictive regulations from the federal government. At the same time, the Great Society pograms that had provided resoures in response to black protest were curtailed or eliminated in favor of new revenue-sharing or block-grant programs, gradually redirecting monies away from the older cities to richer cities, suburbs, and towns. Within each locality, some of the funds which had previously provided jobs and services in the ghettos were channeled into police departments and tax reductions.

The persisting recession and rampant inflation that characterized the 1970s caused a sharp reduction in the standard of living of already-depressed groups. Unemployment rates were still much higher for blacks.

It is now apparent not just how much was accomplished during the civil-rights struggle, not just how much is yet to be accomplished, but also how tenuous were the results of the struggles of the sixties.

# CHAPTER IV

# THE CONTEMPORARY ENERGY CRISIS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY

## Introduction

In the stagnant economy of the 1980s, the decline of available energy resources exacerbates the already depressed economic condition of the poor, a disproportionate percentage of whom are blacks. For this segment of society, the contemporary "energy crisis" appears to divert attention from their urgent need for more equitable access to economic, political, and social resources in order to enhance opportunity, especially during periods of intense disequilibrium.

This is not to say that the energy situation does not directly affect the poor. Quite the contrary: The energy crisis aggravates their poverty. As the price of energy rises, it places a progressively heavier regressive burden on the poor.

As larger shares of the economic system are diverted into the purchase of energy, energy production becomes a major driving force of inflation and cannibalizes the economic system it is supposed to support. For the economically dispossessed, the energy crisis is not the

distant, abstract "running out" of a natural resource, but the immediate, practical, rising cost of energy. The poor are affected by the energy crisis in ways that are only too evident: many families at or below the poverty level; widespread unemployment, especially among black youth; a shrinking tax base, as viable industries and the more economically secure citizens relocate; and a resulting deterioration of municipal services, to name a few effects.

Thus, the nation is in the grips of an energy problem and an economic problem. Taken separately, each poses many problems of enormous complexity. Together, they pose a challenge of crisis proportions. The convergence of these problems frustrates the best efforts toward solutions. Race and class considerations make matters worse. Energy policy, which affects every member of society, undoubtedly has a disproportionate effect on the lives and livelihood of blacks as well as other minorities, if characteristic patterns are replicated.

## Competition Over Scarce Resources

A country is insecure to the degree that it is dependent upon external sources of scarce primary resources. Lacking global institutions with effective authority to assure equitable access to and distribution of scarce resources among all nations, national leaders

predominantly select as an alternative the mobilization of national finances, technologies, and productive institutions toward the goal of maximum resource self-sufficiency. Other priorities -- for example, unmet housing needs, education, environmental concerns, human and civil rights, and the like -- become subordinate.

The current energy crisis exemplifies the priority preference of advanced industrial nations. Maximizing energy independence is linked to the balance-of-payments competition: The quintupling of crude oil prices caused most countries to give priority to energy-related industries, rather than to the social-justice needs of their citizens.

Historical, political, economic, and social forces have set into motion periods of relative disequilibrium, during which patterns of inequality were perpetuated and often systematically reinforced. Structural conditions favoring the development of public policies to strengthen such patterns are very much a part of contemporary America and other advanced industrial nation-states.

There is a finite supply of the five critical resource systems -- energy, nonfuel minerals, food, water, and human skill. These five systems are so interrelated that to examine them separately is somewhat misleading. Food cannot be produced without water. Electrical energy cannot be generated without copper. The most crucial resources, of course, is energy, for it is

the key to access to all the others, including human energy.

Resources have become increasingly integrated into a global system which has integral structural inequality. Part of the world starves while another part reaps the benefits of continuously record-breaking profits; a segment of society continues to be disproportionately unemployed or underemployed while benefits accrue to other segments with access to means of economic advancement.

Every generation faces transition. Today, the United States is confronted with massive change. Suburbs are growing at the expense of the cities. The Sun Belt is growing at the expense of the Snow Belt. The economy is shifting emphasis from manufacturing to service. The national growth rate is slowing; the balance-of-payments deficit is growing. The very meaning of "the American way of life" is being questioned. A national energy policy must be developed and implemented within this context; energy policies do not unfold in a vacuum. Changes in the energy equation interact with changes in hundreds of other social, economic, and political equations.

Many decisions went into the shaping of this nation. America developed a petroleum technology and a way of life that made it possible, and necessary, to build automobiles with exceptional fuel efficiency. Super-highways were constructed to help lead people away

from the very cities built to accomodate them. Highly centralized energy generating technologies were developed which aggravated the problem of pollution and altered the desirability of certain locations. America developed a way of life that made public transportation unimportant and, in many cases, undesirable.

Now, new decisions confront this nation -- decisions that ultimately will help to determine the society of the future. With the emergence of a post-petroleum civilization, intense struggles have developed between traditionally recognized rich nations and recognized poor nations, as well as between the more and less advantaged sectors within rich nations, over the sharing of energy resources and markets -- over access to food, fuel, minerals, and water.

The roots of America's energy dilemma extend deep into its history (much deeper than the 1973-1974 Middle East oil embargo). The United States remained a neophyte in exploiting resources until the Civil War. Water, human, and horsepower energy were the mainstays. The use of steam was still uncommon in America, and electricity was not to be introduced until the late 1880s.

Until the Civil War, government intervention in resource development was marginal and inconsistent. Following the Civil War, however, unprecedented industrial, scientific, and technological developments begun during the War accelerated and expanded as America

began its movement from a predominantly rural agricultural society to an urban industrial society. Blacks, like all Americans, found themselves caught up in this massive transition, but their admission to the accrued economic advantages of industrial America was painfully slow.

America's towering presence in the 20th century global arena was powered by cheap and abundant fuel sources, allowing unprecedented economic, industrial, and military development. Abundant oil, coal, electricity, and natural gas became synonymous with "America." Crude oil especially gained in popularity as a fuel. It was easier to get out of the ground, to transport, and to handle than the bulkier coal. Oil flowed through a pipeline, left little residual waste when burned, and was cheaper than coal. Even before the contemporary gasoline era, oil was considered an excellent investment.

The oil industry is heavily concentrated -- and in general, oil wealth is concentrated, not only in particular corporate enterprises but even in individual families. The peculiar characteristic of oil -- its mobility or fugacity -- makes it a substance easy to monopolize and control from oil well to gas station. Exercising such control requires huge amounts of capital and relatively few people, and this circumstance has produced extraordinary profits (Blair, 1978).

From the very beginning of America's quest for oil,

little thought was given to the value of oil as a nonrenewable natural resource. Whenever a driller hit a strike, he extracted as much oil as he could, as soon as possible, in order to jump the gun on any possible competition. (Competitors would drill dozens of wells along adjacent properties, hoping to extract more oil than the original explorer could manage.)

The mad rush for profit from oil riches led to a waste of natural resources as well as financial waste. Energy-powered economic, industrial, and military might was the apex of an inequitable pyramidal social structure, with the bottom level of America's economic pyramid consistently and disproportionately occupied by blacks and other minorities. Energy resources wer less available to them for economic and social progress. They owned few, and most often none, of the corporations, small businesses, transportation networks, farms, automotive vehicles, and household appliances requiring coal, oil, electricity, or natural gas. Moreover, the increasing number of blacks moving to urban areas knew little about or had little access to energy as a key housing, employment, health, and economic development resource. As corporate control of energy tightened before the 1930s, blacks and other minorities had less and less influence on energy decisions, even in their own homes -- particularly as they moved from rural homes, where the primary energy source was wood, to gas-, coal-, and

electric-powered homes in urban areas.

Assumptions about scarcity are central to any economic and political doctrine. The relative scarcity or abundance of foods has a substantial, direct impact on the character of political, social, and economic institutions.

Basically, the past three centuries have been an era of exorbitant, perhaps abnormal, abundance, with a direct impact on the shaping of attitudes and institutions. The bonanza of New World and other sources of virgin resources, the take-off and rapid-growth stages of science and technology, the availability of "free" ecological resources such as air and water to absorb the waste products of industrial activities, and lesser factors allowed this process to unfold with apparent inexorability.

Virtually all the philosophies, values, and institutions typical of modern industrial society are fruits of an era of apparently endless abundance. The return of scarcity in any guise represents a serious challenge to the modern way of life. Ophuls (1977) refers to "ecological scarcity" as a new form of scarcity. Instead of focusing on simple Malthusian overpopulation and famine, concern is now centered on shortages of energy and mineral resources necessary for industrial production; pollution and other limits of tolerance in natural systems; physical constraints, as in the laws of

thermodynamics; complex problems of planning and administration; and many other factors never even considered by Malthus. Ecological scarcity is therefore an ensemble of separate but interacting constraints on human action, and it appears to pose problems surpassing those presented to past generations by scarcity in its classical form. Factors such as maldistribution and control of resources exacerbate the problems.

"Spaceship Earth," a term used to describe the consequences of ecological scarcity, expresses the nature and difficulty of the challenge. Acccording to Boulding (1970), since

> this overpopulated globe is beginning to resemble more and more a spaceship of finite dimensions, with neither mines nor sewers, our welfare depends not upon increasing the rate of consumption or the number of consumers -- both of these potentially fatal -- but on the extent to which we can wring from minimum resources the maximum richness and amenity for a reasonable population . . . far from scarcity disappearing, it will be the most dominant aspect of the society.

There is, of course, no historical precedent for such a society. What is ultimately required by this crisis of ecological scarcity, with its large potential impact on all forms of disequilibrium, is the invention of a new mode of post-industrial or advanced-industrial civilization.

The common denominator in the energy equation is the

issue of political power over physical resources. "Whoever controls world resources controls the world in a way that mere occupation of territory cannot match" (Barnet, 1974). Where vital materials are in heavy demand and short supply, that fact alone gives power to some people over others. Even the illusion of scarcity creates power. A world of scarcity is a world of inevitable conflict.

