

**Africanism versus Non-Racialism**

**an overview of race and class as categories  
in contemporary South African political discourse**

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The underdevelopment of African area studies in general, and of South African social science in particular, has meant that the focus in South Africa over the last two decades has been on economic explanations of apartheid. Whether based on class analysis or on a liberal problematic, most writing on South Africa from within the region has failed to take account of, or has explicitly rejected, the premises and conclusions of a more-or-less sophisticated sociology and anthropology of race and ethnicity developed elsewhere, and has not successfully integrated this work into the mainstream of academic discourse.[1]

Progressive political discourse, on the other hand, especially among South Africa's black majority, has had to confront the regime's racial problematic head-on. Schematically speaking, the result has been a division into two main political trends, one of which, represented by the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), tries to privilege race as a social category in the development of strategies for liberation, and the other, represented principally by the ANC and the SACP, tries, if not to deny race, at least to reduce it to secondary status. Alongside these tendencies, and in competition with them, exist various so-called "moderate" black groups, such as the predominantly Zulu-speaking Inkatha Freedom Party, of which more later.

Thus, so-called "black politics" is split into an ideologically divided liberation movement, and some extreme-left parties, on the one hand, and a group of conservative and explicitly ethnic bantustan-based parties on the other. This paper will argue for the validity of both non-racialism and Africanism as trends within South African politics, while rejecting the legitimacy of the so-called ethnic parties.

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1. This applies particularly to work done in and on the United States and Brazil. Stanley Greenberg attempted a comparative study of Alabama and South Africa (as well as Israel and Northern Ireland) in his *Race and state in capitalist development: comparative perspectives* (New Haven, 1980), but his work had relatively little impact in southern Africa itself.

Although South Africa can scarcely be described as belonging to the African Diaspora which is the focus of this seminar, it has several characteristics which, arguably, make it a fruitful point of comparison with such countries as the United States and Brazil, and which indeed distinguish it from the majority of other nations on the African continent. First of all, it is by far the most developed of the African economies, with a sophisticated industrial and manufacturing sector, financed mainly from the export of primary products such as gold, a solid transport and telecommunications infrastructure, and a large commercial agricultural sector. Such simple (and often misleading) indicators as average life expectancy and per capita GDP place South Africa somewhere in the middle of the Latin American league, and in some respects even on a level with the poorer parts of southern Europe.[2]

But it is the demographic profile of South Africa, combined with this relatively high level of development, which makes it a unique case study on the African continent. Only South Africa has an extensive and permanent white population largely without ties to a European mother country overseas. Only South Africa has a significant mixed race population, making up nearly ten percent of the total inhabitants of the country. But most of all, only in South Africa has the issue of race come to dominate and determine all forms of the state's political discourse.

At a deeper level, it was at least partly in reaction to the apartheid state's systematic use *in practice* of racial categorisation as a mechanism both of economic exploitation and of social control that both Africanism and non-racialism emerged, the first as a kind of inversion of some of the racial assumptions of the dominant discourse, the second as a refusal to accept a determinate role for race - or indeed ethnicity - as political categories. Let us look briefly at how apartheid, as a mechanism of exploitation, functioned historically, and at the contradictions which emerged from its use.

#### APARTHEID: A CAPITALIST ABERRATION OR THE ESSENCE OF THE SYSTEM?

The use of migrant labour in the gold mines of the Rand dates back to the nineteenth century. For much of that time, South African mining capital has been able to turn a profit only by the super-exploitation of labour first from neighbouring colonial territories and later from neighbouring independent states. Since the costs of the social reproduction of labour were borne in the agricultural peasant or family sector, in another country, mine

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2. For some recent statistical indicators, see tables 1 and 2 at the end of this paper.

owners were able to pay extremely low wages, which enabled them successfully to exploit mines which were only marginally viable. When black miners fell sick, grew old, or were injured in accidents, they were simply paid off and sent home at virtually no further cost to the mine company.[3]

According to this agenda, meanwhile, the black population of South Africa itself was to be turned into a migrant work-force in its own country by being forcibly moved into the marginally fertile "bantustans", which occupied a mere 13 percent of the national territory, there to constitute a reserve army of labour. Clearly, in order to construct the black "nations" which were supposed to live in the bantustans, some kind of population classification by race and ethnic group became necessary.

