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FROM LIBERATION TO CITIZENSHIP: IDENTITY AND INNOVATION IN BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

In the political tradition of black South Africa, ideological positions such as liberalism, socialism, and nationalism are secondary to themes emerging out of the conjuncture of race and class. Successive generations of South African intellectuals have been confronted with a similar project -- the core concepts of Western political discourse had to be made responsive to the realities of racial proletarianization. Based on either multiracial or racial nationalist conceptions of "the people," and implicitly citizenship, populist thought became the primary means to relate racial and class struggles and gradually influenced all shades of political discourse. At the core of black political thought has been two interrelated and recurring visions of liberation, one multiracial union and the other black republican.[1] While adherents of both visions have claimed to be desirous of a genuine nonracial society, they have tended to disagree over placing emphasis on intraracial or interracial class solidarity as a means to attain this end.

Two important contentions guide this discussion. First, intellectual efforts to reconcile issues growing out of the

interrelatedness of racial domination and class exploitation have contributed an innovative dimension to black South African political thought. Second, nascent conceptions of identity and citizenship (who belongs to the political community) embedded in various schools of liberation thought continue to influence black popular attitudes toward South Africa's fledgling democracy.

This discussion is not intended as an historical treatment of black liberation nor as a comprehensive account of debates within various black liberation organizations. The paper argues that the tension between nonracial and race-conscious populist discourses traverse ideological positions and has contributed a popular or indigenous dimension to the meaning of citizenship in the South African context.

Antinomies in Black Political Thought

Since wage labor was imposed on them under the conditions of racial domination, the majority of black South Africans have been the subjects of a process that can be described as racial proletarianization.[2] In its impact on everyday life, proletarianization remains the most powerful process in the complex of changes referred to as either industrialization, economic development, or the growth of capitalism.[3] During each phase of South Africa's economic evolution, labor and racial repression were interdependent.[4]

As a class counterpart of racial domination, racial proletarianization not only informed the consciousness of the black working and middle classes but the values and practices of the

entire intellectual and political culture. Thus, by defining events within the boundary categories of race and class, racial proletarianization encapsulates what has been a central concern of South African social theory -- how should the relationship between capitalist industrialization and racial domination be understood? As a theoretical problem, the conjuncture of race and class can provide the foundation for one conceptualization of the black intellectual tradition.

Historically, multi-racial unionists have called for class alliances across the racial divide while black republicans demand that class alliances be exclusive to African and/or black South Africans.[5] Multiracial unionists envision non-racial citizenship in a democratic society to be generated by the political action of progressives from all races. Alternately, black republicans conceived of "Azania" (their name for liberated South Africa), as a black republic that would restore African land and communal traditions through the revolutionary efforts of black Africans. Forged in the crucible of generations of political struggle, multiracial and black republican visions of liberation have produced different conceptions of nationhood, revolution, citizenship, and democracy.

With respect to contemporary liberation politics, these two views are usually associated with the rivalry between the African National Congress (ANC or Congress) and the breakaway Pan Africanist Congress (PAC or Africanists). Since the 1950s, multi-racial unionism, associated with the far older ANC and its allies,

has enjoyed a dominant position in the black liberation movement. Indeed, the elaboration of a multiracial agenda for a new South Africa proved to be a key factor in the ANC's overwhelming victory in the countries first all race elections. Currently, the fundamental tenets of multiracial union are the foundation of South Africa's first elected government of national unity and its campaign for racial reconciliation.

By contrast, black republicanism, upheld by the PAC, the early Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and, more recently, by the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), has been relegated to the status of a relatively small opposition within the opposition.[6] Ironically, in the 1940s, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL or Youth League), which produced the senior leaders of both the ANC and the PAC, were more inclined toward the black republican position.