The full dimensions and ultimate consequences of the current "energy crisis" in oil-deficient nations continue to unfold. In this age of scarcity, resource-grabbing is becoming a much more powerful rationale for military intervention. Whatever role securing access to minerals might have had in military planning a generation ago, there is no doubt that increased access did follow the commitment of military power.

National energy policy will be developing for years to come. Knowledge of the size of petroleum resources and ultimate energy futures is largely speculative. Increasing knowledge will demand policy alterations, as well as constant reevaluation based on equity concerns.

Equity is defined in the dictionary as "justice according to natural law or right, specifically freedom from bias or favoritism." The notion is, indeed, widespread that equity has something to do with social justice. But what is "social justice"? What is "favoritism"?

In his signal work, A Theory of Justice, John Rawls (1971) explains that justice is tied very closely to a concept of social and economic equality: "It is not just that some should have less in order that others may prosper." Social and economic inequality can only be justified if such inequality works to the benefit of all, particularly the least advantaged.

What are some of the problems of inequality, in terms of energy? Those who are poor pay a much larger proportion of their income for direct energy supplies than do those who are relatively affluent, meaning that any energy price increases are likely to hit the poor much more strongly than the well-to-do. Small users of electricity and natural gas almost invariably pay more per unit than do large users, meaning that those who use the most energy are rewarded -- a perverse system for a nation concerned about energy shortages. Minority workers are rare among employees in many phases of energy production, and hence are not able to enjoy many of the direct consumer benefits from increased domestic energy production. In addition, blacks generally have a more tenuous hold on their jobs than does the average American. They are much more likely to be bumped out of work in any energy-intensive setting as the nation makes the transition into a new energy environment (Anderson, 1978).

The importance of equity in energy policy has been

very slow to emerge. Perhaps because equity issues in energy policy are subtle and not readily perceived, it has taken the nation several years to even begin to recognize that there is more to energy policy than national security, economics, and environment. Nonetheless, energy policy formulators are reluctantly beginning to show awareness of the importance of social-justice concerns.

It has become clear that the impacts of the energy crisis are not uniformly distributed throughout society. The energy crisis for some is an inconvenience, for others a problem, and for still others a life-and-death matter. Policy may alleviate these effects or exacerbate them.

## Energy and Employment

In addition to the crisis of energy prices, blacks face energy-related employment challenges. For example, more than two million jobs were lost during natural-gas shortages in the severe winters of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978. More than 400,000 of these jobs were held by minorities and women (Case, 1978). Blacks face several barriers to jobs in both the conventional and the emerging energy industries. Historically, they have had poor access to corporate, nonprofit, university, and public institutions most likely to experience

energy-related increases in employment. Declining public support for public and private sector affirmative action programs will not improve minority access to these employment opportunities. As energy analyst Ellis Cose (1978) points out:

> Energy, economic and job booms are most likely to occur in rural Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, and North and South Dakota, locations with relatively tiny black populations. Supporting banking, insurance, finance, real estate and other business activity is likely to occur in cities. But primary energy recovery, transportation and other production activity is most likely to take place away from population centers with sizable low-income, elderly and nonwhite populations.

How much employment various energy policies and strategies generate remains debatable. Nordlund and Mumford (1978; 66) suggest:

> Increased reliance on domestic energy sources, a policy with few opponents, will help boost employment in U.S. industries by more than 200,000 persons each year between now and 1981. Two industries, coal mining and power plant construction, will provide most of the new job opportunities. New and expanded coal production will create approximately 25,000 new jobs per year. Power plant construction, which includes nuclear, fossil-fueled, and hydroelectric plants, will generate about 150,000 jobs yearly over the 1978-81 period.

If this is correct, it is clear that few of these jobs will be generated in metropolitan areas where the poor and minorities disproportionately live. Coal mining and

transportation and power-plant development occur mostly outside of cities.

Whether the energy-related phasing out or creation of jobs affects blacks negatively or positively depends upon federal, state, and local energy and urban policies. Whether these policies help or hinder blacks depends, in turn, on their impact on the resolution of the energy policymaking crisis. The paucity of black energy policymakers increases the prospect that energy policies will fail to reflect the interests of the poor. Also important is whether energy policy will be integrated with employment, housing, education, health, and other priority concerns in poor communities. Thus, it is necessary to address the general condition of the economy relative to the energy situation.

## Work as an Indicator of Assimilation and as an Index of Social Status

Work achievement and the freedom to choose one's job have always been very highly valued in this country. Supporting values include democracy, freedom, equality, individualism, future progress, optimism, and the pursuit of happiness. The status of black Americans in the labor force provides a concrete setting for asking whether America has kept its promise of freedom and dignity for all.

Employment factors are particularly important in assimilating into American society. Within this context, race has always served as a barrier to full assimilation, because members of the majority control resources vital for minority-group survival.

Assimilation can be viewed as a two-edged process. To assimilate successfully, the minority group must adopt the language, values, and behavior patterns of the majority group, and the majority group must accept the newcomers into its ranks as neighbors, friends, and workmates. Gordon (1965) labels these two aspects "cultural" and "structural" assimilation, respectively. The degree of similarity or dissimilarity in occupations held by the white majority versus various minority groups serves as an indicator of structural assimilation.

Black Americans, the most visible minority group in the United States, have the unenviable position of being next to native Americans at the bottom of the economic heap. The roots of this situation, as previously discussed, stretch back to slavery, the legacy of which has thus far been too strong to totally overcome. No other minority group in the United States has had to cope with the heritage of slavery, which includes an extremely negative set of attitudes toward them. No other group has been so systematically excluded from prestigious positions in American society.

The handicaps of impoverishment, limited schooling,

and the lack of an influential employment network system, important as they are, seem insufficient to account for the degree of overt discrimination against blacks. Blacks were making economic gains in the 1950s before the most recent federal legislation was enacted; their rate of progress slowed down in the 1970s, after the major legislation went into effect. If black men continue to progress at their current rate, it will be 75 years before they can achieve economic equality with white men (Thurow, 1976; 20-29).

## Economic Change

While Americans are idealists about democracy, it must be realized that economic power is not distributed very democratically. Distribution is a key issue in part because a significant fraction of Americans have difficulty sharing in consumption increases, and in part because of the clear relationship of material wealth to economic and political power. Who gets what and why they get it has always been a minor issue in capitalist ideology, assumed away by an idealized view of equal opportunity and meritocracy. The Horatio Alger myth told the poor that the rich had more wealth and power because they worked harder, had greater intelligence, and were more frugal. This mythology continues to underlie much of the American meritocratic ideology today. Making things

worse is the inescapable cynicism that comes with almost daily revelations of corporate bribes to foreign governments, political payoffs, or tax avoidance by oil companies with huge profits.

The government does not use its distributional power in ways that really satisfy most citizens' needs. A basic underlying factor which is disturbing to the American work force is a sense of loss related to the American dream of continuous affluence and economic growth. During the postwar period, the United States and other advanced industrial nation-states experienced essentially continuous economic growth and increases in real incomes. More recently, they are confronted with long periods of slow economic growth and exiguous improvements, if any, in real incomes. For the majority, the age of boundless affluence has drawn to a close.

The American labor force is directly influenced by such changes in national economic conditions. The fear of inflation is manifest in low growth rates and short growth periods. Another direct impact is the tremendous weakening of the world economic hegemony of the United States. American goods have trouble effectively competing in the world market, in contrast to the increasing success of other nations' goods in the United States market. Furthermore, United States-based multinationals have moved much of their manufacturing outside of the country.

Unfortuantely, most measures proffered to improve America's domestic and international position will disproportionately, and negatively, affect people marginal to the labor force, although repercussions will also be felt by mainstream workers. The struggle against inflation, a deliberate policy of slow growth, translates into high levels of chronic unemployment, going even higher when inflationary pressures heat up. Whatever "normal" unemployment is among the general population, blacks, especially black youth, and other minority groups have traditionally been unemployed at levels many times higher, and there appear to be no policies to correct this disparity.

To promote private investment and increase productivity and competitiveness in the world market, taxes on the more economically advanced populace and on corporations are reduced. The inflationary potential of budget deficits arising from lower tax revenues and continuing public expenditures leads to demands for reduced governmental outlays, especially in the area of social-service programs. These policy prescriptions exacerbate the already deteriorating economic conditions of black and other minority people.

Another factor hurting minorities is the decay of cities. This inevitable phenomenon afflicts blacks and other minorities heavily because cities are disproportionately populated by minorities.

The closing down of plants with relatively lower profit margins and the construction and expansion of more profitable plants is also part of this "recapitalization of capitalism." Among the probable consequences are further deterioration of the manufacturing base of the Northeast and displacement of workers whose home localities offer few alternative employment possibilities. Regional employment policies entice corporations to relocate in particular regions with such incentives as lower tax rates, lower wage rates, and a docile workforce. Where the jobs are located and who gets the available jobs -- mainstream or marginal workers -- will be affected by such policies.

In the drive to contain wage levels and lower the prices of United States goods in the international market, some corporations have already begun to take back gains previously won by unions. As collective bargaining becomes more difficult, a decrease in real wages results. Inevitably, an already high unemployment level forces many unions to accept lower benefits and even forego some. The equity impacts of this situation are very divisive. The "last-hired, first-fired" operational method could very well cause employed blacks to once more bear a disproportionate share of the burden of unemployment.

Entering the 1980s, the perennial problem of the 1970s for blacks, massive unemployment, lingers on. In

fact, the situation appears to grow progressively worse relative to the majority population, as the administration risks high unemployment for the dubious benefit of a tentative lowering of the inflation rate. Gains made during the 1960s and early 1970s are rapidly being eroded.

Among the most obvious remnants of the change that took place in the 1970s is the continued conservatism of the majority. During the latter half of the 1970s the emphasis was on economic growth rather than on extension of opportunity to others. There is no shortage of individuals who maintain that demands for equal opportunity excessively strained the societal fabric during the 1960s and 1970s.

As economic conditions for the general population continue to worsen in light of the energy crisis, concern for equal opportunity continues to erode. This process is not without precedent: In periods of economic, social, and political disequilibrium, inequality persists.