But as John Saul has argued, "the linkage between racial domination and capitalist exploitation is as potentially contradictory as it has been mutually reinforcing," not least because the super-exploitation of black labour prevented the black population from furnishing a local market for durable and semi-durable consumer goods.[4]

By the 1970s, the white market alone could not support the accumulation required to extend industrial development any further. The country's post-war growth strategy had been based on import substitution industrialisation, oriented toward high income domestic consumption and financed principally by the export of primary products such as minerals. Thus manufacturing contributed more to GDP in the immediate postwar period than agriculture and mining put together.[5] However these local consumer goods were uncompetitive internationally, and export of South African manufactures was restricted to neighbouring countries, and to some extent to sub-Saharan Africa in general, a pattern which is being reestablished today.[6]

The result has been the rapid admission of the black population,

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3. For an analysis of the semi-proletarian status of mine labour from Inhambane in Mozambique, and its impact on the local economy, see Ruth First, *Black gold: the Mozambican miner, proletarian and peasant* (Brighton, 1983).

4. J. Saul, "South Africa: the question of strategy," *New Left Review* no.160 (November-December 1986), p.5.

5. S. Gelb (ed.), *South Africa's economic crisis* (Cape Town, 1991).

6. In 1990, exports to non-SACU (i.e. Customs Union) African countries accounted for 32 percent of South African manufactured exports. (Robert Davies, "Emerging South African perspectives on regional cooperation and integration after apartheid" [unpublished paper], Cape Town, 1992).

over the last decade or so, into the market for locally-produced consumer goods, via improved wages and the admission of the existence of a permanent, urban, black working class. Both a result and a cause of this change has been the emergence of powerful black trade union confederations, such as COSATU and NACTU, in the years since the Wiehahn Report in 1979. In these circumstances, such practices as job reservation - the formal exclusion of black workers from better paid positions - no longer make economic sense.

In broad terms, serious social analysis of these processes in South Africa has also historically been divided into two main trends, both concerned principally to explain the nature of the relationship between local capitalism and apartheid. These trends were, broadly speaking, a liberal explanation which argues that apartheid and capitalism in South Africa can be separated, and that capitalism can survive the operation; and a Marxist explanation which claims that it was only apartheid (that is, the super-exploitation of cheap black labour) which allowed capitalism to prosper, that the two are structurally linked, and that sooner or later any attempt to shift the basis of exploitation from race to class will fail. Both these lines of analysis are evidently strongly economic, and neither is of much help in understanding the specific social, ideological, or political implications of the current dismantling of the apartheid system.

The classic liberal historiography of South Africa, which culminated in the work of Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson in the late 1960s, has traditionally argued that apartheid is an aberration within an otherwise viable capitalist system. This idea remains very much alive today, and indeed, is the working assumption behind State President de Klerk's reform initiatives, launched only when it became clear that apartheid practice was creating an economic crisis from which there was no other escape than "deracialisation".[7]

But starting with the seminal work of such exiled academics as Harold Wolpe and Martin Legassick in the early 1970s, however, a Marxist analysis of South Africa began to make itself felt, strongly influenced to begin with by the ideas of Nicos Poulantzas on the composition of the ruling class.[8] The common argument running through these new analyses was that apartheid, violence, and capitalism in South Africa were structurally linked, and that the abolition of the apartheid system would imply some sort of revolutionary transformation in South Africa, since its peculiar form of peripheral capitalism would not be profitable without racial exploitation.

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7. M. Wilson and L. Thompson, *Oxford history of South Africa* (Oxford, 1969), 2 vols.

8. Key figures in this development were Kaplan, Morris, Davies and Dan O'Meara among others.

Attempts to "deracialise" South African capitalism - and hence "normalise" it - can be traced back to the 1970s, when the long postwar boom ended and the country entered a prolonged and chronic economic crisis which has continued until the present. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, South African economic growth has steadily and consistently slowed, and by the late 1980s was hovering around two percent per annum in real GDP terms. In 1990, the year of Mandela's release and the unbanning of the ANC, predicted real growth was around one percent or lower.[9]

De Klerk's "neo-liberal agenda", as Saul has called it, involves precisely the development of mechanisms for freeing capital to take strategic decisions in the market-place without the constraints of an imposed racial division of that very market-place.[10] Deracialisation in this sense would benefit wealthier, upwardly mobile black South Africans rather than workers or rural people, but would by no means bring about the dismantling of the dualistic structure of South African society.