Similar to African nationalists, Marxist thinkers have, at times, also been divided over multiracial and black republican visions of liberation. The South African Communist Party (SACP), which before 1953 was officially the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), and the intellectuals of the Trostskyite Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM or Unity Movement) both embraced Marxist politics. However, the Unity Movement regarded black (all non-Europeans) classes led by workers and peasants as the primary agents of revolutionary change. By contrast, the SACP, an ally of the ANC, generally held-out the possibility of multiracial working class unity as the basis of socialist solidarity.

Both as analytical categories and as race relations strategies, the permutations that result from the interaction of multiracial union and black republican thought are rarely theorized, even though they are evident in most interpretations of black politics. The reasons for the oversight are both intellectual and political. With respect to the latter, in 1960, the white government banned all major opposition organizations, and, as a result, debates concerning the relative merits of various political outlooks were fought-out underground, in exile, or in prison cells.

Furthermore, while black republican sentiment is widespread, the ideologies mass appeal has been undermined by the perception among both blacks and whites that black republicans merely seek to reverse the terms of racial supremacy. Moreover, since many intellectuals rightly reject racial divisions on the grounds that these are repugnant social constructions, they sometimes refuse to accept that racial identity has important implications for political thought.

For the present, the tension between multi-racial union and black republican visions of society continue to inform popular notions of political identity and community. Since black nationalism and multiracialism have represented interconnected poles of theoretical possibility in liberation politics, black intellectuals and leaders have espoused both positions at different times in their careers. Furthermore, a careful examination of political views held by black leaders at any one time may reveal

aspects of both forms of thought. However, with the demise of apartheid, liberation thought, which has provided the basis of black political morality in the past, is confronted with an alternate form of political morality -- constitutionalism.

Liberalism and Black Reactions to White Racial Populism

Whereas Victorian liberalism may have been the first European ideology that black intellectuals embraced, its political timidity and racial conservatism inadvertently reinforced the presuppositions of racial populism. In the context of pervasive legislation based on racial, class, and ethnic identities, it was difficult for black liberals to popularize a nonracial theory of individual liberties and citizenship rights. Moreover, most Africans associated liberalism with both cultural and class assimilation.[7]

For decades, the political values of the African elite have been far from parochial. Peter Walshe identifies early twentieth century influences on African political consciousness as Christianity, the Negro struggle in America, and Victorian liberalism.[8] Before the middle of this century, the African elite no longer considered itself narrowly ethnic. Its leaders wanted to expand the parameters of liberty by giving citizenship the same meaning on both sides of the color-line and were opposed to nativism, in the sense of those who wished to rid the country of Indians, Coloreds or, for that matter, whites.[9]

The African educated elite rapidly associated liberal thought with humane treatment, human rights, and European cultural and

religious values. Jordan Ngubane captures the world-view of the African elite who were largely products of christian mission stations with the pithy phrase, a "new politico-cultural community."[10] By and large, the early founders of Congress were Christian democrats and, as long as it remained an option, the mainstream of the black leadership favored the liberal democratic path. Since land tenure, citizenship, and labor exploitation were interrelated dimensions of social class formation, the collapse of Cape liberalism in the face of segregationist pressure is crucial to an understanding of the liberal-populist nexus.[11] The aborted development of Cape liberalism compelled the Kholwa (African Christian communities) to downplay their preference for christian liberalism.

As political thinkers, segregationists were white racial populists who discouraged African support of universal political ideals, but encouraged ethnic traditionalism. The salient features of pro-segregation liberalism can be gleaned from the historical literature. After World War I, several important liberal capitalists, scholars, and politicians systematically elaborated the fundamentals of segregationist thought which: (a) rejected older laissez faire universalist conceptions of liberalism; (b) contained a theory of a unified white (English-Afrikaner) South African nation in contrast to separate "African nations"; (c) served as a defensive strategy to contain the social forces unleashed by industrialization; (d) played on African land hunger by relating the extension of land rights to the denial of

citizenship rights; (e) exploited traditional African economic, political and cultural notions -- communalism versus communism; traditional democracy versus western democracy; and the idea of a "Bantu ethos" versus cultural assimilation; (f) sought to drive a wedge between the educated elite and the rural African masses; and (g) interacted with African-American separatist thought -- Booker T. Washington in its moderate form and Marcus Garvey in its more radical manifestation.[12]