There is inequality in almost every society. Seldom, however, is it confined to inequality among individuals; most often, it is groups within a society that are regarded as unequal because they are of different races or castes or different ethnic, language, or religious heritage. An expressed commitment to equality and freedom for all citizens is characteristic of advanced industrial societies; but inequality among different segments of

their populace remains pervasive.

Most modern societies have introduced formal education as a means of eliminating inequality between population groups. Education is provided so that all children will learn similar skills for participation in adult life. In this way, modern societies hope to transform inequality based on birth-ascribed status to inequality based on ability or lack of ability. For many groups, this transformation has not taken place. Better explanatory factors for inequality between groups are needed.

Nowhere have the causes of group inequality been more deeply probed and debated than in the United States. Even though Americans espouse the principles of equality and freedom, and even though public education is provided as a channel for individual self-improvement, a social and economic gap betwen blacks and whites persists. The gap in educational attainment between these two groups is just as wide as the gap in socioeconomic status, and equally persistent.

Educational institutions have been unable to support the myth of equal opportunity and full personal development. The educational system, perhaps more than any other contemporary social institution, has become a laboratory in which competing solutions to problems of personal liberation and social equity are tested and an arena in which social struggles are fought. The school

system is a monument to the capacity of the advanced corporate economy to accomodate or deflect efforts to move away from its primary basis. Paradoxically, educational systems mirror the factors of inequality found in other major societal institutions -- e.g., health care, employment, and housing.

The critical relationship between education and the capitalist economy is this: Schools produce workers. Capitalist production is not simply a technical process; it is also a social process. Workers are human beings who participate actively in production with the aim of satisfying their personal and social needs. The central task of the employer is to erect a set of social relationships and organizational forms both within the enterprise and, if possible, in society at large that channel workers' energies into the production and expropriation of surplus value.

## Barriers to the Rewards of Education

Inequality and social immobility stem from the property and market institutions of capitalism, from the social relationships of work, and from the dynamics of uneven development. The roots of inequality in the United States are to be found in the socioeconomic class structure and a system of racial power relationships. The school system is but one of several institutions

perpetuating the structure of privilege. Education, in and of itself, is relatively powerless to correct economic inequality; indeed, the class, sex, and race biases in schooling only reflect the structure of privilege in society at large. The educational system basically neither adds to nor subtracts from the degree of inequality and repression, because these originate in the economic sphere. Rather, it reproduces and legitimates a pre-existing pattern in the process of training and stratifying the work force. The core of this process corresponds closely to the social relations of dominance, subordination, and motivation in the economic sphere. Through the educational encounter, individuals are induced to accept the degree of powerlessness they will face as mature workers.

Formal education is usually designed to equip citizens with personal attributes -- attitudes, values, knowledge, and cognitive and other skills -- needed to perform adequately the social and economic roles characteristic of their group. Historically, the education of blacks has equipped them with suitable qualities for their lower position in society, while that of the dominant group has equipped its members with qualities necessary for superior roles. The dual nature of education in the stratified American society may be expressed in various ways: segregation, tracking within the same schools, biased learning resources; differences

in educational identities -- that is, stereotypes, treatment, and expectations; and different evaluations of and rewards for the same academic skills displayed by members of the two groups. In the United States, such differences between black and white education have been well documented.

The claim that formal education is intended to equalize black and white status misrepresents the relationship among education, opportunity structures, and systems of social mobility in the United States. In a dual system of social mobility, the same level of education does not necessarily yield equal value in both systems of mobility.

## Blacks and the Job Ceiling

Too many discussions about the education of blacks center on the influence of education on their economic status, especially on their ability to obtain better jobs and higher wages. It is generally assumed that improved economic conditions will create more jobs and higher income levels and result in greater social and political participation.

Drake and Clayton (1970) and Fraizer (1957) use the concept of job ceiling to describe the occupational experiences of black Americans. The term denotes the following:

1. Members of particular minority groups are not permitted to compete freely as individuals for all types of jobs to which they aspire and for which they are qualified.

2. They either are excluded outright from the most desirable occupations or are not permitted to obtain their proportionate share of such jobs, solely because of racial or class status, not because they lack the requisite training.

3. As a result of these restrictions, such minorities are confined largely to the least desirable jobs.

In such a stratified society, occupations are thus divided into two broad categories: those above the job ceiling, and those below it. Workers above the job ceiling are in the four top categories: (a) professionals and technicians; (b) managers, officials, and proprietors; (c) clerical, sales, and kindred workers; and (d) skilled craftsmen and foremen. In the American cultural idiom, these are the most desirable occupations in terms of financial remuneration, social prestige, and the like. But these are also the occupations to which blacks have had limited access, even when they have the necessary qualifications.

Workers below the job ceiling are in the following categories: (a) semi-skilled workers; (b) personal and domestic service workers; (c) common laborers; and (d)

farm laborers. These are the least rewarding occupations in terms of pay, prestige, and other benefits; and blacks have traditionally been restricted to and overrepresented in these jobs.

Research suggests that, for blacks, occupational progress does not depend on educational attainment in the same way it does for whites (Newman, 1978). American society uses two different criteria in assigning adult roles to whites and blacks: Whites are judged qualified for jobs on the basis of education and ability, whereas the jobs available to blacks are predetermined on the basis of skin color. Inferior education has very often served as an initial step in excluding blacks from obtaining the more desirable jobs available to whites, but equal education does not by itself remedy the disparity.

The 1980s are the decade of a slower-growing economy and greater competition for "prestige" occupations. By 1985, it is expected that at least 20% of the population will have competed college (Horowitz, 1980). Continuing education will become a key factor in diversifying one's choices. The health and scientific fields and other areas that require strong conceptual and data skills will constitute the new "prestige" jobs. How these jobs affect long-range mobility will be a key factor in establishing a more equitable society.

The 1970s were especially difficult for blacks in

the white collar service fields that offered little advancement without substantial formal training. The 1980s could see a continuation of the pattern.

Underemployment is also fast becoming a major source of dissatisfaction in the workplace. As the educational level of the workforce rises, discontent and alienation spread among highly educated workers forced to take jobs previously performed by workers with less schooling.

America is essentially at a watershed the likes of which have not been seen since the 1930s. Inevitably, leaders will be forced to confront these issues, which ultimately determine who controls what part of the wealth of the country.

Energy policy will have a lot to do with this distribution. Economic distributional gaps will be either ameliorated or exacerbated by the kind of energy policy intentionally or inadvertently adopted. Equity considerations cannot be separated from energy-policy considerations.

The relationship between energy policy and jobs has great implications for the employment future of everyone. However, this area is especially crucial to blacks and other minorities who have been consistently denied access to economically advantageous sources of employment.

Black employment is affected by the energy shortage in various ways. First, blacks are employed in many of the industries likely to experience layoffs during energy

shortages. These include various manufacturing concerns and the transportation industry -- automobile manufacturing, mass-transit operation, etc. Employment cutbacks due to the energy shortage will disproportionately hurt blacks employed in energy-related sectors.

An equally important employment impact of the energy shortage will become more apparent in the very near future. There are virtually no blacks employed in developing and producing new sources of energy. Education and training are essential for blacks to compete for available positions. Such training could in part replace some of the jobs lost in energy-related plant shutdowns and could perhaps lessen the growing black unemployment rate. However, there is no paucity of documentation of the inaccessibility of education and training for blacks for certain kinds of employment. One result: an acute underrepresentation of blacks in emerging energy sectors at all levels.

Micro-level employment effects are reflected in the impact of energy policy on the volume of employment and the characteristics of jobs in various occupations and industries. Some industries are energy intensive; others are labor intensive. The energy-intensive industries are likely to be most adversely affected by price adjustments stemming from attempts to conserve energy and encourage investment in the search for new energy sources. As a

result, depending on the shape and direction of energy policy, some industries and occupations will be net employment gainers; others will be net employment losers.

Despite limited and short-lived gains in employment and income among blacks in the past several decades, substantial disparities remain between blacks and other groups in the American economy. Blacks are still disproportionately concentrated in occupations and industries with limited opportunities for upward mobility. Further gains in economic equality require continued broadening of black access to stable, well-paying jobs. To accomplish these goals, blacks and public policymakers must assess where jobs will be located and what preparation is required to qualify for expanding opportunity. For blacks, this assessment should specifically address not only where employment opportunities will exist in an economy influenced by a new energy policy, but also where black workers will be in the new environment. Such projections should be based on various assumptions about the state of the general economy and economic growth under various energy scenarios. Racial employment projections need to be developed on the basis of the expected pace of progress toward a reduction in economic inequality for blacks during the decade of the 1980s.

As with all forecasts, the results should be viewed as a broad guide to the direction and rate of change in

employment rather than as a precise enumeration of likely outcomes. Any such findings would also have to be considered preliminary, because no comprehensive energy policy has yet been developed. As the direction of the emerging national energy policy becomes apparent, it may be possible to project more accurately the potential effects on jobs.

Employment projections derived from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (1980) projections of the nation's economy for 1980 and 1985 are based on assumptions regarding the expected path of several components of the economy. These include growth trends in the labor force, gross national product (GNP), productivity (as measured by output per manhour), fiscal and monetary policies of the federal government, as well as other policies that might affect the course of economic growth. The Bureau projects minority employment across the board. Its energy-policy assumptions produce demand estimates for industries across the economy.

The data suggest that black workers would continue to experience a mixed pattern of occupational gains in an environment of higher petroleum cost. Between 1970 and 1985, black participation in the manufacturing industries might increase at a rate comparable to the gains recorded between 1960 and 1970. At the same time, a sharp reduction in the proportion of blacks in agriculture is projected. No proportionate gains are shown for blacks in

the construction industry, and a reduction of black participation in the service industries is projected.

When specific occupations are analyzed, in absolute terms blacks have gained entrance into professional and technical areas, but within those categories, few gains among engineers are expected through 1985. Most gains among black professionals are concentrated in the social science and health fields, and relative to whites, black "gains" are disproportionately low. Most importantly, gains in the social science and health fields tend to concentrate these services within racial groupings.