Lined up against this neo-liberal programme, however, are powerful popular forces, including the trade union movement, principally but by no means exclusively organised around COSATU and NACTU, women's groups, various kinds of civic and church associations, and the ANC and SACP "Congress Alliance". It remains to be seen whether the de Klerk's project of privatising the South African economy, dismantling apartheid, and passing the problem of the redistribution of wealth to the forces of the market-place can be successfully carried out in present conditions.

#### TURNING THE MAJORITY INTO MINORITIES: ETHNICITY AND SOCIAL CONTROL

But race, *per se*, has never been the only constructed social category at play in South Africa. If we accept, for the purposes of argument, the broad division of black, white, coloured and Asian imposed by the apartheid regime as in fact reflecting in some way "real" socially-constructed racial identities, then it may also be useful to look also at the role of ethnicity, as opposed to race, within the South African system of exploitation. Ethnicity has traditionally been used by the regime as a cultural-linguistic social sub-category, as opposed to one based on skin

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9. The figures are: 1987 - 2.1%; 1988 - 3.7%; 1989 - 2.1%. *Race relations survey 1989/90* (Johannesburg, 1990), p.263.

10. John Saul, "South Africa between barbarism and structural reform," *New Left Review* no.188 (July-August 1991), p.30-31.

colour.[11] "Asian" - if it means anything - is therefore, in effect, both a racial and an ethnic category simultaneously.

It was always at least as important to the regime to deconstruct the black majority which apartheid created into various "tribes" or "nations", and thus to present the South African "problem" as one of a multinational state comparable to India or the Soviet Union, as it was to separate black from white. By doing this, the regime hoped to transform the majority into a series of mutually exclusive minorities.[12] The success of this strategy has been limited by proletarianisation.

To give a specific example of the deliberate cultural fragmentation achieved by the regime, although South African languages of the Nguni group, such as Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele, are all more or less mutually intelligible, each has its own separate orthography, grammar and dictionaries. The same applies to the languages of the Sotho group. The language of the Basotho people, for instance, was first written down phonetically by French missionaries, and is thus completely different in spelling from Tswana, a close relative.

Other examples abound. The two nominally-independent bantustan states of Ciskei and Transkei are both supposedly homelands for Xhosa-speaking people. Why then, are there two of these pseudo-states? Simply because the Xhosa-speakers are so numerous that the regime felt safer when they were divided into two.

Even labour practices reflected this kind of conscious creation of an historically-unjustifiable "tribal consciousness". In the mine compounds, Basotho were separated into different hostels from Shangaan-speakers from Mozambique, and from Malawians. If conflicts broke out between hostel-dwellers, for whatever reason, they were then described as "faction-fighting", a code word for "tribal conflict". In the work-place too, different "tribes" were kept apart: Mozambican Shangaans were often employed as "boss-boys" or indunas, a kind of foreman, and the Basotho worked in

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11. I am aware that this formulation ducks serious theoretical questions about the relationship between ethnicity and race, not to mention gender. For a useful survey of some of the issues, see Verena Stolcke, "Sexo está para gênero assim como raça para etnicidade?" *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* no.20 (June 1991), p.101-119.

12. The question of how "ethnic" or "tribal" consciousness was constructed in southern Africa, mostly by colonial and/or settler regimes for the purposes of control through a "divide and rule" strategy, is addressed in the path-breaking volume *The creation of tribalism in southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (London, 1989). On similar themes, see also V. Y. Mudimbe, *The invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy and the order of Knowledge* (London, 1988) and Edward Said, *Orientalismo: o oriente como invenção do ocidente*, trad. Tomás Rosa Bueno (São Paulo, 1990).

highly-skilled and specialised teams to sink vertical shafts using carefully placed explosive charges.

The problem with these carefully-constructed ethnic fictions was that they conflicted with the reality of the South African working class, which is several generations old and completely urbanised. Intermarriage between different groups is widespread, multi-lingualism is common, and residents of Soweto often have only the vaguest idea where in Venda or Bophuthatswana their grandparents came from, if indeed they came from there at all.

