

The Empire Strikes Back

Race and racism in 70s Britain

Centre for Contemporary
Cultural Studies



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Contents

Preface

- 1 The organic crisis of British capitalism and race: the experience of the seventies *John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones and Paul Gilroy*
- 2 Just plain common sense: the 'roots' of racism *Errol Lawrence*
- 3 In the abundance of water the fool is thirsty: sociology and black 'pathology' *Errol Lawrence*
- 4 Police and thieves *Paul Gilroy*
- 5 Schooling in Babylon *Hazel V. Carby*
- 6 White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood *Hazel V. Carby*
- 7 Gender, race and class: Asian women in resistance *Pratibha Parmar*
- 8 Steppin' out of Babylon - race, class and autonomy *Paul Gilroy*

Bibliography

Index

1 The organic crisis of British capitalism and race: the experience of the seventies

John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones
and Paul Gilroy

We are witnessing and passively acquiescing in a quiet but hardly bloodless revolution. The induction of general social disorder, uncensored crime and personal negligence have replaced more warlike conduct as the painless way to undermine the stability of the state.

JAMES ANDERTON

The combined assault on English identity and values is neither planned nor fully understood by its participants; its roots often lie deep in the unconscious. Its main force stems from the lack of coherent opposition. Too many people are frightened off by accusations: 'racialist', 'elitist' or simply 'old-fashioned', which make cowards of nearly all.

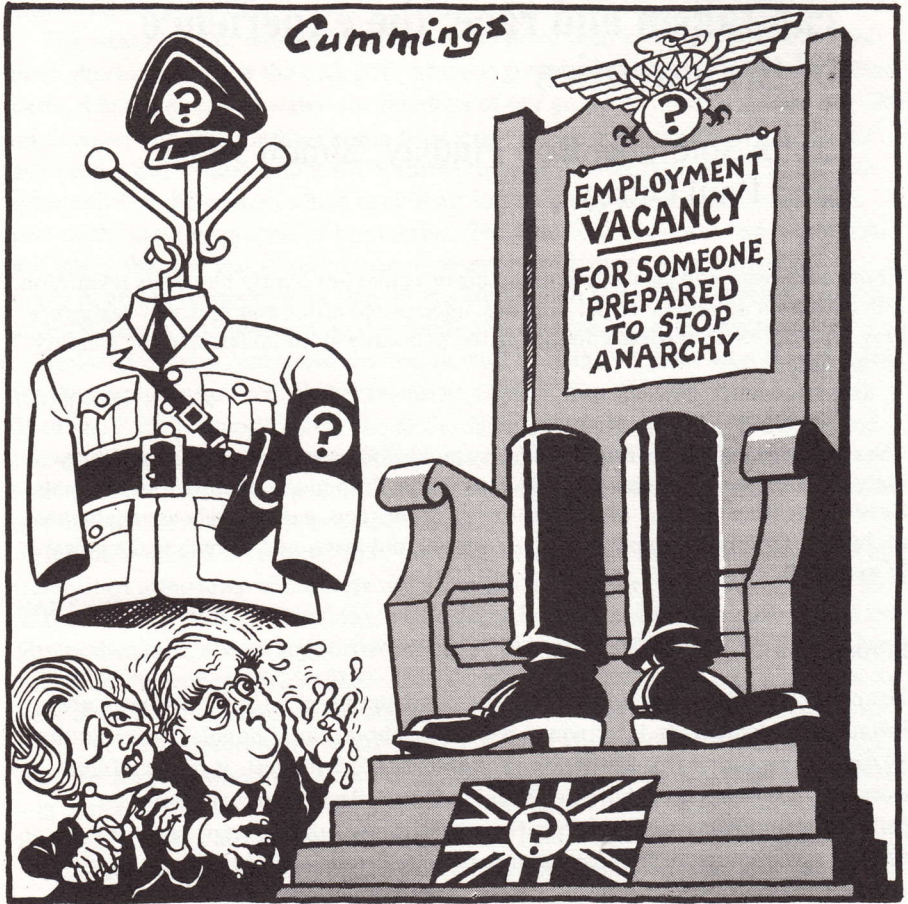
ALFRED SHERMAN

Introduction

The central theme of this book is that the construction of an authoritarian state in Britain is fundamentally intertwined with the elaboration of popular racism in the 1970s.¹ * The aim of this introductory chapter is more modest. It offers a framework for examining the relation of 'race' to British decline, and attempts a periodization of state racism during the seventies. We hope to provide a more detailed morphology of these transformations in future work.²

The parallel growth of repressive state structures and new racisms has to be located in a non-reductionist manner, within the dynamics of both the international crisis of the capitalist world economy, and the deep-seated structural crisis of the British social formation. This idea links the various chapters which follow. Some aspects of it have already been developed by others,³ but the argument is far from complete. What concerns us, therefore, is not to outline a theory of racist ideologies, but to scrutinize the political practices which developed around the issue of race during the seventies. We have chosen this approach for two basic reasons. First, we believe that it is not possible to understand the complex ways in which state racism works in British society without looking closely at the ways in which it is *reproduced* inside and outside state apparatuses. Second, we feel that it is not possible to see racism as a unitary fixed principle which remains the same in different historical conjunctures. Such a static view, which is common in many sociological approaches,

* Superior figures refer to the Notes and references which appear at the end of chapters.



"We'd better do something quick or WE'LL be unemployed..."

London Express Service

Source: *Daily Express*, 10 July 1981
Reproduced by permission of *Daily Express*

cannot explain how racism is a *contradictory* phenomenon which is constantly transformed, along with the wider political-economic structures and relations of the social formation.⁴

The function of this chapter is twofold – first, to introduce at a more general, and therefore theoretical level, themes which will be covered later on, and second, to explain the way in which certain key concepts have been used. In the second and third sections we shall attempt to analyse, albeit briefly and schematically, some of the main shifts in the relation between the various types of state intervention and the wider organic crisis. Although a number of recent Marxist studies have analysed the deep *economic* roots of the present crisis, we think that this is only part of the story. This is why we emphasize the *organic* nature of the crisis, meaning by this that it is the result of the combined effect of economic, political, ideological and cultural processes. A full historical account of these issues has not been attempted in this book, partly because we feel that this is one area where the recent revival of Marxist political economy has made a substantive contribution.⁵ Nevertheless, as a contribution to this debate, we will introduce some discussion of race around which a fuller historical account may be constructed. In the fourth and fifth sections we attempt to show how official thinking on violence, law and order, and race has been closely connected. We establish the origins of these interconnections in debates about violence which began in the sixties and argue that they have assumed a particularly sharp and pernicious form during the seventies. This is because race has increasingly become one of the means through which hegemonic relations are secured in a period of structural crisis management. Although as Chapters 2 and 8 emphasize, we see race as a means through which other relations are secured or experienced, this does not mean that we view it as operating merely as a mechanism to express essentially non-racial contradictions and struggles in racial terms. These expressive aspects must be recognized, but race must also be approached in its autonomous effectivity.

Racism as it exists and functions today cannot be treated simply from a sociological perspective: it has to be located historically and in terms of the wider structures and relations of British society. The historical roots of racist practices within the British state, the British dominant classes, and the 'British' working class, go deep and cannot be reduced to simple ideological phenomena. They have been conditioned, if not determined, by the historical development of colonial societies which was central to the reproduction of British imperialism.⁶ This process generated a specific type of 'nationalism' pertinent in the formation of British classes long before the 'immigration' issue became a central aspect of political discourse.⁷

We are arguing for a conception of racism which is historical rather than sociological. Just as Marxist accounts of the historical links between the specific political structures concentrated in the 'capitalist state' and the course of capitalist development have emphasized the dynamic nature of political relations, so we would argue that the links between racism and capitalist development are complex, and conditioned by the specific socio-political circumstances in which they function. We

want to emphasize that ethnic and racial forms of domination are shared not by *exogenous* mechanisms, but by the *endogenous* political economic forces which are dominant in the specific societies under study.⁸ It follows from this basic proposition that racial forms of domination do not develop in a linear fashion but are subject to breaks and discontinuities, particularly in periods of crisis which produce qualitative changes in all social relations.

This is how we see the period of the seventies in Britain.

The reorganization of the international division of labour and black workers in Britain

It is important to situate the question of racism in Britain today in a broader international context.⁹ Although these links are often ignored in studies of 'race relations' we refuse to study them at our peril. A recent report from the OECD is worth mentioning in this respect, since it points out in a very clear way the need for 'supporting policies' to be instituted to help out national states facing acute social problems. The message contained in this report was tellingly summarized in a *Financial Times* leader called 'Searching for consensus':

Not only the pre-summit row over U.S. interest rates, but also the eight days of street fighting in London, Liverpool and Manchester, have shown that consensus, whether on the international stage or at home, is becoming in dangerously short supply.¹⁰

It should be made clear that what happened in Britain over the period 1979-81 cannot be reduced to some immutable laws of history which apply to every society at every point of time. Such a reduction avoids difficult problems by attributing the type and direction of the changes occurring to an outside force, some inevitable determinant of all social relations. It is as methodologically distant from a critical Marxist account as the liberal-democratic pluralist framework which dominates the research on race relations in Britain.¹¹ In opposition to it, we suggest that while the specific forms of racism which exist in Britain today have been shaped by endogenous political-economic forces, they have also been transformed in ways which can only be understood as the result of the qualitative changes in Britain's international position over the last three decades.

Although the disarticulation in labour demand and supply in most European countries since 1973-4 has shown how fragile the position of migrant workers really is,¹² there is a much longer history of decline which underlies the experience of these workers in the period after 1945. Indeed, from a longer-term perspective 'the end of the migrant labour boom'¹³ does not look as surprising as it may have done a few years back.

The reproduction of racial and ethnic divisions has been a central feature of accumulation in the post-war period precisely because of the requirement that labour from the colonies and other peripheral economies be used to reorganize the

main industrial sectors of the advanced industrial economies. This is a proposition which has received strong support from a number of historical and sociological studies of specific societies,¹⁴ and from a theoretical perspective.¹⁵ But it has tended to be used as a mechanical model of explanation, with the assumption that it is applicable to every situation, and therefore very little advance has been made in substantiating *historically* the variable patterns of absorption and exclusion of migrant labour as they have taken shape in the main European societies. We still have no clear idea of how a 'historically-concrete and sociologically-specific account of distinctive racial aspects'¹⁶ can help us to develop a more critical perspective towards the analysis of racism and its modalities in late capitalism. The elements of such an approach exist in abstract formulations but the process of applying them to concrete situations in an experimental fashion has hardly begun.

Take, for example, recent advances in developing critical accounts of how, in their specific modalities, imperialism, the state and the restructuring of the labour process have shaped the articulation of the different levels of the accumulation process.¹⁷ A number of these approaches, notably those of the debate on the state, have been usefully applied to the study of migration and the processes through which the segmentation of the working class takes place. Yet no attempt has been made to link such studies to issues such as racial/ethnic divisions, which have tended to be consigned to the study of ideologies rather than political economy. Because of this neglect, the field of race has been dominated by narrow sociological studies, and no grounded attempts to locate it within a political economy framework have materialized.