Unlike urban policy, national energy policy articulates no integrated and comprehensive program for blacks. The various areas of energy crisis for the economically depressed -- prices, institutional demise, jobs, and policymaking -- must be addressed. Only then will energy policy be truly national. Ultimately, it is in society's best interest to couple the development of an energy policy with the question of equity. If equity is not addressed as a distinct factor, even the more advantaged sectors of society will pay exorbitant social costs.

## Equity and Energy Futures

The energy crisis, especially in terms of long-run social and political implications, may be more important

than most people think. Scarcity leads to spiraling unemployment rates; large-scale changes in energy sources; and a substantial conversion of the United States economic base.

The peak of natural gas and petroleum production in the United States occurred early in the 1970s. World production of oil is expected to peak between 1985 and 2000. If present trends continue, cheap, abundant natural fluid fuels will have come and gone in a mere 100 years (Ophuls, 1977).

Western civilizations are clearly in a critical state of affairs because the extraordinarily plentiful and high quality energy resources upon which these civilizations are built are seriously threatened. Furthermore, there is no scientific assurance that near substitutes can be made available in the quantities upon which the industrialized economies of the world have grown dependent. There is increasing concern that because of environmental limitations, economic engineering, and institutional delays inherent in United States production and consumption systems, it will not be possible to develop and implement alternative technologies fast enough to compensate for the decline of fluid fossil fuels. Nor is there any basis for assuming that energy resources for the United States will be as low cost and abundant in the foreseeable future as at present.

Thus, the present directions of development cannot

be sustained unless alternative long-lasting sources of energy, comparable in quality and quantity to natural gas and petroleum, can be developed. However, from a technical resource management perspective, the problems of the United States are excess, inefficient use and waste, rather than energy resource limitations, although the quantity and quality fossil fuels is finite. Americans will eventually be forced to accept the permanence of energy-based scarcity. Recurring recessions, inflation, tight money supplies, and increased unemployment all result in part from energy shortages.

The American vision of an ever-abundant future, in Kenneth Boulding's (1966; 275) words, will give way, and the nation "will begin to move from a wasteful, rambunctious cowboy economy, where growth is the main goal, to a sparse, contained spaceship economy, which consciously puts limits on growth."

It is undeniable that the United States and other advanced industrial nation-states have in the past exploited developing nations, and that the surplus from that exploitation has been an important factor in the maintenance of American national abundance (Blair, 1976). As developing nations conclude that such relations have been less than equitable, they have begun to institute controls on foreign investment and to consider withholding natural resources.

Concomitantly, it is becoming less profitable to exploit the Earth. As fossil fuels become scarce and easily accessible fuel reserves are used up, replacements must come from locations that are more expensive to exploit, such as Arctic or deep-ocean wells. With foreign economies and the Earth's fossil fuels less available for exploitation, the rich will prosper at the expense of the lesser advantaged in the United States.

Energy links the effects of capital productivity and labor productivity, for it enables relatively new, more capital intensive machinery to produce goods with much less participation of labor than during pre-war transformation. As new production technologies displace the older ones, energy-intensive production displaces human labor. When progressively less labor is required for a given rate of output, the ability of the economic system to regenerate jobs is threatened. Also, the amount of energy and capital needed to accomplish tasks similar to the pre-war transformation have increased; the amount of labor used to produce the same output has decreased; and the impact on the environment has worsened.

Unemployment has been chronic. In the United States during the last few years, unemployment, especially or blacks, has been rising to levels unprecedented since the 1929 Depression (United States Department of Commerce, 1979). Apparently, no economic force has been sufficiently strong to counteract completely the effects

of changes in production technology on the availability of jobs.

The trajectory of industrialization -- the increasing replacement of human labor by machines -- leads logically to the erosion of the industrial workforce. By the end of the century, the proportion of factory workers in the labor force could conceivably be as small as the proportion of farmers today. The entire area of blue-collar work could diminish to a point where the term could lose its sociological meaning as new categories more appropriate to the divisions of the new labor force are established. Meanwhile, at the current rate of labor-market entry, the professional and technical class will be the second largest occupational group in society by the end of the century. This is the new dual revolution in the structure of occupations and, to the extent that occupation determines modes of behavior, it is a revolution in the class structure of society as well. This change in the character of production and of occupations is but one aspect of the emergence of the "post-industrial" or "advanced industrial" society.

An industrial system requires a wide range of skills and professional competency broadly distributed throughout the workforce. Specialized human resources are indispensible to the science, technology, and production methods of industrialism.

The science and technology of the industrial society is never static; it generates continual, rapid, widespread changes in production methods and products, which in turn create frequent changes in the skills, responsibilities, and occupations of the workforce. Both the threat of obsolescence and gains from new and expanding fields reflect the highly dynamic quality of jobs and occupations. Major adaptations are required of workers by the frequent changes generated by technology and science.

Inevitably, a complex industrial society requires continual training and retraining of the work force. The content of an occupation or job classification is rarely set for life, as in the traditional society. Occupational mobility has come to be associated with a high degree of geographical movement, and with social mobility in the larger community, both upwards and downwards.

Complex industrialization requires an educational system functionally related to the skills and professions imperative to its technology. Such an educational system is not primarily concerned with conserving traditional values or perpetuating the classics. However, a case can be made for a significant degree of generality in the educational system. Because of the rapidity of change and knowledge growth during the course of a career, workforce participants must be able to adapt to changes in specialties and to shift to new fields. The complex

industrial society tends to require an increasing level of general education for citizens, not only because this facilitates training and flexibility in the workforce, so that education becomes one of the principal means of vertical social and economic mobility in a technical world, but also because as incomes rise, natural curiosity increases the demand for formal education. "This demand for a certain minimum of culture is created by the conditions of the capitalistic mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapidity of development of world competition, and so forth" (Ophuls, 1977).

Blacks are often left out of this process of mobility. As Harrison (1972) argues, "society has essentially created a separate and secondary labor market for blacks and other disadvantaged persons; although no walls enclose this secondary labor market, people with black skin frequently find it difficult to get a passport for travel to the primary labor market."

Fuchs (1972) adds: "'Low' income or 'poverty' in the U.S. is largely a matter of economic distance. When most Americans have a great deal, those who have much less are poor regardless of their absolute level of income." A relative poverty standard explicitly recognizes that all so-called "minimum" or "subsistence" budgets are based on contemporary standards and political realities, not on any intrinsic or scientific basis.

For the underclass, the acute poor, etc., a complex industrialized state provides many obstacles, both social and economic. With technological change and declining reserves of energy rsources, there is always a danger of increasing unemployment, even at constant levels of demand and constant levels of labor-force participation. Also, new technology often creates new skill requirements which general institutional education can meet better than can specific job training. This combination of trends makes it convenient for employers to increase the (often arbitrary) general-education requirements they impose as hiring standards for jobs demanding constant skills.

Encouraging the labor force to pursue school through higher levels can serve a dual purpose. It cuts down the amount of time any potential worker will spend in the labor force, reducing the potential size of the unemployed pool and undercutting some potentially threatening developments in the system as a whole. It also imposes on the general public the costs of certain kinds of training, freeing private firms of these costs. But the longer most workers remain in school, the less effective are the traditional stratifications between those with no or limited schooling and those with more. It then becomes necessary either to adjust relative educational distinctions upward (establishing college as a new boundary between groups of workers, for instance),

or to devise new forms of distinction on the job or within labor-market institutions (to replace previous distinctions created by education) (Bell, 1974).

As the effects of technology, population growth, and resource consumption perpetuate change and uncertainty in the global environment, the need to formulate policy regarding future events becomes acute.

Within the context of the present research, a forecast is simply a proposition in the future tense which carries no weight of positive proof. Therefore, it is not the truthfulness of the proposition that one can evaluate; instead, it is the reasonableness of the arguments and explanations which support the proposition. Forecasts must be more than mere propositions; the propositions must be accompanied by logical warrants, reasons, assumptions, and grounds.

The future of equity in distribution of energy-derived resources is uncertain. Its very historical justification is being questioned and challenged. When people perceive uncertainty ahead, their concern with the future increases proportionately. Therefore, the future must be more fully taken into account.

A country's external relations do not alone account for persistent patterns of inequality. The internal pattern of economic, social, and political organization must be analyzed to evaluate factors constraining a more

equitable system of advances. Practitioners of medicine realize that diagnosis must precede prescription. That social scientists generally have not followed th same course in their prescription of equitable "cures" is largely attributable to an unstated assumption that inequality and its attendants, racism and discrimination, are to be treated as separate in any analysis of societal, economic, and political disequlibrium. However, it is the opinion of this researcher that factors causing inequality cannot be separated from "the whole of society" -- e.g., political, social, and economic conditions. An analysis that includes consideration of racism and discrimination is a necessary prelude to devising appropriate policies and strategies for promoting the welfare of the society as a whole. This analysis is essential to understanding the most recent shift from abundant and inexpensive energy resources to limited sources of energy.

Unless certain patterns of society are altered, the final quarter of the 20th century will be marked by significantly more inflation, more unemployment, shortages, political polarization, possibly terrorism or violence on the European model, and the further centralization of power. In considering possible changes in social patterns, several points are essential to the issue of energy resources and equity. First, it is in the long-run interest of all of the world's people to achieve

sustainable societies. But a sustainable society that remains grossly inequitable probably cannot be achieved, and if achieved, it cannot be maintained -- it is socially, militarily, and politically impossible. Second, energy is the key to sustainability. The energy policies and actions of the United States are integral to any world solution to the problems of energy and sustainability. Third, energy is the primary distributive mechanism in the American economy today. Not only can energy either alleviate or exacerbate the economic, social, and political inequities in society, but such effects will be forced to occur within the next few decades.

What do the later 1980s and the 1990s portend? Following are a few fairly reasonable predictions. There will clearly be continued economic uncertainty, and those on the bottom half of the economy will continue to suffer the most. There will be continued high inflation, which also will have a particularly rough impact on those at the bottom of the economy. A large amount of the inflation will be in the costs of health care, food, shelter, and energy items, which together are the major share of the budget of poor people. There is little reason to believe that inflation will not be relatively high.