Thus to attempt to explain conflict between Inkatha and the ANC, that is, between those who accept the fiction and those who reject it, by reference to "tribal" differences is to fall into a trap carefully prepared by the apartheid regime.[13] The reaction of a substantial part of the South African democratic movement to this trap has been to deny that race, even as a *subjective* social category, has any political significance.

#### THE NON-RACIALIST AND NON-SEXIST TRADITION IN SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION POLITICS

The Congress Alliance - the ANC, the SACP, and other groups - has a long and chequered tradition of "non-racialism", and a very much shorter tradition of "non-sexism".[14] In South African political terminology the former refers above all to a denial that the struggle is one of black against white, and an affirmation that is a struggle of black and white against racism and for democracy.[15]

The African National Congress (ANC), founded in 1912, is the

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13. See, chosen at random, for instance, references to "tribal violence" in the *New York Times*, 23 June 1991; and a characterisation of the ANC as a "Xhosa" organisation in the *Jornal do Brasil*, 20 July 1991. Numerous other examples of this kind of error can be found

14. The ANC's National Executive Committee moved some way to recognising that struggles around gender issues cannot be subordinated to the "main" issues of the liberation struggle when it declared that "the emancipation of women is not a by-product of a struggle for democracy. It has to be addressed in its own right [...] The prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in South African society permeates our own organisations [...]" (ANC NEC, "Emancipation of women in South Africa," [May 1990]).

15. Much of what follows is taken from Julie Frederikse, *The unbreakable thread: non-racialism in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1990).



largest and oldest of the liberation movements. The ANC explicitly espouses a policy of "non-racialism", which allows it to include whites and Asians in its highest executive committees. Indeed, the ANC's conscious attempt to reflect the demographic composition of South Africa was clearly shown in 1990, when its delegation to the "talks about talks" with the de Klerk government included whites, Asians, women, and an age range from the mid-30s to the mid-70s. By contrast, the government team was made up entirely of Afrikans-speaking white males in their 50s and 60s.

The ANC and its closest ally, the South African Communist Party (SACP), subscribe to a programmatic document adopted at a Congress of the People held at a football ground in Kliptown, outside Johannesburg, in 1955. This document, the Freedom Charter, opens with the words "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" and marked the first step towards an explicit rejection of race as a useful political category in the struggle.[16] The derogatory expression "charterists", referring to members of the ANC and its allies grouped around the Freedom Charter, and used principally by cultural nationalists in the PAC and the BCM, has its origin in this period.

We may now be seeing, however, the emergence of a much more nuanced attitude towards race within the democratic movement in South Africa. There are signs of a recognition that non-racialism (as a denial of race) can have its draw-backs, and that it can be cynically used to perpetuate inequality. A South African journalist has pointed out recently that information about race, in, for example, statistics of criminal convictions and punishment, can be useful in uncovering injustices.[17] In another instance, the predominantly white and Afrikans-speaking University of Stellenbosch has claimed that it cannot provide figures on how many black students it has, since race statistics are no longer kept. The progressive University of the Western Cape, on the other hand, using the approach of the US Bureau of the Census, asks

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16. Many writers do not take the Charter very seriously. In a recent book, Stephen Ellis describes it as "a ringing declaration of principle [which ...] could hardly raise objections in any person who was not politically eccentric [...]" (Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba *Comrades against apartheid: the ANC and the South African Communist Party in exile* [London, 1992], p.28. Anthony Sampson says it reads more like a psalm than a political document (*O negro e o ouro: magnatas, revolucionários e o apartheid*, trad. Joaquim Palacios [São Paulo, 1988], p.90)

17. Arthur Goldstuck, "When race is not a racist issue," *Weekly Mail* [Johannesburg], 20-26 March 1992, p.21.

applicants to identify their race group, and explains why.[18]

AFRICANISM AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS:  
ANTI-WHITE OR ANTI-COMMUNIST?

The PAC is much smaller than the ANC, and emerged from a group of "Africanists" around the late Robert Sobukwe, a former Youth League leader, who left the ANC in 1959 to set up the new grouping, a move precipitated by the adoption of the Freedom Charter. South Africa belonged, said the PAC, not to all, but to the "indigenous sons of the soil," the Africans. Whites, moreover, could never work wholeheartedly for liberation, since they all belonged to the privileged minority and would always work, consciously or unconsciously, to defend their own interests. "We aim politically," said Sobukwe in 1959, "at government of the Africans, by the Africans, for the Africans." [19]

Although the PAC is often described as being to the "left" of the ANC, it has a mixed ideological history. One of the main motives for its foundation was the Africanists' dislike of a perceived domination of the ANC by white communists. It remains unclear whether the main objection was to their race or their ideology. But despite its overtly anti-communist stance, the PAC has, confusingly, also included at one time an ultra-leftist Maoist wing.