The reorganization of the international division of labour has only belatedly been analysed from the perspective of its implications for migrant workers, although a number of general accounts of a shift from 'labour-import' to 'capital-export' strategies have been written.¹⁸ Such accounts have, however, not been balanced by a parallel attempt to draw out the mediations between the international environment and the operation of individual nation states. A few illuminating remarks have been made by Stuart Hall,¹⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein,²⁰ Sivanandan²¹ and Marios Nikolinakos.²² But their accounts have tended to remain at too general a level of abstraction to be directly applicable to the contemporary transformations of the politics of migration and ethnic/racial divisions. What they do suggest, however, is the need to apply criteria of historicity and of combined though uneven development to the study of ethnic/racial patterns of domination in late capitalism. Wallerstein, in his historical account of capitalist development, argues correctly that Marxists have too often failed to locate racial, national, or regional divisions materially, and consigned them all too simply to the ubiquitous superstructure. He himself proposes that such divisions are not *exogenous* but *endogenous* to the rearticulation of nation and class which capitalist development brought about:

The development of the capitalist world-economy has involved the creation of all the major institutions of the modern world: classes, ethnic/national groups,

households, and the 'state'. All of these structures postdate, not antedate, capitalism; all are a consequence, not cause. Furthermore, these various institutions in fact create each other. Classes, ethnic/national groups and households are defined by the state, and in turn create the state, shape the state and transform the state. It is a structured maelstrom of constant movement, whose parameters are measurable through the repetitive regularities, while the detailed constellations are always unique.²³

This conception of the interplay between the state and the reproduction of ethnic/racial differences is important because it situates the operation of the international context within the complex reality of the political and economic forces in each national formation. Moreover it firmly locates the capitalist state as a central mechanism for the articulation and reproduction of such divisions. It thus problematizes both narrow sociological models which take the nation state for granted, and reductionist frameworks which only 'explain' race through displacing it on to economic forces. In his work on mugging, and the position of race and class in the Caribbean, Stuart Hall has developed a similar account of how the reproduction of hegemony is not a stable process but is constantly reshaped and undermined by the operation of the wider socio-economic structures.²⁴

It would be against the line of thought developed in this book to think that these general arguments are directly applicable to the complex history of black labour in Britain, both before and after 1948. A number of mediations have to be introduced if we are to analyse how the patterns of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' of black workers have been transformed over time. Certainly a global view of labour migration is important if we are to break down the idea that racism is an 'aberrant epiphenomenon introducing a dysfunction into the regular social order'.²⁵ It is also a means by which one can counter what has been called a 'loss of historical memory' and understand the way in which the imperialisms of the past and present secure the transformation of racist practices. According to Stuart Hall the development of racism as a political force has to be understood *sui generis*:

It's not helpful to define racism as a 'natural' and permanent feature – either of all societies or indeed of a sort of universal 'human nature'. It's not a permanent human or social deposit which is simply waiting to be triggered off when the circumstances are right. It has no natural and universal law of development. It does not always assume the same shape. There have been many significantly different *racisms* – each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way, whatever common features it may appear to share with other social phenomena. Though it may draw on the cultural and ideological traces which are deposited in a society by previous historical phases, it always assumes specific forms which arise out of the present – not the past – conditions and organisation of society. . . . The indigenous racism of the 60s and 70s is significantly different, in form and effect, from the racism of the 'high' colonial period. It is a racism 'at home', not abroad. It is the racism not of a dominant but of a declining social formation.²⁶

This is an argument which will be developed at length, and with reference to concrete issues, later on. But from the perspective of this section it is important to emphasize the issue raised in the last sentence, about the *specificity* of the sixties and seventies – the period of decline and restructuring. In the context of black settlement in Britain this conceptualization allows us to locate the shaping of racial segmentation in the labour market, residential segregation, legislation to control immigration, and the policing of black working-class areas, as related aspects of organic crisis in the present period. Racisms structure different areas of social life. It is the development of new forms of racism in a phase of relative decline that a materialist analysis of the current situation must explain.

In broad terms, the post-1948 experience of black workers in Britain can be periodized according to three phases: (a) the period of immediate response by the state to the wave of black settlement, leading up to the control of immigration strategy promulgated by the 1962 Act; (b) the articulation of various policy packages to deal with the ‘problems’ which were seen as associated with a black presence, e.g. in education, the social services, employment, which dominated official thinking up till the early seventies; (c) a period of ‘crisis management’ which has operated since the early seventies and which prioritizes the option of control and containment of forms of black resistance against racial domination. These phases cannot be said to be discrete, and there is clearly a case to be made that there was a fair amount of overlap between them. Nonetheless, it seems useful to think of the post-war period as one of contradictory changes in the economic and political forms of racial domination, rather than as one of linear patterns of sociological integration.²⁷ This periodization is also helpful because it elucidates links with changes in other aspects of social life, and with the transformation of Britain’s economic position in the international arena.

During the latter two periods, as public concern has focused increasingly on the complex definition of social problems and the management of the crisis, we have seen quite fundamental redefinitions of the racial dimension of politics and a reshaping of the national and urban political economy. Although these processes must be given some degree of autonomy, it is still possible to look at the mechanisms which have secured an articulation between the different levels. In rejecting reductionist forms of analysis we do not believe that it is at the same time necessary to construct race as a *completely* autonomous factor, with no relation to other areas of social reality. We contend that the international context, the material reality of a ‘declining social formation’, and subsequent transformations in the role of the state, have contributed to the form and trajectory of racisms which have in turn, shaped these relations during the seventies. The following sections concentrate on these issues, and introduce the main themes which govern the concrete historical analyses presented in the rest of the book.

Racism and authoritarianism in the seventies

The period which this book covers cannot easily be abstracted from what went on

before or, more importantly, from the developments which we are witnessing in the first phase of the eighties. Yet there is little doubt that the seventies was a period of major changes in a number of areas, not least in the political field, which will have profound implications for the position of black people in British society. The struggles around the policies of the Conservative Government during 1971-4, the breakup of the 'unity' of the Labour Party during the late seventies, the series of expenditure cuts imposed by both Labour and Conservative administrations, the massive rise in unemployment since 1976, and the imposition of a neo-conservative politics since 1979, may all seem to be issues which are only tangentially related to race as such. But they all have to be looked at as part of the wider politico-economic environment which has conditioned the ways in which race has been experienced.²⁸ Take for example the role of the state in its various attempts to control vital areas of the economy, social welfare expenditure and the repressive apparatuses. All of these changes have been shaped by the uneven development of political and economic relations during the seventies, and also by changes in the balance of the state apparatuses themselves. Economic policies have been framed around the various stages of the developing organic crisis of accumulation which Britain experienced during this period. But they have also been shaped by a variety of political struggles and other factors which cannot be reduced to a simple reflection of the accumulation processes. The history of 'the cuts' in state expenditure, an uneven process which went through various stages throughout the seventies, illustrates these twin processes,²⁹ as does the articulation of legal mechanisms in the field of industrial relations to the management of organized labour.³⁰ We shall discuss later how both policing and the 'race-relations industry' have undergone a parallel process of restructuring.

Most late capitalist states have gone through a period which Poulantzas and others³¹ have defined in terms of two shifts: first, a progression from the interventionist *state* of the post-war period to the *technocratic state* of today, which not only acts to meet the needs of processes of production and reproduction but is a constituent element of these processes; and second, the articulation of more specific and organized forms of politically orchestrated domination in every field of social life, and the development in embryonic form of a *state authoritarianism*. This analysis is of course abstract and is not meant as an explanation of what has actually happened to every national state formation. As an analytical tool, however, it can be productive, at least in trying to make sense - from a theoretical perspective - of what has actually happened in Britain over the last decade, and although this approach has been criticized for being determinist, this criticism does not hold for all the applications of this model to concrete situations.³² Against the backdrop of the fundamental changes which the last two decades have wrought on the political realm, it is important to analyse such developments theoretically as well as historically. The first problem with using a term like *authoritarianism* is that it carries a conspiratorial connotation. Although it should be clear from the concrete analyses of specific state agencies which are contained in later chapters that such a viewpoint could not be further from our own, it may be a useful exercise to state our theoretical distance from it here.

We see the period of the seventies as one in which there was a rapid development of rational forms of direct state control as opposed to more indirect forms of social control. In other words, it is the articulation of an 'all-pervasive state regulation of social and economic processes',³³ rather than partial and intermittent forms of state intervention, which characterizes this period. This has been shown in relation to race-relations legislation by John Lea, who argues that even in the sixties there was a shift in emphasis from integration to social control.³⁴ In a wider theoretical and comparative framework this has also been substantiated by the work of Poulantzas, Offe and Habermas.³⁵ Offe argues that the current form of the state can best be characterized by the term the 'crises of crisis management':

Such a definition predisposes one to favour a processual concept of crisis. Crises, then, are developmental tendencies that can be confronted with 'counteracting tendencies', which means that the outcome of crises is quite unpredictable. Moreover, this processual form of crisis concept has the advantage of making it possible to relate the crisis-prone developmental tendencies to characteristics of the system; in other words, such developmental tendencies need not be seen as catastrophic events of contingent origin.³⁶

In addition, this model allows us to see the specific nature of the state's role today, which is by no means monolithic. Just as the economic crisis of the seventies has taken a unique form - stagflation - so state authoritarianism is a novel phenomenon in capitalist democracies (though as a tendency it has a long history), corresponding neither to the normal liberal-democratic state form, nor to fully exceptional forms like Fascism. Democracy has not been recomposed on a new basis, but neither has the crisis been resolved through the wholesale elimination of democracy. What we have seen, as Poulantzas puts it, is:

Intensified state control over every sphere of socio-economic life combined with radical decline of the institutions of political democracy and with draconian and multiform curtailment of so-called 'formal' liberties, whose reality is being discovered now that they are going overboard.³⁷

This schematization of the recent history of the state serves to demonstrate that as hegemony becomes contested, in its various sites of operation in civil society and state, power becomes more concentrated and centralized as the dominant bloc seeks to insulate itself from popular struggles. Since the state is structured by the capacity of one or several classes to realize their specific interests, it is to be expected that policies will not be uniform, but result from a sometimes contradictory series of decisions and non-decisions taken to meet perceived or real dangers.

Because political authority in late capitalism is structured so that it selects specific outcomes from an infinite number of possibilities, the state is able to

construct a hierarchy of 'political needs' that have to be dealt with. In the case of the restructuring of the social services and the nationalized industries in the period since 1971, what we have seen is not a uniform reduction of levels of expenditure but a hierarchical ordering of priorities in relation to the twin axes of 'reducing inflation' and 'increasing profitability'. Of course, this process has not taken place in a linear manner but has taken shape through a series of negotiations and retreats which have involved shifts and relocations in the formulation of 'needs'.

The state has not been totally successful in its attempt to harmonize contradictory social and economic processes. We can see this from its growing interventions in the processes by which crisis is *ideologically* constructed. The state which in 1945 presented itself in the guise of a more humane and socially responsible capitalism, has been pulled into the processes of crisis management. Ravaged by a crisis it cannot control, it is in a sense boxed in, between the inner limit of inadequate response and the outer limit of excessive response. The case of unemployment is a clear example of how this politicization of the state tends to overflow from the political system as such. The state responds to the issue of unemployment reactively rather than positively: it attempts to prevent a 'problem' from becoming too 'serious' rather than to actually produce solutions. This has produced fresh contradictions within the state itself:

Increasingly the state has appeared to absorb all the pressures and tensions of the economic and political class struggle into itself, and then been torn apart, by its conspicuous lack of success – progressively, the various crises take the form of a general crisis of the state as a whole, and rapidly reverberate upwards from their initial starting-points to the higher levels of the legal and political order itself.³⁸

This tendency for the state structures to become ensnared by the processes which they themselves set in motion has a long history – but what makes it so pervasive in the current situation in Britain is an overall historical legacy of economic failure and social disintegration. It is this relative paralysis of the state and the fracturing of mechanisms of social control which has produced a new articulation between the state and racism today. But before we examine this in detail, it is necessary to say something more about the ways in which the sharpening of the crisis, and its articulation to more precise and extensive forms of intervention, has been experienced at the ideological level.