Wages, overall, will not keep up with inflation, despite union escalator clauses. Other factors will

prevent wages from keeping pace with inflation, one key factor being that the majority of workers in the United States are not members of unions.

Economists have recently been attempting to redefine the term full employment. A part of this effort involves defining frictional employment, the number of people who "normally" are moving from one job to another at any given time. These are not people who will never be able to find jobs; they are between jobs for a month or two. The frictional unemployment rate has been moving up. At one time it was considered acceptable at 1% to 2%; now it's acceptable at 3% to 4%, and 5% to 7% is becoming the norm. The figures considered to be acceptable levels of inflation and unemployment will be ever-increasing.

This is an era of cutbacks in social services. Feeling the burden of the energy crisis, the middle class has applied pressure resulting in reductions in taxes, and as the resultant cutbacks in government services and entitlements occur, the first in are the last out: There is a certain kind of seniority system, and programs that minorities and the poor have won over the last 10 to 15 years are coming under the heaviest attack.

Significant problems in housing can be expected. Growing numbers of families are sharing housing in response to the scarcity of affordable housing. One cause of this scarcity is that the Federal Reserve System of savings and loans is issuing fewer housing loans.

The United States' dependence on foreign oil poses particularly difficult energy problems for minorities and the poor. Energy use in many ways correlates directly with income. Poor people have the least ability to change their energy use in response to price, since there is little elasticity in their demand for energy. They have the least energy-efficient homes and buy the least energy-efficient appliances. The poor have little access to the capital needed to make their home environments more energy efficient.

Because energy directly and indirectly affects employment opportunities, wages, education, social services, prices, and living conditions, it may well be viewed as the new frontier in civil rights, human rights, and international relations.

## An Uncertain Future

Whether one attributes the perpetuation of racial inequality to prejudice based on the color of one's skin or to class barriers, or elements of both, most observers agree that the problem at times seems almost intractible. Active white resistance, lack of the political commitment and will to break barriers, and the self-interest of those who benefit disproportionately from the status quo all combine to reinforce the gap between promise and reality. Any increase of the numbers of blacks joining

the social, economic, and political ranks of the middle class to date has not changed this fact.

Against this backdrop, the decline of cheap, abundant energy resources has been changing the structure of the American work force, requiring skills and training to be altered. Continuing learning experiences are an ever-more-integral factor in adult socialization. Just as adults are now socialized into work as a means of meeting needs and of assimilation, the future will see people socialized into continuing education as a key to economic and social advancement.

Continuing education, in the sense of organized instruction in industry, government, community agencies, schools, and colleges, disproportionately serves the advantaged classes. Blacks, elderly persons, and those with part-time jobs, low incomes, and low educational attainment are poorly served by current forms of organized instruction (Cross, 1978).

On socioeconomic indicators, "learners" are most similar to today's college students and "nonlearners" least similar. "Nonlearners" come primarily from the ranks of the lower socioeconomic classes and the elderly. In both categories, the least advantaged are disproportionately black.

Since education focuses primarily upon the future, when information and technology will be key, access to continued learning is essential. The newly emerging jobs

reflect very traditional patterns of stratification. Education, as an element of policy development, is reflective of the emerging shape of society. Unless groundwork is laid very carefully, there may be divisive confrontations over issues much more encompassing than whether certain energy choices will or will not generate more jobs.

A number of important decisions confront this and other industrialized nation-states. Should the emphasis be on "hard" or "soft" energy technologies? On conservation or production? On regulatory solutions or "free-market" solutions? The combination of choices made will affect all the citizens of the country -- minority as well as majority.

In raising such questions and in searching for answers, it is important that consequences of potentially harmful decisions be anticipated and analyzed. It is hoped this analysis makes a contribution in stimulating a more humanistic view toward emerging socially related energy policy.

# CHAPTER V

# PERSISTENT INEQUALITY: EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

## Affirmative Action Review

The measurement of social change is at best an imprecise art, especially in the realm of attitudes and beliefs. But tenuous as the art of predicting the future is, we can be relatively assured that racial problems will remain a part of the United States culture in the year 2000. Pettigrew (1977; 39-41) suggests that the "nature of our racial problems, though necessarily evolving from the past, will nonetheless be radically different from what we have known during recent decades."

Assessment of progress toward equality by black Americans in recent decades is especially pertinent in view of the growing perceptin among white Americans that "advances" made by blacks to date are self-sustaining and need no further impetus or assistance.

Throughout the decade of the 1970s, with its two devastating recessions and record-level unemployment, there were continual pronouncements about the "significant" economic progress of blacks. According to Wattenberg and Scammon (1974; 643-652), 52% of all blacks

have now achieved middle-class status. The news media has fostered interest in the black middle class phenomenon by giving high visibility to such research studies as a Rand report which purports to show a narrowing of the economic gap between blacks and whites (Smith & Welch, 1978).

With this heavy focus on the "new" emerging black middle class has come a significant decline in the number of whites who believe that there is still racial discrimination against blacks. While three-fourths of all whites in 1970 believed that blacks still eperienced discrimination in trying to achieve full equality, by 1977 this proportion had fallen to only one-third (National Urban League, 1978).

Indeed, there are many today who believe that the nation's debt to black people for past injustices has been so fully paid that whites themselves are becoming the victims of "reverse discrimination." In this view, few inequalities between the races remain, and any that do can be ascribed to "deficiencies" in the motivation, character, or intellect of individual blacks. Many whites have become resistant to efforts toward racial equality in education, employment, housing, and overall economic security. Since, in their view, equality of opportunity has already been achieved, and there is no need for special-emphasis efforts on behalf of blacks and other minorities, they strongly resist the use of their tax dollars for social programs on behalf of minorities. This

attitude was quite apparent in many persons who voted for passage of Proposition 13, to reduce property taxes, in California. It was their contention that their taxes were going for "unnecessary" social programs that would primarily benefit racial minorities (Austin, 1976; 37-42).

The spread of these disturbing ideas is increasing fears among blacks that "progress" has come to a halt and that many of the perceived gains are eroding. Some blacks justifiably suggest that an era of retrogression has already set in, bolstered by the Bakke decision regarding education and jobs, and other reverse-discrimination suits in the field of employment. Everywhere, there is evidence of white backlash and a retreat from the pro-civil rights convictions of the 1960s.

Although growing research attention is turning to the economic advances of the black middle class, it is also acknowledged that persistent unemployment and poverty still prevail in the black community. However, as Pettigrew (1977; 40) points out, "the nature of racial discrimination has altered considerably. . . . More typical now are techniques ostensibly 'non-racial' in character." Thus, some urban Native Americans with skills prosper, while many on the reservations slip deeper into poverty. Young, educated Asian-Americans forge ahead, while older Asian-Americans and new arrivals face major obstacles. Some middle class black Americans benefit from

the gains of the civil-rights movement, but most poor blacks have experienced few positive changes in their immediate lives. Indeed, poor minority people have lost ground in absolute as well as relative terms in the past few years, under federal programs that have often acted against their interests.

Given the declining significance of racial barriers as a variable in hard-core unemployment and poverty among blacks, the primary explanations offered for persistent high unemployment are structural deficiencies, such as lack of education, lack of job skills, lack of work motivation, and lack of steady employment history. Such external factors as lack of jobs or racial discrimination are not acknowledged in the conventional view. Thus, it is argued that unemployment among blacks remains high primarily because of the influx of structurally deficient persons into the labor force.

In addition, chronic poverty is attributed to the prevalence of a sizable black "underclass" which possesses structural deficiencies. Thus, high levels of joblessness and poverty among blacks are said to be due primarily to the prevalence of "structurally unemployable" attributes and "underclass" values rather than to such external factors as a depressed economy, the unavilability of jobs, ineffective targeting of jobs, or lack of equal employment opportunities.

Several news analyses have set forth viewpoints

which supposedly account for the divergent trends among blacks. The theory of two black societies has been set forth in a series by the New York Times. The analysis suggests that a cleavage has been steadily developing in the black community between the middle class and the chronically poor "underclass" or "structurally unemployed" (New York Times, 1978). In other words, the new popular theories hold that, while the gap between blacks and whites is narrowing, the cleavage between the black middle class and the black underclass is widening. Consequently, the current situation of blacks is more appropriately accounted for on the basis of class or economic differences than racial differences (Wilson, 1978).

Unfortunately, such reformations have too often been uncritically accepted. They have not been properly assessed for their empirical or factual bases. For example, most of the pronouncements concerning the emergence of two black societies have failed to clearly define the criteria for inclusion of a person in the middle class or the underclass category. Darden (1974; 53-54) explains that, as usual, such "statements are highly subjective and are made with little or no specific reference to the source of the data." He further comments, "This procedure is followed for fear that any point by point check for verification may result in part truths, half truths or no truth at all." Vague references

are often made to various categories of blacks, such as "bourgeois" or "structurally unemployed," without specifying the nature and size of such groupings. One can hardly document a significant advancement of blacks into the middle class if that group is ambiguously defined -- or not defined at all.

In order to place the current economic situation of blacks in proper perspective, it is necessary to underscore the fact that, although the rest of the nation may be recovering from the 1974-1975 recession -- the worst economic decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s -- the black community remains in a state of economic depression. Black unemployment is at an all-time high, whether one uses the official United States Bureau of Labor statistics or the "hidden unemployment" count of the National Urban League (1978).

Officially, the number of unemployed whites dropped by 28% (from 6.7 million to 4.8 million) between the first half of 1975 and the first half of 1978. The number of unemployed blacks never fell from the record of 1.5 million during the peak of the 1974-1975 recession (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1979). When discouraged workers are added to the official count, the actual number of blacks out of work doubles to 3.1 million (National Urban League, 1978) -- remaining at the record high of the 1975 recession.