The organisation was never able to develop much ideological coherence around such slogans as "Africa for the Africans", although some waggish analysts have claimed that the PAC's usefulness lies in the fact that it "says out loud what the black members of the ANC just think to themselves." Its political history has been one of internal factionalism, sometimes violent, interspersed with mostly ineffective rhetoric about the armed struggle.[20]

The PAC's dominant ideological influence in the late 1950s and

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18. "The concept of race as used by the census bureau does not denote any clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock [...] the data represents self-classification by people according to the race with which they identify." (Quoted by Goldstuck, loc. cit.)

19. Quoted in Allister Sparks, *The mind of South Africa* (London, 1991), p. 257.

20. Nevertheless, it was a PAC call to action that was being followed by the crowd at the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960. The PAC also had links in the early 1960s with Poqo, an anti-white rural insurrection in the Eastern Cape.

early 1960s came from the pan-Africanist idealism of such leaders as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana or Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, who argued for the political reunification of a single Africa, which had been divided by the experience of colonialism. In the post-war decades, such ideas retained considerable power of attraction, of a kind difficult to imagine today. In addition, the independence of the majority of the former colonies in Africa, between 1956 and the mid-1960s had caused considerable alarm among South Africa's white population, and the spread of the PAC's brand of revolutionary voluntarism among blacks did little to alleviate their fears.

Sobukwe's ideas also included an early form of Black Consciousness, which he had espoused even as a member of the radical ANC Youth League in the 1940s. "In a country where everybody says white is beautiful, we need to say that black is beautiful," he remarked on one occasion. "The government does not want us to be proud that we are black; that makes them uneasy." [21]

The indications are that the PAC was virtually inactive inside the country during the 1980s, after fierce leadership struggles had sapped its strength in the late 1970s, and it is probable that the considerable sympathy that it enjoyed from the leaders of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, where the movement maintained an exile presence, played an important part in ensuring its organisational survival into the present phase. The PAC still has difficulty in presenting itself as not being anti-white, and since February 1990 has managed to attract a certain amount of media attention by adopting the now notorious slogan "One settler, one bullet."

The Black Consciousness movement, which shared many of the PAC's populist ideas and organisational difficulties, emerged in the mid-1970s, at a low point in the ANC's fortunes, around the charismatic University of Natal student leader Steve Biko, and attracted the loyalty of a whole generation of black student leaders, for whom Biko's nuanced affirmations of black pride and black independence had a powerful attraction. BC was posited on the belief that black South Africans should not expect help from whites, and indeed, should form their own separate organisations, in order to build group self-confidence. It caused a considerable shock in 1969, for instance, when Biko and other black student leaders split away from the progressive and anti-apartheid, but white-dominated and liberal student organisation NUSAS, to set up the all-black SASO. [22] But SASO and the other student organisations which made up BC were rapidly crushed by the security forces after the 1976 Soweto revolt. Many of its most dynamic

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21. Sampson, op.cit., p. 91. Emphasis in the original.

22. For a history of BC by an American academic who links it to US black-is-beautiful thinking of the time, see Gail Gerhart, *Black power in South Africa: the evolution of an ideology* (Berkeley, 1978).

leaders went into enforced exile.

BC eventually moved closer to ANC positions than was often admitted, especially in its vision of a future economic order, which could be termed socialist. A whole generation of the younger present-day ANC leaders passed through BC ranks in the 1970s.[23] Indeed, it has been claimed that Biko was in contact with ANC structures when he was arrested for breaking his banning order and beaten to death by the police in September 1977.

Although BC survives in organisational form in such tiny groups as AZAPO and the BCMA, it is now often argued that it represented a necessary stage in the development of black politics, in resistance to widespread white liberal paternalism. However, whatever the political future of Africanism and Black Consciousness expressed as formal organisations, there seems to be little doubt that they still represent a powerful intellectual and cultural trend - at its best in the thought and writings of Sobukwe and Biko - which may have a lasting role in the emerging "new South Africa".