We have argued that the current phase of restructuring the state has to be looked at against the background of the intractable and organic nature of the crisis facing British capital, and that the difficult relationship between class power, class conflict and political forms must be understood from a perspective on the international nature of the crisis and the specific ways in which it is reproduced in Britain. These observations point to the fact that the state cannot rely on some simple form of economic intervention to overcome it. This is confirmed by the ways in which neo-conservative ideologies are shifting the locus of crisis causation to the social and political sphere, and by the general inability to develop policies

which allow Britain to 'live within its means'.³⁹ Precisely because 'depression, inflation or other disasters can bring down a government',⁴⁰ the organizing principles underlying state intervention cannot ignore the need to maintain the conditions of accumulation, but neither can the state ignore for long the necessity to organize consent. The problem of how to negotiate a balance between economic needs and legitimacy has become the central issue of neo-conservative thinking. Thus according to Lord Hailsham:

The symptoms of our malaise may be economic, may show themselves in price rises, shortages and industrial disputes. But underlying the symptoms is a disease which has destroyed democracies in the past, and the causes of that disease are not economic. They are moral and political and constitutional, and in order to cure it we must reorganise them as such.⁴¹

The simplicity of this argument is a bit misleading: the medical metaphor not only betrays a fear of the depths of the British crisis, it also indicates a suspicion of the social elements which make up the society. The economic crisis is seen as a symptom with much deeper roots in the social fabric of the 'nation'. So, on the one hand, we have to look at the metaphors which make the crisis comprehensible and, on the other, the periodization of the elements of the crisis as such.

One of the threads which connects the progression from more secure forms of political regulation and technocratic control is the position of 'race' and the practices which it has generated in the experience of crisis. This is why we need to see how the politico-social field has been structured by shifts in material and ideological relations which have constructed race as a pertinent, political force. Precisely because the state has extended its areas of functioning to cover 'moral', 'political' and 'constitutional' issues, it has become possible to bring about a *racialization* of state policies in all areas of social life. We shall see that labour market policy is not the only area in which the issue of race has taken on a central role in planning.

The restructuring of the state is not disconnected from the contradictions immanent in and between structures, neither does it have a predictable outcome. It is part of an ongoing struggle to impose cohesion in the face of contestation. The substantial transformations of the state during the seventies are not simply an outcome of the changes in the economy. To say this would be to confuse long-term tendencies with the immediate causes of change within the state. So it is important to see that the crisis which Britain faced during the seventies, and faces today, is a crisis of hegemony, an 'organic crisis' to use Gramsci's terminology.⁴² Its content is not reducible to a cyclic economic crisis in the traditional sense, or a 'crisis of the political system' in the narrow sense. It consists rather of profound changes in the balance of forces, in the class struggle and in the configuration of the class alliances. It is visible in the emergence of new social forces and a specific representation of these changes in the form of crisis management *within* the state itself. This is demonstrated by recent work on the reorganization of state policies during the seventies which⁴³ discusses the complex ways in which the recognition of

Britain as a 'declining social formation' has affected the development of official responses to real and perceived problems. It is important to understand, therefore, that in terms of both its ideological construction and its material functioning, the state itself is becoming a factor in the reproduction of the organic crisis. Consequently, it is difficult to substantiate the idea that the state can act as a liberal-democratic arbitrator sorting out problems and providing remedies for dysfunctions. This is clearest in the field of economic interventions, and the protracted battle to restructure the relation between the state and the economy which has taken place over the last two decades. It can also be viewed in the areas of education, urban and social policy.⁴⁴ Here too the state is increasingly having to cope with a situation which requires a transformation of its own powers to deal with changes in society as a whole: it is in this sense that it is wrong to see the incipient form of authoritarianism which is taking shape as a 'strong state', since it is the outcome of a dialectical interplay between changes in the political field as well.

Following arguments developed by Poulantzas, Jessop and Foucault,⁴⁵ we see the seventies as a period during which the following tendencies become manifest (though it should be emphasized that they have by no means reached maturity). First, there has been a rapid concentration of political power in the executive coupled with confusion over the roles of executive, legislative and judicial powers. This has entailed constant intrastate wrangling over the competence of apparatuses associated with these power centres. Second, the decline in the role of bourgeois political parties and the ideological basis on which these parties were founded has accelerated. Third, the political freedoms which have been associated with the ideology of liberal democracy have been severely qualified. This has required shifts in the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state, but also a reorganization of what Foucault has called the 'micro-physiology of power' or symbolic force. As Poulantzas argues:

We know that the process corresponds to a considerable redeployment of the *legal-police* network, which, in a new form, duplicates, props up, supports and extends the capillary diffusion of the circuits of social control: the power of the police, preliminary administrative investigations, control by the various measures of assistance and surveillance, interpenetration of these circuits and the police apparatus . . . centralisation of files and intelligence thanks to advances in electronics, duplication of the official police by private surveillance networks. In a certain sense, this involves a lifting of the traditional boundaries between the normal and the abnormal (i.e. supposedly 'anti-social' elements); thus, control is shifted from the criminal act to the crime-inducing situation, from the pathological case to the pathogenic surroundings, in such a way that each citizen becomes, as it were, an a priori suspect or a potential criminal.⁴⁶

These transformations cannot be documented in detail here. But it is sufficient in this context to point out that the history of policing and legal relations in the seventies substantiates the claims made by Poulantzas and Foucault. We have

witnessed not a simple extension of repression, but a recomposition of relations of power at all levels of society.⁴⁷ Although the more overt forms of 'social control' are orchestrated by the police, it is important to note that the whole of society is constituted as a field of social relations structured in dominance. What were once tendencies have taken institutional form during the last few years.

Political debates over the July 1981 uprising have introduced a new range of possible outcomes which demand reassessment of the balance between social control and reform. However, given the objectives of this book we shall not analyse this question further in the abstract. Instead we shall attempt to show the mechanisms through which the presence of black people in Britain has become constructed ideologically as a national problem, thereby rendering them subject to specific and intense forms of control and repression. These themes must be related to the ways in which the developing organic crisis has been expressed as, and defined by, a 'crisis of race relations'. The power of racial symbols and signification has had a profound impact on how the 'crisis of society' is perceived.

Political violence, law and order and the 'enemy within'

The construction of race as a 'problem' has not come about by evolutionary means. It has emerged from a whole series of events: struggles, breaks, and discontinuities⁴⁸ which have characterized the development of organic crisis. Before we move on to the specific ways in which race articulates or does not articulate to specific phases of the crisis, we must comment on the ideological axis of these struggles - law and order.

In a recent discussion of the policing of the working-class city Phil Cohen argued that: 'The current crisis in the policing of the working class city has become a crisis of legitimacy for the bourgeois public realm as a whole.'⁴⁹ The experience of the various debates over the growth of a violent society, the breakdown of law and order, and the erosion of trust in legitimate order demonstrate this.

Since the sixties, these debates have functioned less as a way of actually changing the situation, i.e. by getting rid of the problem, than as a way of negotiating a more fundamental contradiction: the apprehension of crisis itself.⁵⁰ The concern with violence and law and order is easier to understand if we avoid a simple social control model, and see political and legal institutions as arenas in which the balance between social classes is constructed.⁵¹ It would be a mistake to interpret popular concern with violence and law as a simple diversionary measure designed to secure legitimacy by creating a 'false consciousness'. As we have argued above, the development of common-sense images of social phenomena is best understood from a historical perspective, since they are always discontinuous and contradictory. This is because we treat ideology as a material relation which is both determined by and reacts upon the wider social relations. We therefore distance ourselves from manipulative conceptions of ideological relations and emphasize the need to understand the links between 'popular' concerns and the everyday experience of reality. This is how we see the function of ideologies of race and law in the context of the

present crisis.⁵² The detailed account of the changes in police practices over the last decade has been left for a later chapter, but a few preliminary remarks are necessary at this stage.

The sixties provided a complex of new issues which has rightly led people to see them as a watershed in the development of British society.⁵³ It is striking how in this period 'violence', 'law and order' and 'permissiveness' became central features of the discourses of all political parties and of the media, eventually being articulated in common sense as threats to 'British' society.⁵⁴

In his discussion of the role of the media in the representation of violence Chibnal periodizes the sixties in the following way:

The notion of the 'violent society' is to be seen to result from the convergence of a criminal violence theme, originating in the mid-sixties, and a political violence theme which developed a few years later.⁵⁵

The construction of these themes in political discourse is only partly reducible to the role of the media; we must relate them to transformations in the wider politico-economic framework. In this perspective, the sixties represent what Gramsci called a condensation of contradictions at all levels of society. This placed violence, permissiveness and later race on the agenda of popular politics. This was also the period in which the post-war consensus over the role of the state in economic and social policies began to break down. It presents a clear example of a crisis of hegemonic relations at the political level.⁵⁶ As Stuart Hall and his colleagues have shown, although the sixties are sometimes represented as the high points of the 'permissive society', they are also a period which saw important changes leading to greater separation of decision-making from popular control, and a shift towards an authoritarian response to so-called 'threats' to society. 'Permissiveness' in this sense was a double-edged development, which contained the seeds of authoritarianism even within a liberal discourse. It was one aspect of a new popular politics which *defined* both 'the people' and their desires: 'permissiveness' was not what 'the people' wanted.

The period of Wilsonism from 1964 to 1970 is perhaps the most interesting from this angle, since it is also during these years that race became a core theme in wider political discourse. The 'Wilson experiment', with its detailed plans for transforming the economy, developing further social provisions, and bringing Britain through a new technological revolution, has always been difficult terrain for political historians of the left.⁵⁷ It was, after all, a period which the left had welcomed as the dawn of a new era in 1964, and which ended in a dismal defeat in the 1970 election. It seemed to represent the end of the road for the post-war model of social-democratic change, and yet, ironically, it confirmed the fact that the basic dilemmas which Britain faced could not be overcome by the implementation of technocratic models from the top. The Heath Government learned this bitter lesson when in 1971-3 it attempted to run the country on the basis of a concerted attack on the 'power' of the trade unions.⁵⁸ But it was Wilson's earlier failures which introduced the notion that ours was not simply an economic

problem, but a deep malaise which had taken root in the whole of society.

The idea that 'the nation' is diseased and slowly destroying itself is not new; it has been a recurrent theme in British political discourse. What was new in the sixties was that the threat came to be conceptualized as the 'enemy within' rather than a model of subversion from without.⁵⁹ This shift had profound implications for the way black people were perceived, and it reverberated right across the political field. The period 1964-70 witnessed three developments which had brought it about: (a) a growth in forms of extra-parliamentary organizations, particularly among the young, which were outside the traditional channels of political participation, e.g. the student movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and on a wider scale the development of mass-based youth subcultures;⁶⁰ (b) the development of rank-and-file movements within the trade unions which took up a more combative position in both traditional trade union struggles and in wider political issues;⁶¹ (c) from 1969 the situation in Northern Ireland developed in the direction of a fundamental polarization between the Catholic and Protestant communities, and the British army was used directly as a mechanism of control.⁵² Each of these developments had its own specific impact. At a more general level, the categories of crime, sexuality and youth were the raw materials from which the image of the violent society⁶³ was constructed. These three issues can be used to organize thinking about the transformations that took place in the sixties, and which were to condition how the theme of 'enemies within' would develop in the seventies.