Not only did blacks fail to recover from the

1974-1975 recession, they are also still reeling from the cumulative effects over time of recurring recessions. Essentially, the American economy has been subjected to increasing numbers of recessions within intervals as short as three years. In fact, over the past two decades, this country has had at least five recessions: 1953-1954, 1957-1958, 1960-1961, 1969-1971, and 1974-1975. Before blacks had had a chance to recover from one recession, they had been hit with another.

The increasing frequency of recession cycles and the tenuous nature of recoveries have made it exceedingly difficult to disentangle cyclical unemployment from structural unemployment. According to the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress (1976), cyclical unemployment can be distinguished from structural unemployment as follows:

> Cyclical unemployment refers to a situation in which workers are laid off or cannot find jobs because of a general economic recession and an overall shortage of jobs. Structural unemployment refers to a situation in which certain groups of workers cannot compete successfully in the labor market because of a deficiency of skills or education, a depressed regional economy, or discriminating hiring practices. Such workers have difficulty finding satisfactory jobs even during periods of high overall employment.

The persistence of long-term unemployment creates a serious danger that much of what now is considered cyclical unemployment will become "structural," and the

difficulties of solving the unemployment problem will increase sharply. Eliminating cyclical unemployment requires recovery of the economy. Dealing with structural unemployment requires not only adequate overall job opportunities, also means providing workers with remedial education, job training or retraining, psychological assistance, motivation, and placement assistance to help them compete in the job market.

Importantly, the Joint Economic Committee neglected to mention that if structural unemployment among certain groups of workers is largely due to discriminatory hiring practices, then strong enforcement of affirmative-action mandates may be needed more than job training or remedial education. This notion is reinforced as the unemployment figures for blacks continue to deteriorate.

Black workers were being disproportionately laid off by local governments at a time when Congress had passed legislation expanding the number of public jobs at the local level. During this time, almost half of the workers who had previously been employed in local government were unemployed.

It could have been expected that such persons would receive their fair share of public employment as jobs were handed out. But most of the new public-service jobs did not go to the long-term unemployed, blacks, and other disadvantaged groups. They were once again denied equal employment opportunity because affirmative-action

commitments were not being appropriately enforced in the public and private sectors.

Equally serious is the plight of those persons who will not be helped at all by remedies presently proposed or mandated. These are the unemployed, blacks particularly, who have virtually no job experience or who have been out of the labor market for a long time and are now again trying to find work. They make up almost one-half of the black unemployed, and they are ineligible for unemployment-insurance benefits or public-service jobs. These workers are least likely to have any cushion to fall back on. Particularly, youth who have never worked are losing the valuable years of experience needed for progress in the world of employment.

The public policy of affirmative action is a natural extension of the long struggle for equal rights in this country. From the birth of the Constitution, blacks have fought for their rightful place as citizens of this country, but American society has offered them justice with one hand while withdrawing it with the other. Although the country has recognized the legitimate claim of black people to basic citizen rights via the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, the nation has been unwilling to enforce them. The resultant process of reversal was highlighted in the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, which sanctioned the doctrine of separate but equal as public policy.

After nearly sixty years of struggle under such severe legal, economic, and social restrictions, a ray of hope was again offered in 1954, when the Supreme Court in the Brown decision held de jure segregation unconstitutional. Today, legal segregation as public policy is almost nonexistent, but the vestiges of generations of slavery, segregation, and deprivation, and continued illegal discrimination, have created real barriers to the attainment of full equality. Inadequate health care, dilapidated housing, massive unemployment, and a preferential legal system are monuments to America's denial of equal justice and the failure of public policy to eradicate such disadvantages.

When President Carter emphasized the need to honor the human rights of people throughout the world, Americans needed to realize that there cannot be a well-ordered and just society at home when inequality persists to such an extent that a large segment of society is disadvantaged. The history of black Americans continues to be a struggle for government at all levels to recognize their rights and to enforce rights equally for all citizens.

Affirmative action is but one strategy designed to provide justice and equality for citizens. It is a strategy for peaceful transition to a fair and more equitable society. There is little question that if affirmative action fails, citizens who are the recipients

of less-than-equal treatment will pursue new strategies, some of which may not permit the nation to move smoothly and peacefully to a more equitable society.

Since its inception as a major part of the strategy for achieving equality of opportunity in employment, affirmative action has been surrounded by controversy. Part of the contention has been stimulated by those who traditionally oppose government intervention on behalf of minorities. Much of the controversy, however, results from misunderstanding the concept of affirmative action, from problems in implementing the strategy, and from unrealistic expectations for equal-opportunity and affirmative-action strategies to transform the social and economic structure into one which reflects greater equality -- given the fact that many major institutions had not bought into this goal.

In theory, affirmative action is a preventative procedure designed to minimize the probability of discrimination. Affirmative action in the federal program is defined as the deliberate design and implementation of employment procedures to ensure equal opportunity to all. Procedures for recruiting job applicants, evaluating the qualifications of candidates, notifying potential candidates about opportunities for promotion, delegating new assignments, and awarding salary increases and benefits are to ensure that opportunities are made available to all on a fair basis, as spelled out by

Executive Order 11246 and its implementing regulations.

In practice, affirmative action may not always be so affirmative! The administration of many affirmative-action programs runs counter to their purpose. For obvious political reasons, the government has been reluctant to move against the unions. In universities, the tenure system tends to keep the upper faculty ranks nearly frozen, with only slow prospects of entry for minorities. The civil-service system has adopted confusing affirmative-action programs that are often ignored and are certainly not consistently, equitably, or vigorously enforced.

Ironically, the federal government is neverthless committed to correcting what it terms "patterns and practices" of discrimination against entire classes of employees -- mainly women and blacks. Federal contractors, a group that includes most major companies, must set goals for increasing the number of women and minorities in nine job categories, ranging from manager to unskilled laborer. These goals are at the heart of affirmative-action programs theoretically designed to improve job opportunities in all ranks and specialties where women and minorities are underrepresented. However, the nine categories are so general, and the reporting forms ar so unspecific, that such gimmicks as placing women and minorities in "dead-end" management positions to compensate for their scarcity in other professional

areas are readily applied (Business Week, 1978).

Again, it must be recognized that the continuation and acceptance of such practices fosters discrimination. As has been discussed throughout this presentation, one of the most pressing issues facing the nation has been and continues to be how to eliminate racial discrimination. Solving the problem is complicated by several factors:

1. Contrary to popular belief, discrimination remains a major problem for the vast majority of black people regardless of socioeconomic status.

2. Past discrimination has disadvantaged black Americans to such an extent that this disadvantage is being passed from one generation to another. It is necessary to continually re-emphasize this situation, because "reverse discrimination" has become one of the many emotional phrases used by opponents to undermine affirmative-action programs.

In a declining economy, white males, who are currently overrepresented in the best jobs and professions, have realized that they can no longer obtain privileged positions based on group membership, and have resorted to allegations of reverse discrimination and attacks on affirmative action. But as history and the present situation of black people in the United States demonstrate, it is virtually impossible for this minority to discriminate against the majority.

For example, white males constitute approximately 73% of all faculty positions in institutions of higher education, although they are just 43% of the total population (Wagstaff and Moore, 1974). They have been able to obtain these positions because of a system which excluded blacks, other minorities, and white women. While academia professes to be a bastion of enlightenment, in reality it has been sexist, elitist, and racially exclusive. The attack on affirmative action has come primarily from academia, where white males are overrepresented. They attack affirmative action because it has begun to make some progress in bringing minorities and women into higher-education institutions.

A central issue in the affirmative action/reverse discrimination ballgame inevitably is whether race should be taken into consideration. A more-than-sufficient reason for doing so is that the system has so many built-in inequities that race must be taken into consideration to overcome past -- and present -- discrimination.

Racial discrimination denies opportunities to one group while it favors another. Just as discrimination against black people has had a compounding effect because the disadvantages it causes are transmitted from one generation to another, favoritism or positive discrimination for white males has had the effect of transmitting societal benefits from generation to

generation. Even when blacks have achieved middle-class status, it has been almost impossible to transmit the attendant benefits to their children because of the fragile nature of that status. Too often, middle-class status is determined by fluctuations in the job market, and is often dependent upon participation of black women in the labor market.

Compensation in the area of education is critical not only because public policy has helped erect barriers to educational opportunity, but also, and more importantly, because education is the key to social and economic mobility in this society. The current status of blacks, especially in higher education, attests to the institutionalization of discrimination. Black student participation in graduate and professional schools remained severely limited even in the 1970s. Only 3.2% of the doctorates awarded to United States citizens went to blacks. In the fields of law and medicine, blacks were 5% of the full- and part-time students in American Bar Assocation-approved law schools in the fall of 1974 -- and there were fewer first-year black students in law school that year than in 1972. Black doctors were only 2% of all practicing doctors in the United States in 1974, and most of them were graduates of the two traditionally black medical schools -- Meharry and Howard Universities (National Academy of Sciences, 1974; 4). In institutions of higher education, blacks constituted 3% of the total

college faculty, including those in predominantly black institutions (Wagstaff, 1974).

Just as evidence of meaningful change through affirmative action began to accrue, the bottom fell out of the academic job market. The continuation of affirmative-action programs is necessary if this situation is not to reinforce historical patterns of discrimination.

If affirmative action is to be effective, the process must be totally revamped. Legislative and executive government support is necessary. Commitment to the letter of the law must be shown.

A cursory analysis of the current situation for blacks at all levels of employment makes it clear that a fair system has not been established. Progress toward eliminating disparities through the achievement of nondiscriminatory employment practices is projected to be slow. Twenty years from now, the proportion of blacks among both Ph.D. and non-Ph.D. faculties will still be far below parity, even if the requirements of affirmative action are aggressively implemented (Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, 1978; National Academy of Sciences, 1975).

Clearly, equal opportunity cannot be ensured without disrupting "business as usual." Almost everybody is willing to undertake equal opportunity if it involves no cost; however, by definition, affirmative action requires

most institutions to alter traditional practices that produce discriminatory outcomes. Affirmative-action programs designed to increase the supply of jobs require, by definition, the expenditure of extra resources. They require that blacks be treated differently than whites. In short, efforts to correct the results of past discrimination and to prevent the occurrence of new discrimination interrupt the status quo.