#### INKATHA: BANTUSTAN POLITICS AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

When Black Consciousness emerged in the late 1960s, the regime vainly hoped that it could be co-opted into legitimising the bantustans and their political organisations among the urbanised township youth. But when these hopes turned out to be unfounded, the regime turned its attentions to more amenable organisations within the homelands, of which by far the most important was Inkatha.

The ethnically-exclusive Inkatha movement is often portrayed in popular newspaper accounts as a "Zulu" organisation in conflict with another "Xhosa" grouping, the ANC. The movement's projected self-image is one of a moderate national black movement. However, Inkatha's "Zulu" identity is demonstrably less important in practice than its rural and provincial character, and its claims to "moderation" are belied by its ruthless use of violent means to pursue its ends, and by its links to clandestine forces at

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23. Among them Curtis Nkondo, sometime president of AZAPO; Jackie Selebe; and newspaper editor Zwelakhe Sisulu, son of veteran ANC leader Walter Sisulu.

work within the country.[24]

The movement's leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, agreed to accept a role in the government of the Kwazulu bantustan ("Zululand") in 1970, and revived the Inkatha movement, a then disintegrating Zulu cultural organisation founded between the two world wars, as a political base for his particular brand of pro-capitalist, anti-sanctions, and non-confrontational local politics. But Buthelezi's moderation, in the 1970s as now, was always meant for public consumption in the white media. His underlying brutality showed itself most clearly in the way Inkatha consolidated its hold on power in Kwazulu in the late 1970s and early 1980s, virtually laying waste the University of Zululand campus in 1983, for example.

Using Inkatha and Kwazulu as a local power base, Buthelezi was able to launch himself on a national political career, making himself available, in the words of one observer, "for any political outcome that could further his apparently boundless personal ambition." [25] But his ambition has hit up against the limits of ethnic politics in South Africa; by opposing sanctions, and by opposing the armed struggle as a price for continued activity as a homeland leader, Buthelezi squandered any chance he may have had of establishing a national following. Instead, he now relies on conservative and semi-proletarianised Zulu-speaking migrant workers for support. These men, who spend half their lives in rural backwaters dominated by local chiefs, and the rest in military-style all-male hostels, are easily encouraged to mob action.

In fact, the so-called ethnic violence between Inkatha and supporters of the ANC began in Natal, where virtually the whole black population is Zulu-speaking. The struggle there, as in Transvaal, was between an organised and semi-urban working class in more-or-less regular employment, and a rural reserve army of labour with only intermittent access to the money economy, acting with the clandestine support of state security structures of

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24. On Buthelezi's own shady past, and the history of the Inkatha movement, see Gerhard Maré and Georgina Hamilton, *An appetite for power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the politics of loyal resistance* (Johannesburg, 1987); and Mzala, *Gatsha Buthelezi: chief with a double agenda* (London, 1988). See also reports on links with Namibian paramilitary training camps and slush-funds in, e.g. *Weekly Mail* [Johannesburg] 13 December 1991; *Guardian* [London] 24 January 1992; etc.

25. Saul, "South Africa between barbarism and structural reform," p.13.

various kinds.[26]

Inkatha has made some gestures in the direction of developing an economic policy, but Buthelezi's pronouncements in this area reveal all too clearly whose agenda he is following. He speaks, for instance, of the "redistribution of wealth" but says that he does not favour taking from the rich to give to the poor, since this merely spreads poverty. Instead, Inkatha policy is to deregulate the economy and provide educational and training opportunities. Similarly, Inkatha wants to "maximise development" in poor rural areas, a formulation so vague as to be meaningless.