The threat posed to the nation by trade union 'militants'⁶⁴ emerged into popular politics during the sixties. Its growing resonance reflects the development of class struggle during this period, particularly when compared to the long boom from 1948 to 1963. More than that, it embodies the decline of the hegemonic political institutions of social democracy, which had achieved a relative class peace during the immediate post-war period. Political representation of the Seamen's Strike of 1966 and the struggles over the reform of trade union legislation during 1968-9 are two clear cases of this process, which is also visible in numerous localized cases.⁶⁵ The general trend is clear:

Time and again, in the succeeding decade, the class struggle was to be reconstructed, ideologically, in these terms: the conspiracy against the nations; holding the nation to ransom; the stark contrast between the subversive clique and the innocent worker and his family - the seducers and the seduced.⁶⁶

The unspoken meaning of this discourse on trade unions was that they had come to exercise too much 'power' and, in doing so, to threaten the legitimacy of the state itself. These ideas governed the electoral campaigns of 1970 and 1974 ('who rules the country?'). They have also been a crucial element in the appeal of neo-conservative ideologies in the late seventies. However, terms such as 'militants' and 'agitators' have become vehicles for a more generalized phobia about who the 'enemies of society' actually are.

The fundamental move away from the social-democratic consensus was not limited

to the field of working-class struggles. It involved strategic shifts at a number of other levels, including the role of parliamentary institutions, the bureaucracy, the police, and the local authorities. The breakup of the post-war coalition demanded a wholesale rethinking of the function of democratic institutions. This was urged on by the fear that 'too much' democracy could lead to an overload of demands on a state already weakened by both the period of relative economic instability, and the disturbances experienced in the late sixties. In a double sense the years leading up to the seventies were a time of transition:

Politically, in Britain, as elsewhere, the 1968-69 period represents a watershed: the whole fulcrum of society turns, and the country enters, not a temporary and passing rupture, but a continuous and prolonged state of semi-siege. Its meaning and causes, then, and its consequences since, have been neither fully reckoned with, nor liquidated. The political polarisation which it precipitated fractured society into two camps: authority and its 'enemies'.⁶⁷

This 'prolonged state of semi-siege' extended far beyond the shores of Britain, and indeed in the period 1968-70 it took on a more virulent form in countries such as France and Italy. But the oppositions were the same, as the well-known report of the Trilateral Commission on *The Crisis of Democracy* makes clear:

Everywhere one discovers a complete dissociation between the decision-making system, dominated by traditional and often quite rhetorical political debate, and the implementation system, which is the preserve of administrative systems quite often centralised and strong, but usually even more irresponsible when they are centralised and strong. This dissociation is the main cause of political alienation among citizens. It continually nourishes utopian dreams and radical postures and reinforces opposition to the state.⁶⁸

Despite numerous appeals to the good old 'common sense' which the British are supposed to believe in, the fear that political violence (i.e. opposition to the state) would be a reality for some time to come was shared by the major political forces. Their responses differed, but the fear remained the same.

The beginning of the seventies saw not only the self-recognition of a society firmly caught in the grip of 'violence', but general fears of a further slide into lawlessness. The stark choice was between authority and disorder, and there were calls for immediate action. The prevention of further violence, and the comforting realization that even within the existing political structures the limits to change were not firmly set, became the guiding principles of a moral backlash against 'liberalism' and later on against the 'socialism' of the Labour Party.⁶⁹ The crisis of the British way of life came to be seen as pervading the economy, social welfare, the schools, the prisons, on the streets, and above all the family. Everywhere there were moles at work. Commenting on 'the red badge of revolution that is creeping

across Britain' after the Angry Brigade trial, the *Evening Standard* for once gave form to the hitherto amorphous threat:

These guerrillas are the violent activists of a revolution comprising workers, students, trade unionists, homosexuals, unemployed and women striving for liberation. They are all angry. . . . Whenever you see a demonstration, whenever you see a queue for strike pay, every public library with a good stock of socialist literature – anywhere would be a good place to look. In short there is no telling where they are.⁷⁰

This siege mentality shaped the seventies, in much the same way that the fear of the future had helped to construct the image of violent society in the sixties. Even as the crisis took shape, a new range of political possibilities had been created by the realization that *these* enemies could not be countered by traditional methods. A new range of strategies and of political outcomes developed with the awareness that the consensus which had been taken for granted for so long had broken down.

During this period, transformations in the *form* of state power were secured through a political discourse which emphasized the drift of British society into 'violence' and 'disorder' as a way of securing and reordering the relative balance between the ideological and repressive roles of the state. This is particularly true of the ways in which the policing role came to be defined but it was also a clear tendency in the fields of industrial relations, social welfare, and race relations.⁷¹ Both the Heath Government from 1971–4, and the period of the Labour Government (1974–9) saw a popularization of these themes. Though there was simultaneously a marked increase in the level of racist violence against black communities – particularly in the form of 'Paki-bashing' – the 'violent society' and the consequent threat to the existing order of things was not redefined by these crimes. The issue of the day became 'political violence' rather than the 'criminal violence' of the train robbers and Kray twins. There was a concerted attempt to counteract the tendency for political action to take a 'violent' form.

In his study of these developments, *Britain in Agony*, Richard Clutterbuck provides a clear statement of this position:

The 1970s were agonising years for the British people, who felt frustrated, humiliated and insecure. By British standards they were exceptionally violent years. Economic performance was dismal. British society, instead of drawing together as it has more often done in past crises, seemed to become more cantankerous, less generous and less compassionate.⁷²

From an explicit social control perspective, Clutterbuck moves on to explore the relation of merely criminal violence to its subversive counterpart:

Political violence should be treated more seriously than criminal violence, not only because it has a more arrogant motivation, but also because it affects the lives of

more of the community. . . . Crimes of violence have increased alarmingly and, for robbery with violence and rape, the courts will send a man to jail for several years. But some magistrates seem to regard political violence as more morally forgivable than violence for personal gain.⁷³

He attempts to rationalize a *perceived* change in the 'social basis' of violence during the seventies.⁷⁴ This required commensurate shifts in official discourse and in the legal-police apparatuses which proceed to counter the danger of 'violence' being used to change the nature of society. Clutterbuck's notion of political violence is predictably elastic. It includes various forms of dissent which, by their very nature, involve physical contact with symbols of authority, but which are not intrinsically violent nor illegal, for example picketing, demonstrations etc. Hall *et al.* have shown in their study of 'mugging'⁷⁵ that changes in the use of language can be indicative of wider shifts in the balance of power in society. The passing of notions like the 'violent society' and 'the breakdown of law and order' into common parlance reflected transformations in the form of authority, political participation and social relations which undermined the legitimacy of the state. This process has taken place while the system has been under severe pressure to 'deliver the goods'.⁷⁶ These shifts, more than anything else, conditioned the development of the crisis of political authority which Britain experienced in the seventies.

The battle lines between 'society' and its 'enemies' were more clearly drawn by the end of the seventies than they had been for decades. This was because responses to the crisis had taken a specific course, with hegemony being secured on the basis of ever more loose definitions of the 'enemy within'. The cause of the crisis was constructed through ideas about externality and criminality which supported a view of blacks as an 'outside' force, an alien *malaise* afflicting British society.

It was a short step from seeking to explain the crisis through the unions, to linking the unions with violence and terrorism.⁷⁷ By the mid-seventies it was possible to present blacks as the main danger to society. Anything could be blamed, so long as it was not capitalism itself. This is a common feature of all legitimization crises:

Official discourse on law and order confronts legitimization deficits and seeks discursively to redeem them by denial of their material genesis. Such denial establishes an absence in the discourse. This absence, the Other, is the silence of a world constituted by social relations, the reality of which cannot be appropriated by a mode of normative argument which speaks to and from its own self-image via an idealised conception of justice.⁷⁸

The processes by which this 'denial' came to operate by racial differentiation constitute the main concerns of this book. We aim to show how the material conditions which have reorganized state racism over the seventies are deeply rooted in the *present*, and gain power from the ways in which the organic crisis of British capitalism is being experienced. This is the argument we want to outline in the last section of this chapter.

Making sense of the crisis: the centrality of race

In the wake of the election of the Conservative Government in 1979 an important official debate has taken place about the position of black people in Britain.⁷⁹ In *Hansard* one can find many humorous, and some not so humorous, attempts to produce watertight definitions of exactly who is 'British' and who 'is not'. It is important that we are clear what such debates are about: they are an aspect of a much broader attempt to bring some kind of order into a society which is widely perceived to be falling apart. They are part of a struggle to 'make sense' of a conjuncture where all that is good and wholesome seems to be under threat.⁸⁰ It should be no surprise that the management of 'good race relations' has assumed a central and expressive role in the context of this deep-seated crisis. For what is seen to be at stake in the arena of race is the survival of the existing order of things. Alfred Sherman, a key figure among right-wing ideologists, has articulated these fears:

The imposition of mass immigration from backward alien cultures is just one symptom of this self-destructive urge reflected in the assault on patriotism, the family – both as a conjugal and economic unit – the Christian religion in public life and schools, traditional morality, in matters of sex, honesty, public display, and respect for the law – in short, all that is English and wholesome.⁸¹

The convergence of these fears around the idea of a threatening black presence (always codified as 'immigration') cannot be reduced to economic factors. Economic decline preceded popular acknowledgement of crisis, and the expulsion of blacks as a solution to national problems has a long history in British political thought. There is a lot to learn about how material conditions in urban areas have been affected by the crisis, how youth have been affected by unemployment, etc. But none of these areas can properly be understood if we do not acknowledge the ways in which 'race' is used to construct explanations and therefore consent, where crisis management is the goal of popular politics.

There is no one-to-one correspondence between the 'crisis of race' and the economic crisis. Yet race is always present, whether the issue under discussion is the growth of unemployment, the role of the police in inner-city areas, or the recent 'riots' in a number of major cities. The complexity of this signification demonstrates that the history of racism in British society cannot be grasped by a simple formulaic reduction of races to some immutable economic base. There are many political/historical factors which condition the relation of race to the current crisis; all need careful study. The specific circumstances which have generated a new racism are not the result of autonomous racial conflicts any more than they are the outcome of some abstract laws of capitalist development. The contextualization of racism today demands analysis of both the racial and non-racial elements which constitute the complex totality within which it functions:

At the economic level, it is clear that race must be given its distinctive and 'relatively autonomous' effectivity, as a distinctive feature. This does not mean that the economic is sufficient to found an explanation of how these relations concretely function. One needs to know how different racial and ethnic groups were inserted historically, and the relations which have tended to erode and transform, or to preserve these distinctions through time – not simply as residues and traces of previous modes, but as active structuring principles of the present society. Racial categories alone will not provide or explain these.⁸²

The new morphology of racism which has developed in the seventies needs to be located against the background of these social relations, which have been drastically reorganized by overall conditions of crisis. In every field of social life there is talk of a crisis, whether it be a temporary fiscal problem or a much deeper crisis of confidence in the existing order. As far as 'solutions'⁸³ are concerned, there is a tendency for *ad hoc* interventions to be proposed, only to be superseded by new 'problems'. The crisis is insoluble. In this context, race relations have become the central aspect of attempts to orchestrate politically – and therefore to manage – the effects of organic crisis. We must locate the pertinence of 'race' within this *hegemonic* struggle and assess its articulation by and with the processes which secure economic, ideological and political power and domination. A few tentative propositions follow as to how this should proceed.