Much ambivalence or antagonism to affirmative action has been addressed by Hamilton (1977). He contends, rather cynically, that the struggle for equality of opportunity as traditionally understood and pursued within the civil-rights context might already have come to an end. Hamilton cites the March 21, 1977 foreign-policy speech by President Carter in which the question of human rights was switched from the national to the international arena.

> The impact of such a foreign policy stance is that this country feels confident enough about its own internal "human rights affairs" to be able to assert leadership on the issue in the international arena. Such a position would have been untenable (if not unthinkable) ten, fifteen, and certainly twenty years ago. (Hamilton, 1977)

Hamilton feels that "affirmative action and other preferential treatment policies are not likely to be linked, in attitudes and actions of many people, to the earlier thrust for justice in the civil rights, equal

opportunity stuggle" (Hamilton, 1977). He therefore advises that affirmative action preferential policy be seen "for what it is, namely a corrective policy approach which makes no claims to being egalitarian or 'democratic'" (Hamilton, 1977). Pointing out that a corrective policy must necessarily raise questions of reverse discrimination, since it is a zero-sum game, he also suggests that the corrective purpose be linked with a compelling (perhaps a substantial) state interest, i.e., changing the emphasis from the individual to be trained to the constituency to be served. In this way, he argued, the critical areas of societal concern would be such matters as health care for the poor and quality teachers in inner-city schools.

Affirmative action will not, and should not be expected to, alleviate all discrimination problems. But strong implementation of affirmative action can do much to assure a more-equitable distribution of opportunity. Moreover, affirmative efforts to bring black people into the mainstram of American life will have a direct influence on the quality of life for all Americans. The true goal of affirmative action is not to deny opportunities to those who presently are dominant, but to see that each person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential and to bring to the whole society the wealth found in cultural diversity.

## Conclusion

Almost two decades have passed since Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his dream that "one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'" Today, this dream remains more a goal than a reality. Although one can argue as to whether adequate progress has been made in this quest, there is little question that massive changes, albeit relative, have occurred for the nation's black population. While certain advances have been made, improvement has been uneven, and in some cases, the black situation has even deteriorated.

Although opinions differ about the meaning and causes of rising dependency, crime, unemployment/-underemployment, and family deterioration, it is a complex process to weigh the benefits of progress against the costs of continuing or intensifying social problems. The task becomes further complicated by the diversity inherent in change. Regarding social matters, isolated developments are meaningless; the whole becomes essential to any understanding of a part. However, the interrelationships between education, income, employment, family patterns, housing, health, and other factors are never direct. Gaining insight from a more comprehensive perspective is often an extremely complex task, due to

the voluminousness of the information that must be considered. The circumstances of society are dynamic and interrelated.

While a number of factors can be considered in assessing social and economic status, well-being can be profiled along the following dimensions:

Employment. Earnings are the primary source of income, and work is a major activity of most adults. Job satisfaction affects overall well-being, while occupational position and earnings are important determinants of individual status and prestige.

Income. Money is of central importance in a society where the consumer is sovereign and where public services and facilities are relatively scarce. Money may not buy everything, but income is a significant determinant of well-being.

Education. A diploma is becoming a more common prerequisite to employment in better-paying and higher-status jobs. Education's effect on values and outlooks is another factor in determining class standing and future prospects.

Family patterns. The family is still the basic mechanism through which economic and social status is transmitted from one generation to the next.

Health. Sound health is important for the enjoyment of life, and its absence can affect earning capacity, education, family patterns, and other social indicators.

Health is also affected by economic problems. For example, low income may mean a deficient diet, which can result in health problems.

Housing. Adequate housing is vital. Living in deteriorated, overcrowded housing can be a source of misery and a handicap to development. The location of one's dwelling may well be a determinant of access to schools and jobs. The cost of housing affects how much money remains for other needs.

Power and control. The "good life" is not just a matter of physical comfort; it is also reflected in intangibles such as self-fulfillment and self-determination. Having a voice in business, government, employment, unions, and shaping community life are of significant importance here.

Current conditions, and changes and rates of change in the aforementioned dimensions, generally determine whether conditions for blacks are intolerable, merely acceptable, or favorable. An assessment of change may demonstrate a need for redirection of society toward acceleration of improvement. Public policy has played a pervasive role in socioeconomic change, and government intervention strategies can be analyzed to determine their impact on blacks as well as identifying the most effective approach or combination of approaches for the future.

The aforementioned social-class indicators are based

on socioeconomic variables of status -- i.e., occupation, education, wealth, power, and prestige. Other indicator factors also affect various sectors of American society: ethnicity, race, sex, and age. When multiple parallel stratification systems exist, individuals may be simultaneously ranked on several systems. Though the stratification systems are parallel, they are not necessarily equal.

Policymakers have certainly acknowledged the inconsistencies of stratification. Racism is a particularly poignant illustration of how factors in parallel systems of stratification manifest themselves. Civil-rights legislation and affirmative-action policies have resulted from America's continual need to "legislate" inalienable rights for the consistently disenfranchised black population.

Entering the 1980s, perceived gains by the black population are being revaluated. In absolute terms, and despite the battle against inequality, black children, youth, and families are worse off than whites in every area of American life. Twenty-six years after Brown v. Board of Education, most black children still have not gained the opportunities that most white children take for granted. In some areas, the gap between black and white children's chances for success has actually widened rather than narrowed in the past decade. For example, although black infants are twice as likely as white

infants to die within the first year of life, the infant-mortality rate fell faster during the 1970s among white families than among black. Real per capita income increased slightly for whites but fell for blacks. The disparity in school-suspension and teenage-unemployment rates between whites and blacks increased. Today, 47 out of every 100 black babies are born into poverty, compared to fewer than 1 in 8 white babies (Children's Defense Fund, 1980). Between 1969 and 1977, the rate of poverty among black families rose from 3.75 times that of white families to 4 times (United Press International, 1980).

In early 1979, the overall black unemployment rate was 11.6%, compared to the white rate of 4.9%. The black teenage rate was 35.2%, compared to the white teenage rate of 13.5% (Lion, 1979; 5-6). The historical pattern of a black unemployment rate double that of whites still held -- a quarter century after the Supreme Court's landmark decision outlawing racially segregated systems of public education as inherently unfair and unconstitutional. To deny race as a factor of inequality, especially as related to black Americans, distorts any assessment of social and economic status.

This research project focuses on two socioeconomic factors relevant to blacks -- unemployment, and education -- and demonstrates the relationship of these socioeconomic factors to racial discrimination and poverty.

Employment

To more fully understand contemporary minority employment problems (particularly those of black Americans), the combined effects of institutional racism, the growth of modern industrial capitalism, and minority access to employment opportunities must all be considered. To ignore or underestimate such historical factors plays into the hands of those policymakers who have traditionally placed blame for poverty upon the poor.

By-and-large, much of the unemployment of blacks is directly traceable to post-World War II structural features inherent in modern industrial development, such as industrial decentralization from the older inner-city plants to newer suburban plants; migration of Northern plants to the Sunbelt; and the exportation of labor-intensive jobs to cheaper, non-union overseas labor markets. Harman (1978; 209) points out that chronic unemployment and underemployment are a major problem of post-industrial societies.

The possibility of long-term chronic unemployment and underemployment rests on two propositions: (a) that over the long run, economic growth may not continue to generate enough jobs to accomodate the expanding workforce; and (b) that the quality of available jobs may not be compatible with rising educational levels of the

workforce. Of major concern is Harman's claim that "lack of sufficient and satisfactory jobs is not just a problem of the present, but one that will remain and perhaps intensify in the years ahead" (Harman, 1978; 209). The implication of such findings, if accurate, for minorities and especially blacks (given their employment history), is a bleak employment horizon.

Notwithstanding special employment programs, many of which are having some effect, minority unemployment and underemployment stands little chance of being reduced until there is a societal understanding of the need for all employable persons to be employed. The social costs of unemployment to minorities and the total society are very high. America has more than enough capacity to reduce unemployment. Noted economist Robert Lekachman (1977; 39-40) alludes to this:

> By the standards of other advanced societies, unemployment in the United States is routinely disgracefully high. The percentage of poor people is again larger than Scandinavians, Western Europeans, Japanese, or Australians are prepared to accept. . . . The United States remains, despite the buffets of recent years, an exceedingly rich community. Yet it allows large numbers of adults and teenagers to drift along unhappily without useful work or hope of finding it.

Lekachman adds that "an enlightened community offers decent employment to all who want work and are capable of working" (Lekachman, 1977; 91). Those who are unable to

work, he feels, should receive, "without stigmatism or recrimination, a reasonable cash grant."

Structural problems inherent in modern industrial societies will also have to be addressed, as will awareness on the part of American citizens that work is vital to the human personality and to the peace of society. Full employment thus is a key to social justice in the United States today. No other progressive goal can fully be achieved without it.

Historical employment patterns of black workers. As previously mentioned, contemporary employment problems of urban minorities (mainly blacks) have resulted from the combined effects of institutional racism and the structural characteristics of American industrial development. Sociologist Julius Wilson (1978; 1-4) identifies the period from post-Reconstruction to the end of the New Deal as one of "industrial expansion, class conflict and racial oppression," when some of the most blatant forms of institutional racism occurred. He describes the period from post-World War II to the 1970s as a time of "progressive transition from racial inequalities to class inequality." According to Wilson:

> As the nation has entered the latter half of the twentieth century . . . many of the traditional barriers have crumbled away under the weight of the political, social and economic changes of the civil rights era. A new set of obstacles has emerged from basic structural shifts in the economy.