There is now some evidence that Inkatha support is withering even in rural Natal where it has traditionally been strongest. From this position of weakness (and with revelations appearing every week in the progressive press about his involvement with the military and security apparatus of the white regime), Buthelezi has recently demanded, after contacts with the ultra-right wing leader of the Conservative Party, Andries Treurnicht, that the Zulu king and the Zululand government should also have places alongside Inkatha at the CODESA negotiating table.[27]

#### THE FUTURE OF AFRICANISM: THE ACADEMY OR THE TOWNSHIP?

While Inkatha and its ilk face bleak prospects for political survival, the future of Africanism and of Black Consciousness as an organised political trend will depend largely on the outcome of the negotiation process in South Africa. The PAC is currently adopting a hostile attitude to the ongoing multi-party CODESA talks, in which it refuses to take part, a decision reaffirmed as recently as December after meetings with church leaders and Commonwealth officials.[28] The organisation's president, Clarence Makwetu, has also recently refused to appear before the Goldstone Commission, which is investigating political violence in South Africa, to answer allegations that PAC's military wing, APLA, has been involved in attacks on the police.[29]

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26. For a careful analysis of the state's collusion in violence in Natal and Transvaal, especially with regard to the Kwazulu Police force, see Africa Watch, *The killings in South Africa: the role of the security forces and the response of the state* (New York, 1991).

27. *Southern Africa Report* [Johannesburg], 14 February 1992.

28. *The Star* [Johannesburg], 23 December 1991.

29. SAPA dispatch, 17 February 1992, printed in *Facts and Reports* 6 March 1992.

The PAC is thus positioning itself for what many would see as a cynical and opportunistic appeal to the radical militants of the townships, who will presumably be unwilling to accept anything less than a complete "one-man one-vote" outcome from the negotiation process. According to some analysts, this in fact has its advantages for the ANC, which is able to use the potential threat of militant pressure from the left to squeeze concessions from the government during the negotiation process.

But this works both ways. During the white referendum on 17 March, on the continuation of negotiations, de Klerk was able to use the threat of a swing to the right and a resulting "no" vote to scare liberal whites with the spectre of a general election which the Conservative Party might have won. The result was a massive turn-out of over 80 percent, and a two-thirds majority for continuation of the talks.

Although in terms of post-1990 politics, the PAC and AZAPO are usually presented as to the left of the ANC, there is a good case for arguing that the situation is not so simple, and that the radicalism of both movements, at least in economic policy is more apparent than real. Certainly the economic policy of both groups, as published, harks back to the kind of colossal state intervention in the economy which was characteristic of both the former Soviet Union and the "old" South Africa, but which has now been abandoned by both the NP and the ANC.

The BCMA, for example, according to its published programme, is committed to the massive nationalisation of "all heavy industry, major commercial undertakings, multi-national monopolies and syndicates." The programme also promises to "nationalise all banks and insurance companies" and to "assert complete state control of foreign trade" among other measures.[30] The PAC has similarly committed itself to nationalisation "on a grand scale" and to a massive land reform.[31] It is difficult to see these kinds of policies, combined with a refusal to deal with the white state, attracting large-scale support.

However, if - as seems increasingly possible - the ANC and the government do succeed in working out a political compromise acceptable to the whole country, and which is more than just a pact between two competing elites, Africanism as an intellectual and cultural trend may yet find a role for itself. This could be a form of political "marginalisation" as an intellectual tendency in progressive black universities, rather than as a real power in the townships.

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30. *Sowetan* [Johannesburg], 9 February 1990.

31. *Sowetan* [Johannesburg], 10 August 1989; *South* [Cape Town], 8 March 1990.

In any case, there can be little doubt that black intellectuals face an uphill struggle in reminding most white South Africans that they are citizens of an African country, within the Third World, and that they will sooner or later have to come to terms with that fact - politically, culturally, socially and linguistically.



APPENDIX: STATISTICAL TABLES

Table 1  
Selected Indicators for Southern Africa and Brazil[32]

	Per Capita PPP in 1987. (US\$)	* GDP (US\$)	Life Expectancy (male) (female)	
Portugal	5,597	1,872	68	75
South Africa	4,981	2,978	52	55
Brazil	4,307	1,573	61	66
Botswana	2,496	1,125	53	56
Zimbabwe	1,184	859	54	58

\* Both PPP and GDP figures are per capita in 1987 dollars. PPP are "Purchasing Power Parities" calculated from price comparisons on over 150 categories of expenditure on GDP. Note that the PPP figures place Brazil and South Africa close behind Portugal with Botswana and Zimbabwe some distance behind.

Table 2  
Total Population of South Africa, 1990[33]

	Number	%
African	28,258,000	75.3
Asian	978,000	2.6
Coloured	3,244,000	8.6
White	5,052,000	13.5
TOTAL	37,532,000	100.0

32. *Race relations survey 1989/90*, p.xcii-xov.

33. *Idem.*