The first point is that the term 'articulation' needs to be used precisely: as a concept which means that race *joins together* the various elements of the organic crisis and the ways in which they are experienced, but also that it *gives expression* at the political and ideological levels to specific forms of control aimed at black people.⁸⁴ The meshing of these two meanings can be most clearly seen in relation to issues of rising unemployment, cuts in welfare expenditure, the crisis of the local state, and the reorganization of the forces of law and order. It can be seen at work in the common-sense neo-conservatism of Sir Keith Joseph, who has been known to explain the relative decline of the inner cities and some regions 'through' race.⁸⁵ Popular representation of the recent 'riots' in Bristol, Brixton and July 1981 shows how racial and therefore cultural conflict systematizes and 'explains' both what is happening, and what might happen in the future.⁸⁶ In any discussion of unemployment, for example, race 'slips' in, whereas ten years ago the issue would have been ignored. Keith Middlemas, a critical Tory thinker, expresses some of these linkages very clearly:

What will Britain look like after even three years of 2 million unemployed? Divisions, which for half a century governments have tried to abolish will show nakedly, between the two geographical Englands, with Scotland, Wales and North Ireland on the periphery, like the Italian Mezzogiorno, between those in work and unemployed; between the mature and the young, between white and black.⁸⁷

The seamless location of 'white and black' among a wide variety of other divisions shows the way in which the crisis of the seventies was lived through race. By

situating race amidst the new realities of structural change and economic uncertainty that characterize the present conjuncture, it also provides a glimpse of the meaning of what we have called the new racism.

The quotation from *Middlemas* reflects one of the main strands of thinking about race in the seventies. It places a number of seemingly 'non-racial' phenomena on a par with race; with the implication that a solution to the problem of the divisions between white and black must be sought in the wholesale transformation of the wider conditions which produce and maintain consensus. The other strand in the dominant approach to 'race' in the seventies has been to present the 'race problem' as comprised of the black communities themselves. The earlier quotation from Alfred Sherman is a good example of how this argument operates, as is the following from the Nationality Bill debate:

On the issues dealt with by the Bill we are in the grip of forces which, because of the large influx of immigrants into Britain, we now seem unable to control. Racial violence is occurring with increasing frequency. The British people are sick at heart about it all. We badly need honest and forthright politicians to express their feelings without fear of being condemned on moral grounds.⁸⁵

This image of forces beyond the control of ordinary 'British people' is a recurrent theme in neo-conservative racist 'theory', particularly since it fits in with the common-sense notion that 'enemies within' - subversive moles - are undermining the structures of society. It connects with common-sense ideas about *why* racial 'problems' arise by identifying 'racial violence' as a result of an illegitimate alien presence. The unseen 'illegal' immigrants are central to this political discourse. Their very illegality ensures that the British resentment which perpetrates violence on 'Pakis' is scarcely more than rough justice provoked by foreign interlopers. In the context of mass unemployment, deindustrialization, and major outbreaks of social violence, old-style 'Powellism' was not an adequate mode through which the crisis could be rendered intelligible. The late seventies saw a transformation of racist ideology which took account of these new realities, and provided a more adequate though nonetheless racist interpretation of what was happening. Those reworkings have taken place along two main lines.

First, there has been a consistent attempt to pin down the dangers posed by specific groups of the black population: the illegals, the young, the militants, the unemployed, and even the white traitors who identify with an 'alien culture'.⁸⁹ This involves recognition of the 'deep social problems' revealed by black poverty, as well as a concerted attempt to control the antisocial disruption which is considered to be a consequence of the encounter between 'deprivation' and pathological 'immigrant' cultures. Second, a reworking of the concepts of 'nation' and 'citizen' has taken place which aims to deny even the possibility that black people can share the native population's attachment to the national culture - God, Queen and country. This presents the common-sense logic of repatriation or 're-emigration':

The United Kingdom is the national homeland of the English, Scots, Welsh, Ulstermen. . . . They wish to survive as an identifiable national entity . . . they have been willing to work, suffer and die for it. By contrast, for the jet-age migrants, Britain is simply a haven of convenience where they acquire rights without national obligation.⁹⁰

In crisis conditions, these ideas accord with a mythology which has very deep roots in English popular culture. The essence of this culture has, after all, depended on a kind of historical forgetfulness which reworks the whole meaning of 'Britishness' in powerful images of the purity of nation, family and way of life, now jeopardized by the alien, external wedge. For this culture, even the imagery of the 'enemy within' has a particular resonance in terms of race. Subversion is un-British. The overall context of a society rapidly becoming conscious of its own shortcomings, of an entropy of political thought, and the consequent need to 'pull together' in order to survive made the issue of race an important signifier of the crisis. This may be clearer now that the post-Bristol 'riots' have placed the issues of race and political violence explicitly on the political agenda. But the roots of the inferential interconnections go much deeper than the recent events. For over a decade now, race has been situated, primarily through the discourse of Powellism, as a specific social problem which has been imposed from *outside*.⁹¹ As the bastard children of Empire set up 'camps' in the heartlands of the mother country, a degree of *internalization* has been forced on the reluctant Briton. The blacks are now a home-grown problem. They are in Britain but not of Britain.

Since the first signs of disturbances in major inner-city black areas, the response of the state has been (a) to prepare the police forces to deal with 'the fire next time', and (b) to inject fiscal resources into the depressed areas to help with specific social problems by initiating schemes to deal with what are seen as the 'causes' of increasing violence and a breakdown of law and order.

This is not crude monolithic state strategy, and these two elements of a response have not always been successfully integrated, nor been applied equally in every case of locally centred 'race' disturbances. At a macro-level, however, one should not underestimate the extent to which the preventive/ameliorative measures are being backed by a steady strengthening of security forces. Where admitted, this has been presented as an insurance measure, rather than the frontline of defence. But, since the 1979 police riot in Southall, it should be clear that this insurance policy is flexible if not tactical. A leading political commentator on *The Sunday Times* recently assessed the risks of the present situation in the following way:

What are the risks to British society? It is fanciful, no doubt, to envisage brown shirts and red brigades coming out on the streets. It may be tendentious to predict that Britain might join these nations whose most successful members must protect themselves and their population behind barbed-wire and armed guards. All this is no doubt a worst-possible scenario. But it is one the government should be thinking about.⁹²

The reality of the 'worst-possible scenario' is precisely what has concerned the state over the last few years. Of course there is still an important gap between Powellism, the extreme right, and state racism – but with the concept of 'humane repatriation' looming ever more centrally in official thinking on race it need not be conspiratorial to talk of a shift in the balance of state responses from amelioration to repression. At the level of everyday practices the oppressive aspects of the state's role have been felt throughout the seventies: by black youth, by black workers engaged in industrial disputes, and at the territorial level by whole black communities.⁹³ What has happened over the last period, particularly since 1976, is a qualitative strengthening of these repressive measures. This has been demonstrated time and time again by numerous official and academic studies,⁹⁴ as well as in the anger of blacks themselves.

These moves can only partially be explained by the tendency for racism to show a close relation to the tempo of crisis management. Race must be given its own autonomous effectivity in any account of the present; it makes every black person a priori a suspect, a potential criminal, a potential agitator. During the series of 'riots' from early 1980 to July 1981 the fixing of a number of 'causes' to these events within official explanations, located race as one variable among others, including social, economic and local issues.⁹⁵ Yet within the popular consciousness, and not just the media, the issue of race came to occupy the central role in common-sense accounts of *why* the riots have taken place in specific areas. The press coverage of the events took a number of forms, some of which will be looked at more carefully later on in the book. But there can be no denying that race, even at the level of metaphor, was a crucial variable in explanations of the Bristol, Brixton and the July 1981 'riots'.⁹⁶

When Enoch Powell asked in a House of Commons debate 'in which town or city does the honourable Gentleman (Mr Whitelaw) expect the next pitched battle against the police to be fought?', he did not need to make the race dimension overt for everybody to understand what he meant.⁹⁷ Coverage by the *Daily Mail*, *Sun*, *Daily Express* and *Daily Telegraph* during July 1981 needs no elaboration. Even the more 'liberal' views of *The Financial Times* and *Guardian* place race supreme among numbers of other factors as the common denominator of the riots.⁹⁸ *The Financial Times*, for example, under the banner headline 'Outbreak of an alien disease', reflected on the events in a typical manner:

Like an epidemic of some alien disease, to which the body politic has no immunity, street riots have erupted in different parts of England during the past ten days. . . . It is in a way all the more disturbing that there are so many conflicting explanations of the past week's violence. Riots in different towns seem to have been sparked off by rather different factors: in Southall by racial fear and racial hatred; in Liverpool perhaps by a tradition of lawlessness and rivalry between police and idle, frustrated youngsters; in Manchester apparently by imitation of their Liverpool neighbours; and perhaps worst of all, in parts of London, by what appears to be pure criminality and greed. For if there are so many forces which are capable of sending hundreds of

youths onto the rampage – youths of all races, and living in relatively prosperous areas such as London, not just suffering from desperate deprivation – then the problem of restoring order and respect for law may be all the greater.⁹⁹

It is worth taking note that this ‘alien disease’ theme is shared by openly racist political groups, which have given it an extra edge by greater emphasis on the cure – repatriation.¹⁰⁰ However, even when the social problems of unemployed or poor inner-city people are discussed rather than the ‘immigration problem’ *per se*, racial signification and explanations gain the upper hand. It should be understood that there is no necessary contradiction between the institutions of the welfare state, and the intensification of social control required by crisis management. The details of the police response to this situation will be discussed later, but it is useful to outline the state’s political responses to the post-Bristol situation.

After the Southall events of April 1979, the crisis management approach to race has taken two forms. One, generally associated with the Labour Party, the Liberals and a section of the Conservative Party, prioritizes ‘social engineering’ experiments aimed at improving the urban environment as well as strengthening law and order; a second, which is upheld by the majority of the Conservatives and the fringes of the political right, holds that law and order must come first, and that any reforms should proceed through the due process of law.¹⁰¹ In the House of Commons debate on Civil Disturbances held on 16 July 1981 the basic features of these approaches were presented in some detail.

It is important to avoid a binary counter-position where at the level of political strategies there is either a conspiratorial attempt to control black people or a policy of social reform.¹⁰² For throughout the sixties and seventies race-relations legislation has been neither completely ‘progressive’ nor ‘socially controlling’. It reflected both a reform and a control element, which attempted to secure the ‘problem’ of race as part of an overall political agenda. It is in this complex, and ultimately contradictory, way that the response to the growing activism and self-organization of black people is likely to develop over the next decade. As such it is likely that it will also be subject to contradictory outcomes.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, it is important to look seriously at the *popular* alternative which is being advocated by the right in Parliament and by racist organizations on the streets; that is, the issue of repatriation. The discourse of repatriation is rooted in the reality of the present crisis, even though some elements of its ideological construction have been carried over from the past. It has been restructured and reorganized by the materiality of the employment crisis, by the thematization of violence, and by the rapid decline of inner-city areas. The pivot of this rearticulation is the location of ‘racial problems’ as historical invariables to the extent that remaking history itself becomes a method of ideologically constructing the need for repatriation. The ‘facts’ are taken as given because the last two decades are supposed to have ‘proved’ that as the black population grew, violence and disorder became the order of the day. Traces of black life have been removed from the British past to ensure that blacks are not part of the British future.