Wilson's arguments emphasize class subordination as opposed to racial oppression. While this author does not accept all of Wilson's arguments, there is a recognition that some of his arguments are important in providing key racial and class factors in the historical employment patterns of black workers. Currently, there is an increasing urban underclass, disproportionately comprised of racial minorities. At the same time, there is a direct relationship between high unemployment rates among racial minorities and the technological and organizational changes occurring in American industry. Wilson (1978; 96-97) contends that the current high unemployment rate of black workers is "partly related to the rapid growth of corporate industries which depends more on technical progress and increases in physical capital per worker than on growth of employment."

As the post-World War II corporate sector developed, industrial technology expanded, resulting in an increase in technological unemployment. Since black workers constituted a large percentage of corporate-sector workers rendered redundant by emergent technology, they were displaced in larger numbers than white workers by advancing technology (Wilson, 1978).

During the 1950s and 1960s, urban black workers were joined by their Southrn black counterparts leaving the plantations as a result of agricultural mechanization.

The introduction of new farming machines and techniques between 1950 and 1965 increased farm output by 45% and reduced farm employment by 45% (United States President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, 1967). Although mechanization affected all agricultural areas nationally, its greatest impact was concentrated in the cotton South among black farm workers. Over four million Southern blacks left the South after 1940, destined for inner cities in Northern industrial centers where industrial decentralization was rapidly occurring.

Of the 20 million farm workers displaced out of agriculture between 1940 and 1965, Southern black farmworkers were the most vulnerable. Most were living in economies characterized by low wages and sub-human working conditions. By 1966, the black working class of the South, which had migrated north, now formed with its Northern counterpart a massive class of unemployed and underemployed workers in the heart of the nation's cities. In 1966, the average unemployment rate among blacks in the central cities was 9.3%, compared to the national average of 3.5% (Gordon, 1972; 6).

Such high unemployment and underemployment rates have traditionally been explained by scholars and public-policy analysts by attributing them to blacks' lack of skills and family disorganization, and to a lesser extent, to institutional racism. Few analysts examined the larger context for linkages between the

changing nature of American industry, the declining manufacturing sector, and racial discrimination. For example, during the 1950s and 1960s, central cities experiencing the largest black unemployment were those which did not consistently share in the nation's economic growth (Piven & Cloward, 1971; 216).

Within this context, the unfavorable minority employment picture was exacerbated by the nature and form of economic development. Nevertheless, racism remained an important factor. In many cases where minority workers had as much formal schooling as white workers, minority workers still failed to obtain jobs (Sorkin, 1974; 68). Such racial practices by business and union alike prompted the rise of minority working class protest groups in the 1950s and 1960s (Foner, 1976; 293-310, 397-424).

Role of the Cities

A general understanding of the historic role of American cities is essential: Namely, to function as receiving centers for successive waves of immigrant workers, particularly cheap workers. American industrial cities, above all else, provided jobs for immigrants. Now, as "the wilting of metropolitan areas raises to new heights the crisis of function of the American city, . . . the less skilled will apparently bear the brunt of the burden of no growth and decline" (Sternlieb and

Hughes, 1977; 156-157). A large proportion of these less-skilled workers are black.

Compounding the problems of declining industrial cities and the decline and shift of the manufacturing sector is the overseas transfer of some jobs once available to minorities (Frank & Freeman, 1976). In many cases, this American corporate shift overseas was motivated chiefly by avarice -- the insatiable need for higher profits at the expense of American workers (Barnet & Muller, 1974; 216). Some of the largest United States-based global corporations, like Ford, which long provided employment to minority auto workers, employ more than 30% of their workforce overseas (Barnet & Muller, 1974; 303).

Unfortunately, too few people make the connection between American multinational corporations and unemployment. Yet as Barnet and Muller (1974; 333) contend:

> The mobility of capital and the immobility of labor and government are adversely affecting income distribution in the United States and causing serious structural unemployment. As a result, the economic security of the average American is threatened.

The aforementioned effort to call attention to some of the structural aspects of black workers' employment problems is not an attempt to ignore institutional racism, which still exists in domestic labor markets. Its

only purpose is to make clear the larger picture and to identify other pertinent factors responsible for the unemployment and underemployment of black workers.

Institutional racism still exists in America and has historically disproportionately kept black workers in the unskilled, low-wage, low-mobility sector and white workers in the skilled, high-wage, high-mobility sector.

Blacks proceeded from the system of slavery to that of sharecropping. It was well into the middle of the 20th century before most Southern black sharecroppers left the Southern fields for the Northern factories where they faced relatively higher levels of unemployment and underemployment than other groups (Foner, 1976). From the post-Reconstruction period to the mid-1970s, when effective civil rights enforcement procedures were finally having some effect on black employment opportunities, institutional racism took its toll on black workers. Organized labor limited employment opportunities for minorities through union constitutional restrictions and through control of labor markets (Hill, 1967; 365-402).

Black young adult unemployment. Black young adults are essentially a minority within a minority. They are consistently drifting further and further out of the American mainstream. The problem of young adult/teenage unemployment is at best a blot on the social consciousness and human values of American society. Black

teenagers have experienced rates of unemployment of 25% and above throughout the past decade (United States Department of Labor, 1977). Although white teenage unemployment rates are also significantly higher than those of adults, the disparities are not nearly as wide as for black teenagers.

Partly in response to widespread joblessness, black teenagers and young adults have dropped out of the labor force in alarming rates (United States Department of Labor, 1975). Limited access to employment other than in dead-end, menial jobs undoubtedly contributes to high drop-out rates. Institutional barriers to full participation in the labor market further exacerbate this condition. The normal problems of young people adjusting to the world of work are compounded in the case of black teenagers by poor public-education systems, employment discrimination, and limited supportive services in the community.

The extraordinary nonparticipation of young blacks in the labor force makes the conventional measure of unemployment almost meaningless as a guide to the problem of joblessness in the black community. If just one-half of the non-participants among black teenagers were added to the total unemployed as measured by the standard definition, the black unemployment rate would probably be nearly double reported rates.

Although significant gains have been made by blacks

in the past 20 years, there remains a major gap between black and white Americans. Reviewing national demographic and socioeconomic changes for the black population, particularly since the 1962 second edition of Gunnar Myrdal's classic study of American blacks, An American Dilemma, the differences between black and white populations have on the whole not changed. Myrdal (1966) argues that the professed American creed of "liberty, equality, justice, and fair opportunity for everybody" had in practice been extended least of all to blacks.

While the civil-rights movements launched in the 1950s, along with the Great Society of the 1960s, provided socioeconomic gains for many blacks entering the 1980s, the picture now appears more bleak.

When the dismal record on mortality, steady employment, and income is considered, it becomes clear that a major move by American blacks into mainstream middle-class America is not imminent. What gains blacks have made are now being threatened by cutbacks of federally supported social programs and changes in the government's role in protecting civil rights, plus an increasing number of immigrants into the United States who compete directly for low-level jobs on which many blacks must still rely.

Past history, both positive and negative, provides a mechanism for new beginnings. Events and circumstances which promoted equality between black and white Americans

require consistent commitment and support to preserve those gains in the present, and to improve a future that is inevitable. Whatever has retarded or impeded progress is retrogressive and affects all American citizenry.

Gains in American levels of living since 1940 have improved the condition of black and white alike, albeit for whites such gains, relative to those of the black population, remain consistently greater across all socioeconomic measures. Laws now (at least on paper) prohibit the most blatant forms of discrimination. There is a general climate of congeniality in the workplace and in other formal and informal meetings. While the etiquette by which we live, especially that supported by law, provides a relative degree of advancement for blacks, the relations and tolerance are often forced. They successfully mask stereotypical ways of thinking and the bureaucratic manipulations that sustain them. Such actions have persisted, and reveal themselves in the many ingenious ways civil-rights laws are circumvented to ensure basic human rights, which are themselves renegotiated over and over again.

While attempts have been made to ameliorate problems of continuing discrimination and lawlessness by improving the enforcement of civil-rights legislation, the paradox confronting such actions is the very inadequacy of the enforcement provisions. The need for civil rights enforcement provisions to begin with addresses volumes

about the resistance of white Americans to accepting black Americans as equals.

When the American public views itself as a civilized and mature people, then there must be acknowledged not just how much has been achieved in civil rights, nor how much is yet to be accomplished, but how fragile is the result.

Americans are an aggressive and competitive people. During more economically advantaged times, black Americans have achieved enough to maintain and even reduce a little the relative distance between them and white Americans. But dependence upon the economy to reduce disparity between the races continues to position black Americans at a disadvantage where they become vulnerable to the kind of progress that vanishes in times of economic retrenchment. Moreover, the economic system has inherent limits which tie later comfort to early and continuous high earnings, which are not yet commonly the lot of black American workers. When competition for basic needs becomes keen in a stagnant or receding economy, and when, at the same time, the push for equality manifests itself in a closer proximity, the film of civility often disintegrates and disequilibrium occurs. Too often, such times are perilous; newly learned manners give way; and retrogression sets in, sometimes exacerbated by an indifferent or opportunistically neglectful government.

While the cutting edge of black Americans' progress

has been protest and intense effort has been an integral part of this process, such persistent and creative efforts have not achieved their goal. This lack of achievement is testimony to the power and influence of white majority resistance. This is not just because of their wealth, or because of the restrictions societies impose on minorities; it is also because black and white Americans still live out their lives in separate social worlds. That separateness is no accident; it is managed and contrived. Residential segregation is only the physical manifestation of the way American society as a whole is organized. Such living arrangements lead to separate communication networks that operate continuously to the advantage of the majority in maintaining their better-than-equal life chances. The majority controls public and private institutions and the management that controls access to employment and training opportunities.

The separate worlds of black and white Americans are only one manifestation of how racism has become institutionalized in America. Blacks disproportionately are denied employment regardless of merit; denied housing regardless of creditworthiness; and receive less from income security systems regardless of characteristics similar to white fellow citizens. Economic, social, and political disequilibrium foment institutionalized racism.

In the final analysis, the challenge of economic, social, and political dislocation in modern industrial

society calls for both a general public commitment as well as public-policy programs to attack inequality from a broader focus -- one that includes dimensions which address the pervasive and destructive features of ethnic and racial discrimination and class subordination.

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