It is precisely the weight of this history which allows Powell to penetrate the walls of official thinking even when his 'solutions' are specifically rejected. After the July 1981 riots he spoke of the inevitability of 'civil war' if the black population rose in line with his predictions.¹⁰⁴ In rebutting both the Conservative and Labour strategies he voiced an alternative view of causation:

The Government and the House will not be serving the country unless they address themselves to the ultimate reality, the ultimate cause, the *sine qua non*, without which what we have witnessed and are witnessing could not and would not have happened. . . . [Mr Hattersley] gave three causes – poverty, unemployment and deprivation. Are we seriously saying that so long as there is poverty, unemployment and deprivation, our cities will be torn to pieces, that the police in them will be the objects of attack and that we shall destroy our own environment? Of course not. Everyone knows that, although those conditions do exist, there is a factor – the factor which the people concerned perfectly well know, understand and apprehend, and which unless it can be dealt with – unless the fateful inevitability, the inexorable doubling and trebling, of that element of a population can be avoided – their worst fears will be fulfilled.¹⁰⁵

We have quoted this argument at length because it is important to note the ways in which even when race is not mentioned in so many words, it is the 'element' which cements common-sense notions of why violence is increasing, and why the existing order is under stress. Powell's idea of an 'ultimate cause' intersects with popular racist notions at the level of everyday experience and becomes a central means of explaining why the country is 'going to the dogs'.

Repatriation is not a political strategy that can be put into large-scale practice at this particular time, not least because blacks will not countenance it. As the task of policing and managing black working-class areas becomes even more difficult, calls for a final solution to the 'problem' of race are likely to increase. Sections of the Conservative Party have already debated the appropriate financial inducement. But the outcome of these struggles cannot be judged from here. Options for state responses to the 'alienation of black youth' supposedly revealed by 'the riots' are already taking shape. It would clearly be false to argue that the state will respond simply through either greater repression or ameliorative measures of social control. There is a strong element of both these approaches in proposals being considered in policy-making channels.¹⁰⁶ The unsteady terrain on which the police have been operating has already led to a reworking of their tactics in inner-city areas.¹⁰⁷ No doubt, in time, we shall see the development of policies for all areas of social life which aim to control and contain the 'social' problems which government policies have done much to reproduce.¹⁰⁸ Piecemeal responses should not be seen as the guiding principle of all the state's actions in this field. It is incorrect to maintain a modified pluralist framework, whereby each of these responses is seen as liable to negotiation on its own terms, e.g. the current attempts to reform policing and the development of 'new' policies for the inner-city areas. The transformations in the role of the state are structural, and should not be confused with

the *ad hoc* policy alternatives which appear in the political arena. The fundamental reworking of state policies which took place in the sixties, and accelerated during the seventies, secured a new balance of hegemonic relations, a tendency which we have called *authoritarian statism*. It is foolish to think of the state as some kind of immobile object which suddenly awakens to the riots, and could be swayed either way by sound arguments. Such a situation, if it has ever existed, is not the one which confronts us today. We are faced with a state that is in the process of fundamental change, which cannot be reduced to a conscious will, and which is the outcome of complex determinations at all levels of British society.

As shown in later chapters (particularly Chapters 2 and 8) the restructuring and strengthening of state racism in the current period has been periodized and punctuated by the operation of racist practices and by the contradictory effects of crisis management. The aftermath of the recent 'riots' undoubtedly represents a watershed in the development of state racism, but we should avoid the temptation to think about it in outdated categories. The response of the state to the perceived and real 'dangers' of this period will take novel forms which cannot be understood through a simple dichotomy of reform/repression. We are likely to see policies which display a fluid combination of preventive and repressive options, which will be moved one way or the other according to the balance of forces. The accelerated pace of development in the 'race-relations industry' over the past few years is therefore a sign of things to come, as is the intensified policing of working-class black areas. This is why the choices of resistance and struggle which black communities are making must not be fitted into narrow models of political action which assume that liberal-democratic forms of government are the only forms possible in late capitalism. They must be seen for what they are: a response which has been conditioned by popular racism, state racism and the intensity of the racist attacks against black communities in many inner-city areas.¹⁰⁹

The everyday struggles of blacks against the racism of capitalist command are the ground on which the state and its agencies will attempt to develop mechanisms of containment and counter-insurgency. They also supply 'facts' from which new elements of racist ideologies will be constructed, at the level of official discourse and on the streets. They raise issues which have a wider importance than the immediate scope of the struggles themselves. As Stuart Hall remarked, in his account of the recent riots:

The police-black front is the front line: policing and the drift into authoritarian social control are front-line issues. Nevertheless, responding to the riots is not a matter of defending civil rights or of 'being nice to black people'. Rioting and civil disorder grow out of and reflect back on what is happening to the working class as a whole and to society as the crisis cuts into the latter at all levels. The riots are only the outward, if dramatic, symptoms of this inner unravelling of our social, political and community life.¹¹⁰

In this wider, deeply social sense, the long-term implications of recent events are

likely to be profound. They show that the articulation of race to the organic crisis has resulted in important contradictions for the state, which will sharpen as the crisis involves more and more groups in the front line. The problems this poses for the state are being assessed within various state agencies, with the help of the race-relations industry. The left has hardly attempted to sift the complex issues involved, let alone think about them. Yet without carefully working through the issue of race and crisis, it is inconceivable that they will come up with an adequate response to the development of repressive policies, and popular authoritarianism.

Conclusion: stepping into the eighties

Whole histories remain to be written about the experience of black workers in this country. In this book we aim to produce some elements of that history, which we hope will form a basis for further research. Because of our deep dissatisfaction with the dominant approaches to 'race-relations theory', which tend to concentrate on either narrow empirical studies or descriptive interview surveys, we have attempted to locate our own work within a broader theoretical framework which derives much from recent Marxist discussions on the nature of contemporary capitalism. We are aware that this approach has its own problems, but we feel it to be a necessary step in the current context of debates on racism.

Broadly speaking, there are four conclusions which can be drawn from our discussion so far, some of which will be elaborated in the chapters which follow. The first step in breaking down the dominant conceptions of 'race relations' is to locate histories of racism firmly within a framework which establishes that it is reproduced by endogenous political-economic forces, not by exogenous mechanisms. Second, it is important to see that the changes in the *form* of racism during the seventies were forged in the crucible of the struggles waged by black people against the patterns of domination imposed by the manner of their incorporation into the relations of production, as well as by the practices involved in their political and cultural forms of resistance. Third, we have argued that although the ways in which the 'crisis of race relations' has been conceptualized cannot be separated from the general crisis of hegemony which has afflicted British capitalism, it would be wrong for analysis to stop there. We need to analyse race in terms of its *specific* forms at *different* periods of time in order to see how it articulates - or not - with other social relations. Fourth, we argue that in a context of emerging authoritarianism and a strengthening of repressive agencies, there is little hope that reformist strategies will fundamentally improve the material conditions which confront black people in their daily struggle to survive in British society.

The full development of these arguments is beyond the scope of this book, but we do believe that individual chapters have developed them to a sufficiently high level to sponsor new areas of concrete investigation and to illuminate a number of important phenomena articulated to the structural position of black people in the dominant social relations. We would not claim to have 'finished' this discussion, but it does seem to us that the questions we raise need to be considered more

seriously than they have been in the past. If this discussion takes place we will have served a useful role in sensitizing others to an understanding of both the deep roots of racism in Britain, and the need to move beyond simple reform in order to overcome racism. This is why in the midst of the depressing story we tell, we feel able to maintain some optimism about what can be achieved if the oppressed organize to change the conditions of their daily existence. The experience of the black masses during the decade of the seventies has alerted us to what underlies the superficial appearance of the British state: namely that the normal processes of political authority, when they cannot proceed by co-operation, proceed through confrontation, and, at a higher level, through the state's orchestration and legitimation of repression. This is a very dangerous time, and those who are interested in transforming the material conditions of contemporary capitalism must not mistake a situation of crisis for the collapse of capitalist relations of domination. As Friedrich Pollock once remarked, albeit in a different historical context: 'What is coming to an end is not capitalism but its liberal phase'.¹¹¹ This may be a more fruitful way of looking at current realities than the rather dubious attempts to develop modes of political action which are premised on the continued existence of a liberal-democratic state.

Acknowledgments

In writing this chapter we have incurred a number of debts which we would like to acknowledge. Apart from helpful discussions over a number of months with other members of the group, we have benefited especially from detailed discussion with Robin Wilson and Errol Lawrence. Robin Wilson co-operated with us in the early stages of writing this chapter. Outside the group we would like to thank the following for various types of support and help: Martin Barker, Ann Walters and Mike Cowen. In addition the late Neil Williamson was instrumental in helping us develop some ideas expressed in the chapter. Christine Dunn and Rose Goodwin were helpful in typing successive drafts with patience. In addition our common enthusiasm for West Bromwich Albion was important in showing us the value of good teamwork.

Given the nature of recent political developments it is important to note that the final version of this chapter was completed in July 1981.

Notes and references

- 1 On the links between racism and authoritarianism the classic texts are those of Stuart Hall and his colleagues, in addition to the work represented by the journal *Race and Class*. But see the following for a general outline of these positions: S. Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis* (Macmillan 1978); S. Hall, 'The law's out of order', *Guardian*, 5 January 1980; A. Sivanandan, 'Race, class and the state', *Race and Class*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1976), pp. 347-68.
- 2 We envisage this work developing along a number of axes, which are difficult to specify at this stage. But, in particular we would like to look further at the

historical background of black workers in Britain, the complex morphology of legal-administrative organization of race relations, and the development of common-sense racism in the context of crisis management.

- 3 For a summary presentation of the basic aspects of Hall's approach see: 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance', in UNESCO, *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris 1980). In addition a useful intervention in this debate has been made by G. Carchedi in his: 'Authority and foreign labour: some notes on a late capitalist form of capital accumulation and state intervention', *Studies in Political Economy*, no. 2 (Autumn 1979), pp. 37-74.
- 4 Here we should not be seen as arguing that there is a one-to-one correspondence between the transformation of racism and the changes in the wider economic framework. But we would wish to maintain that there is a relationship between the two and that this involves relations of determination. In this sense we would take issue with the approach popularized by Hindess and Hirst which relies on a notion of necessary non-correspondence. In the field of race this is associated with the work of John Gabriel and Gideon Ben-Tovim which we discuss in Chapter 7. An outline of this approach can be found in their article on: 'Marxism and the concept of racism', *Economy and Society*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1978), pp. 118-54.
- 5 An outline of these debates can be found in: John Urry, *The Anatomy of Capitalist Societies: The Economy, Civil Society and The State* (Macmillan 1981). But for more critical accounts see: E. Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State* (New Left Books 1978); B. Jessop, 'Recent theories of the capitalist state', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 1 (1977), pp. 353-73; H. Gintis and S. Bowles, 'Structure and practice in the labour theory of value', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1981), pp. 1-26.
- 6 These issues are usefully discussed by: K. Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath* (The Hague 1978); P. S. Gupta, *Imperialism and The British Labour Movement* (Macmillan 1975); W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonisation of the British Empire* (Oxford University Press 1977).
- 7 See: R. Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (Allen Lane 1973). For a longer historical perspective see: D. A. Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians* (Leicester University Press 1978).
- 8 For a detailed analysis of this argument see: Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies', particularly pp. 336 ff.
- 9 This is an argument developed in greater detail in: J. Solomos, 'Urban social policies, migrant workers and political authority', in J. Solomos (ed.), *Migrant Workers in Metropolitan Cities: A European Perspective* (North Holland Press 1982).
- 10 *The Financial Times*, 11 July 1981.
- 11 In the field of race the pluralist framework tends to be an underlying theme in most debates rather than a conscious theoretical effort. But precisely because it remains unspoken and relies on common-sense notions of the relations of power in our society its tendency is to foster debates about the role of policy changes which take the possibility of reform for granted. In this sense it fits into the traditional pluralist power framework, albeit with a racial

- dimension. For criticisms of the pluralist paradigm see: R. Benewick, 'Politics without ideology: the perimeters of pluralism', in R. Benewick *et al.* (eds.), *Knowledge and Belief in Politics* (Allen and Unwin 1973); W. Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (D. C. Heath 1974).
- 12 See: Carchedi, *passim*; S. Castles, 'Structural racism: ethnic minorities in Western Europe', paper prepared for World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism, 1980.
- 13 R. Cohen, 'The end to the migrant labour boom', *Newsletter of International Labour Studies*, no. 10 (April 1981).
- 14 Two of the main studies are: S. Castles and G. Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (Oxford University Press 1973); G. Freeman, *Immigrant Labour and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies* (Princeton University Press 1979).
- 15 M. Nikolinakos, 'Notes towards a general theory of migration in late capitalism', *Race and Class*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1975), pp. 5-17; M. Castells, 'Immigrant workers and class struggles in advanced capitalism: the West European experience', in R. Cohen *et al.* (eds.), *Peasants and Proletarians* (Monthly Review Press 1979).
- 16 Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance', p. 336.
- 17 All of these debates are very complex and it is not feasible to take account of them in detail within the terms of reference of this book. But in specific cases we have referred to these debates to support our own analysis of events during the seventies. A useful attempt to apply some of these theoretical advances historically can be found in: M. Reich, *Racial Inequality: A Political-Economic Analysis* (Princeton University Press 1981).
- 18 For a summary presentation of these arguments see: F. Froebel *et al.*, 'The world market for labour and the world market for industrial sites', *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1978), pp. 843-58; A. Sivanandan, 'Imperialism and disorganic development in the silicon age', *Race and Class*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1979), pp. 111-26.
- 19 Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance', *passim*.
- 20 I. Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (Cambridge University Press 1979), particularly Part 2.
- 21 A. Sivanandan, 'Imperialism and disorganic development in the silicon age'.
- 22 M. Nikolinakos, 'The new dimensions in the employment of foreign workers' (Berlin 1975).
- 23 I. Wallerstein, 'The state in the institutional vortex of the capitalist world economy', unpublished paper 1980, pp. 3-4.
- 24 S. Hall, 'Pluralism, race and class in Caribbean society', in UNESCO, *Race and Class in Post-Colonial Society* (Paris 1977).
- 25 D. Lecourt, 'Marxism as a critique of sociological theories', in UNESCO, *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris 1980), p. 284.
- 26 S. Hall, 'Racism and reaction', in Commission for Racial Equality, *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain* (CRE 1978), p. 26. The notion that the racism of the seventies is historically specific is important to our own understanding of what we have come to see as the 'new racism'. We would also wish to place special emphasis on Hall's remarks concerning links between the present and cultural and ideological traces from the past. This forms the subject matter

of part of the next chapter.

- 27 This is a view which we attempt to substantiate in a number of chapters in this book and one which needs much more work done on it. This is because in general the development of a race-relations sociology during the last decade has relied on notions of society which are liable to sociological investigative techniques, thus pushing historical and structural issues into the background. Where historical and political analyses do make an entry into the debates they do so either in a minor way or they tend to be narrow case studies of specific issues. Although we do not claim to have redressed this situation, it is important to stress that this is the area on which much more serious and critical theoretical work remains to be done.
- 28 S. Hall, 'The whites of their eyes: racist ideologies and the media', in G. Bridges and R. Brunt (eds.), *Silver Linings: Some Strategies for the Eighties* (Lawrence and Wishart 1981).
- 29 I. Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State* (Macmillan 1979).
- 30 On the history of state attempts to orchestrate trade union reform in the sixties and seventies see: L. Panitch, *Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy: The Labour Party, The Trade Unions and Incomes Policy 1965-1974* (Cambridge 1976); L. Panitch, 'Profits and politics: labour and the crisis of British capitalism', *Politics and Society*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1977), pp. 477-507.
- 31 N. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (New Left Books 1978), especially Chapters 1 and 2; C. Offe, 'The separation of form and content in liberal democratic politics', *Studies in Political Economy*, no. 3 (Spring 1980), pp. 5-16.
- 32 This is the reply we would make to the arguments put forward by Paul Hirst and Barry Hindess, and taken up by a number of other writers. See: B. Hindess, 'Democracy and the limitations of parliamentary democracy in Britain', *Politics and Power*, no. 1 (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980); M. Prior (ed.), *The Popular and the Political: Essays on Socialism in the 1980s* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1981).
- 33 C. Offe, 'Political authority and class structures: an analysis of late capitalist societies', *International Journal of Sociology*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1972), p. 78.
- 34 J. Lea, 'The contradictions of the sixties race relations legislation', in National Deviancy Conference (ed.), *Permissiveness and Control* (Macmillan 1980).
- 35 A good summary of the shifts in modes of social control, using the theoretical framework of Habermas and Offe in particular, can be found in: J. Keane, 'The legacy of political economy', *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1978).

The impact of Poulantzas's work is clear in the work of Adam Przeworski who provides an illuminating account of the transformations of the state in his: 'Material bases of consent: economics and politics in a hegemonic system', *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 1 (1980). See also: V. Burris, 'The structuralist influence in Marxist theory and research', *Insurgent Sociologist*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1979), pp. 4-17.

- 36 C. Offe, 'Crises of crisis management: elements of a political crisis theory', *International Journal of Sociology*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1976), p. 32.

37 Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, pp. 203–4.

38 Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis*, p. 214.

39 The articulation of these themes over the period of the seventies and the construction of the Thatcher strategy are closely related. Some of the important contributions to the debate about the post-1974 experience, and also the post-1979 experience, of austerity policies are discussed in: C. Leys, 'Neo-conservatism and the organic crisis in Britain', *Studies in Political Economy*, no. 4 (Autumn 1980), pp. 41–64; L. Panitch, 'Trade unions and the capitalist state', *New Left Review*, no. 125 (1981), pp. 21–44.

40 This is an argument which was developed at length in: C. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (Basic Books 1977). More recently it has been debated and further developed by: G. Therborn, 'Enterprises, markets and states', unpublished paper 1975; C. Offe, 'The attribution of political status to interest groups', in S. Berger (ed.), *Interest Groups in Western Europe* (Cambridge University Press 1980).

41 As reported in *The Times*, 3 December 1973.

42 Gramsci develops this concept in the *Prison Notebooks* and applies it in a number of historical contexts, particularly in relation to Italy. For a full discussion of the origins, development and usefulness of this concept see: C. Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and The State* (Lawrence and Wishart 1980), especially Chapters 2, 3, and 6.

43 On the overall issue of the reorganization of the state in Britain see: N. Johnson, 'Quangos and the structure of government', *Public Administrations*, vol. 57 (Winter 1979), pp. 379–96; D. Coates, 'Politicians and the Sorcerer: the problems of governing with capitalism in crisis', in A. King (ed.), *Why is Britain Becoming Harder to Govern?* (BBC Publications 1976). The comparative aspects of this process are analysed in: D. Coombes and S. A. Walkland (eds.), *Parliaments and Economic Affairs* (Heinemann 1980).

44 On these links see: M. Castells, 'Urban crisis, political process and urban theory', in *City, Class and Power* (Macmillan 1978).

45 Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*; B. Jessop, 'Capitalism and democracy: the best possible shell?', in (ed.) G. Littlejohn *et al.*, *Power and the State* (Macmillan 1978); M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (Harvester 1980).

46 Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, pp. 186–7.

47 This is an argument which has been taken up by Alain Touraine in his: *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press 1981). In this work Touraine attempts to look at the implications of these shifts for the development of social movements within the contemporary context and thereby attempts to widen the issue to cover oppositional forces.

48 These breaks are dealt with in somewhat more detail in the later chapters, but it may be useful to comment briefly on the whole notion of discontinuous histories. This way of thinking through the complex levels of determination involved in any specific historical conjuncture has developed as a measured response to economism within Marxist theory. But it cannot as yet be said to have been fully articulated, since in some contexts it has tended to be used simply as another way of saying that reality is 'complex'. To

leave the issue at this level would be to accept a more or less relativist approach, which cannot tell us very much about actual mechanisms of determination. What we have attempted in this book is to use the idea of discontinuous histories in a concrete manner to explain how race articulates to the organic nature of the crisis.

- 49 P. Cohen, 'Policing the working class city', in National Deviancy Conference/Conference of Socialist Economists, *Capitalism and the Rule of Law* (Hutchinson 1979), p. 136.
- 50 For an account of this crisis and the ways it was experienced at the level of official thinking see: S. Blank, 'Britain: the politics of foreign economic policy, the domestic economy and the problem of pluralist stagnation', *International Organisation*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1977), pp. 673-722; B. Jessop, 'Corporatism, parliamentarism and social democracy', in P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch, *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation* (Sage 1979).
- 51 On the issue of negotiation in relation to moral and legal relations see: P. Corrigan, 'On moral regulation: some preliminary remarks', *Sociological Review*, vol. 29, no. 2 (1981), pp. 313-37. On the wider issue of the collective negotiations between capital and labour see: C. Offe and H. Wessenthal, 'Two logics of collective action: theoretical notes on social class and organisational form', in M. Zetlin (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 1 (Jai Press 1980).
- 52 This is the argument which Paul Gilroy develops in the chapter on policing, where he attempts to show the kind of options which the repressive apparatuses are opening up for handling working-class black communities.
- 53 For a concise account of the transformations which led to this conception of the sixties see: S. Hall, 'Reform and the legislation of consent', in National Deviancy Conference, *Permissiveness and Control* (Macmillan 1980).
- 54 Detailed accounts of these processes can be found in: Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis*, especially Chapters 8 and 9. But see in addition: S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Martin Robertson 1980).
- 55 S. Chibnall, *Law and Order News* (Tavistock 1977), p. 75.
- 56 The best account of this breakdown can be found in: B. Jessop, 'The transformation of the state in postwar Britain', in R. Scase (ed.), *The State in Western Europe* (Macmillan 1980).
- 57 These issues are discussed in some detail in: J. Solomos, 'The political economy of energy policy in Britain', unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, February 1980, especially Chapters 3 and 4.
- 58 On the chronology of the Heath experiment see: A. Barnett, 'Class struggle and the Heath Government', *New Left Review*, no. 77 (1973), pp. 3-41.
- 59 The orchestration of this shift has to be located firmly within the state itself because it is within its own apparatuses that the technocratic world view of a Britain rejuvenated by the application of 'new technologies' arose and took shape. In addition, however, one must bear in mind that during this period the legitimacy of social democracy had yet to be seriously brought under question.
- 60 See the various accounts of youth and other subcultures that are contained

- in: S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hutchinson 1976); J. Clarke *et al.* (eds.), *Working Class Culture* (Hutchinson 1979).
- 61 For a comparative account of these transformations in the role of unions see: C. Crouch and A. Pizzorno (eds.), *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe Since 1968*, 2 volumes (Macmillan 1978); S. Berger, 'Politics and antipolitics in Western Europe in the seventies', *Daedalus* (Winter 1979), pp. 27-50.
- 62 These developments are carefully analysed in: P. Bew *et al.*, *The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72: Political Forces and Social Classes* (Manchester University Press 1979).
- 63 See: Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis, passim*; Chibnall, *Law and Order News, passim*. Also see the discussion in Chapter 2.
- 64 In a number of specific contexts the themes of trade union 'militants' and 'race' have been connected, notably in the struggles at Grunwick and Imperial Typewriters. But clearly both these themes have operated in an autonomous manner as well, even when the specific ways in which they have been presented have produced wider resonances. What is likely to happen, however, as levels of black unemployment reach a higher peak is that the industrial struggles waged by black workers in defence of jobs will take on a more general form.
- 65 For a careful account of all these struggles see: Panitch, *Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy*.
- 66 Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis*, p. 238.
- 67 *ibid.*, p. 238.
- 68 The Trilateral Commission, *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York University Press 1975).
- 69 Jessop, 'Corporatism, parliamentarism and social democracy'.
- 70 As quoted by: T. Bunyan, *The History and Practice of the Political Police in Britain* (J. Friedmann 1976), p. 47.
- 71 These points are developed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 8.
- 72 R. Clutterback, *Britain in Agony* (Penguin 1978), p. 19.
- 73 *ibid.*, p. 311.
- 74 The treatment of 'violence' in relation to recent 'race riots' is an example of this trend, and we discuss the specific meaning of these developments in Chapters 2 and 6.
- 75 Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis*, Chapters 8, 9, and 10.
- 76 For a discussion of the general tendency of late capitalist states to 'deliver the goods' and the ensuing political contradictions see: A. Melucci, 'The new social movements: a theoretical approach', *Social Science Information*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1980).
- 77 This accusation was made by Margaret Thatcher in the build-up to the 1979 election when she said: 'In their muddled but different ways the vandals on the picket lines and the muggers in our streets have got the same confused message - "we want our demands met or else" and "get out of our way, give us your handbag or else"'. Speech in Birmingham, 19 April 1979.
- 78 F. Burton and P. Carlen, *Official Discourse: On Discourse Analysis, Government Publications, Ideology and the State* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1979), p. 138.

- 79 It is important to note however that the terms of the debate have not remained constant since the 1979 election, and that the process of the criminalization of black youth has progressed much further now.
- 80 In this sense the argument of Burton and Carlen quoted above is too narrow. What should be looked at is not really *official discourse* but *social discourse*. The latter term is more amenable to the study of how ideologies change over time.
- 81 A. Sherman, 'Britain's urge to self-destruction', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 September 1979.
- 82 Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance', p. 339.
- 83 In fact the relationship between 'problems' and 'solutions' is not as discrete as we have made it sound. For example the implementation of policies through state agencies often results in the articulation of new problems, or at least new aspects of old issues. This is because the actual mechanisms and manner in which specific policies are implemented feeds back into the definition of what issues policy-makers should concentrate upon. This is why in much of contemporary neo-conservative thinking we find a simple reversal of the Keynesian formula: the state is now the cause of capitalism's problems and not its saviour. The reasons why such views develop do not concern us here, but it is important to emphasize that these notions are not abstract ideological shifts but outcomes of material practices which question whether the state can actually solve the problems which it aims to do. Such a 'suspicion' of the state has very wide implications, which have hardly begun to be considered.
- 84 This formulation of articulation owes much to the discussion in: Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance'.
- 85 An example of this was his speech reported in the *Guardian* on 24 January 1980 under the headline 'Joseph blames decline on immigrants'.
- 86 A wider discussion of the role of the media as definer of specific discourses about race, and particularly black youth, can be found in Chapter 2.
- 87 K. Middlemas, 'Unemployment: the past and future of a political problem', in B. Crick (ed.), *Unemployment* (Macmillan 1981), p. 151. This line of thinking is close to some strands of 'wet' or 'traditional' Conservative thinking, and Middlemas himself is a reputable historian of the British state and its development in the twentieth century. Moreover he is in the intellectual vanguard of attempts to reconnect the Conservative Government to its 'roots', by which is meant the idea of an all-class alliance. Although it is by no means a popular view in terms of current Conservative policies it is by no means out of order to think that it may become more popular at a future moment of failure.
- 88 *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)*, 4 June 1981, Column 1180, Mr Ivor Stanbrook. He goes on to refute the charge that the Bill is racist by arguing that it is simply an accident of history that it affects black people: 'Most people in Britain happen to be white-skinned. Most of those who would like to become British citizens happen to be black-skinned'.
- 89 The issue of 'identity' in this sense was a clear theme in the various debates on the 1981 Nationality Bill: *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)*, 3 June 1981, Columns 931-90. The interventions by Enoch Powell and the reply

- by John Tilley are particularly interesting. See also: R. Behrens and J. Edmonds, 'Kippers, kittens and kipper boxes: Conservative populists and race relations', *The Political Quarterly*, no. 52 (1981), pp. 342-7.
- 90 A. Sherman, 'Britain is not Asia's fiancée', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 1979.
- 91 The classic studies by Paul Foot are still a good starting-point for situating this issue: *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Penguin 1965); *The Rise of Enoch Powell* (Penguin 1969). More generally see: G. Ben-Tovim and J. Gabriel, 'The politics of race in Britain; 1962 to 1979', *Sage Race Relations Abstracts*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1979), pp. 1-56.
- 92 M. Crawford, 'Sir Geoffrey's great gamble', *The Sunday Times*, 30 March 1980.
- 93 The extension of forms of control at the territorial level has been a common theme in many working-class communities (see Cohen, 'Policing the working class city'), but the racialization of these forms of control has also been extensive over the sixties and seventies. See: Institute of Race Relations, *Police Against Black People* (IRR 1979); for the early developments see: D. Humphrey, *Police Power and Black People* (Panther 1972).
- 94 The case of Lambeth has been one which has been most extensively studied. See for example: London Borough of Lambeth, *Final Report of the Working Party into Police/Community Relations in Lambeth* (London Borough of Lambeth 1981). But we try to show in this book the pattern is both much more extensive and deeper than is generally appreciated.
- 95 This is clear for example in the way in which policies aimed at 'helping' black youth have been formulated. See for example: Commission for Racial Equality, *Ethnic Minority Youth Unemployment* (CRE 1980). L. Wood, 'Where work is a black white issue', *Financial Times*, 23 March 1981. But the exact fixing of the various determinants will be discussed later when we consider the development of specific policy alternatives.
- 96 The usage of 'race' in explanations of the 'riots' should not be seen in isolation from the wider usage of racially based common-sense ideas about why the crisis of the seventies took specific forms. Even when discussion of the riots has been limited to local cases the national issues have fed into these debates. See for example the coverage of the Brixton riots in the *South London Press* from 14 April to 16 April 1981.
- 97 *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)*, 6 July 1981, Column 26. In this debate Powell's views received strong support from a number of back-bench Conservative MPs although they were generally dismissed by the Cabinet, who adopted a mixture of a social problems approach with assurances of strong support for the police. In his speech in this same debate for example Whitelaw expressed both a call to study the 'social reasons' for the violence and the need to act firmly against 'mindless violence in our society'.
- 98 This is not a book which aims to provide a specific account of the 'riots' since the Bristol events of 1980, but we have attempted to look at some of the connections between these events and the issues which concern us. Nevertheless a specific analytical account of the themes developed in the media would be a useful example of how the articulation between 'race' and 'crisis' is transformed when political legitimacy is questioned and forms of

resistance grow on the streets. This theme will be discussed in detail by Bob Findlay in his Ph. D thesis on 'Race and the media: a redefinition of the problematic'.

99 *The Financial Times*, 11 July 1981.

100 The history of the various right-wing movements and their attempts to link up the themes of race with repatriation is summarized in: M. Billing and A. Bell, 'Fascist parties in post-war Britain', *Sage Race Relations Abstracts*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1980), pp. 1-30. The various right-wing movements are also analysed on a regular basis in the anti-Fascist magazine *Searchlight*. But the resonance of the repatriation theme has a much wider resonance than the right-wing movements, as is shown in: P. Gilroy, 'Managing the "underclass": a further note on the sociology of race relations in Britain', *Race and Class*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1980), pp. 47-62.

101 This division parallels the wider policy divisions within the Conservative Party about the orientation it should take to counter the dangers of 'greater state control' and 'lawlessness': contradictory divisions whose ideological roots have a long and complex history.

102 The inadequacy of pure control theories which ignore the historical basis of contradictions has been demonstrated in: G. Stedman Jones, 'Class expression versus social control? A critique of recent trends in the social history of "Leisure"', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 4 (1977), pp. 162-70.

103 Some of these contradictions are analysed in: G. John, *In the Service of Black Youth*, National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC 1981).

104 *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)*, 16 July 1981, Column 1414. The exact phrase which Powell used in the Debate on Civil Disturbances was: 'Inner London becoming ungovernable or violence which could only effectually be described as civil war'. He saw this as the inevitable result of the growth of the black population in the inner-city areas.

105 *House of Commons Debates (Hansard)*, 16 July 1981, Column 1416.

196 In the area of youth unemployment, for example, the ameliorative actions of the state have to some extent taken precedence in the immediate response of the state. But at the everyday level the role of the police remains strong and there is a clear attempt to strengthen the technical forms available to the police.

107 See two clear reports about the Brixton events and the July 'riots' which summarize and critically situate the development of police practices: 'Brixton: new facts emerge', *State Research Bulletin*, no. 24 (June-July 1981); 'The July riots', *State Research Bulletin*, no. 25 (August-September 1981); 'Riot control: a new direction?', *State Research Bulletin*, no. 25 (August-September 1981).

108 This is already clear in the aftermath of the massive rise in unemployment from 1979 to 1981 and the cuts in social expenditure which have been put into practice. The attempt to control the 'social problems' aspect of these policies is one which will take a number of forms, including a reconstruction of the possible options of resistance which are open to oppositional groups. For an elaboration of this theme from a theoretical perspective see: C. Offe, 'The separation of form and content in liberal democratic politics.

109 We would emphasize in this context that the question is not one which can

be thought of in narrow class terms, with race added on as an extra dimension to unchanged fixed concepts. Rather it is important (a) to rethink the basis and unity of the concepts themselves and (b) to conceptualize the politics organized around black communities in their own autonomy. This is also a debate which goes beyond race as such, since it has implications for how we think through the history of working-class movements in general, and their complex articulation at all levels of society. For discussions of these issues see: A. Prezworski, 'Proletariat into a class: the process of class formation from Karl Kautsky's *The Class Struggle* to recent controversies', *Politics and Society*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1977), pp. 343-402; S. Bowles and H. Gintis, 'The Marxian theory of value and heterogeneous labour: a critique and reformulation', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1977).

110 S. Hall, 'Summer in the city', *New Socialist*, no. 1 (September-October 1981), p. 7.

111 As quoted in: B. Brick and M. Postone, 'Friedrich Pollock and the "primacy of the political": a critical re-examination', *International Journal of Politics* (Fall 1976), p. 7.