Africans intellectuals responded to segregationists by developing their own indigenous applications of western religious and political thought while simultaneously using liberalism's egalitarian proclivities to their advantage. Equally important was the recognition by the black elite that the syncretistic dimensions of populism could serve as a means of mitigating mass resentment against the introduction of alien religious and cultural norms. In other words, populist thought gave the African elite an ideological vehicle that could be used to structure intra-racial class relations. This was important because as Leo Kuper observed, the educated Christians and the urban proletariat were two strata most significant for African nationalism.[13]

In opposition to white racial populism, African Christians worked out their own syncretic version of Christian philosophy that extolled humanist unity at the expense of theologically-sanctioned racism. For this reason, the dominant non-racial tradition, often understood as a white imposition, can also be interpreted as a <u>black</u> preference. With the expansion of white domination, black

Christian theology split into two ideological positions broadly identified with the European mission and African Zionist churches. Ngubane contends that these positions when translated into political ideologies became the precursors to multiracial unionism and black republicanism.[14]

South African liberalism, construed as the political counterpart of egalitarian christian values, was damaged by its justification of segregation and its reputation as a palliative for oppression. The complicity of early white liberals in the formulation of segregation policy was compounded by the powerlessness of latterday liberals to affect any concrete political change. Eventually, black intellectuals arrived at a rhetorical rejection of most aspects of liberal ideology. According to Ngubane, one of the very few black members of the Liberal Party, liberalism became associated with betrayal in the African popular mind.[15]

So discredited was liberalism that its atavistic association with betrayal and compromise continues to have resonance in contemporary black political discourse. While this tendency has been undermined by recent events, the universally accepted liberal tenets such as the rule of law, parliamentary government, and the promotion of a market economy are often ignored in favor of an indigenous understanding of the term.[16] Nevertheless, while regarding "liberalism" as a term of derision, African intellectuals incorporated most egalitarian liberal values into their political arsenal in the fight against racial domination. Nonetheless, the

rejection of liberalism has been an integral part of both nationalist and socialist populism for two generations of liberation leadership.

Race-Conscious and Non-racial Populism: Competing Conceptions of Citizenship

By the end of the 1940s, the African National Congress Youth League wrestled control of the parent organization from an older and more liberal generation of leaders. Central to their success was the advocacy of nationalist populism and a condemnation of liberal accommodation. Black republicans have offered harsh assessments of the political consciousness of early African middle class leadership. Fatima Meer's remarks mirror the populist appraisal of the liberal origins of African political thought. She contends that the ideological confusion which characterized the early nationalist movement, especially the acceptance of political moderation, rejection of black mass life, and a commitment to the assimilation of European culture, prevented a militant confrontation with white power when its defeat was possible.[17]

As the white-dominated state consolidated control over a multiracial society beginning with the first decades of the twentieth century, black nationalist and black socialist intellectuals worked to conceptualize South Africa's peculiar configuration of racial segregation and intense labor exploitation. Opponents of the segregationist Coloured Affairs Department (CAD), which was created by the South African government in 1943, dubbed themselves Anti-CADers. Ben Kies, perhaps the most brilliant of

the group, made the important connection between the denial of democratic citizenship and labor exploitation. For Kies, the goal of the white nationalists was to "disenfranchise the Non-European piecemeal, to parcel out their labor supply, and to place them under the care of separate administration departments."[18] Offering an early theory of populist leadership, Kies and his colleagues concluded that the counter to "herrenvolk democracy" was the organization of a strong mass movement of non-European unity under the tutelage of a committed and self-sacrificing cadre of black intellectuals.[19]

Confronted by the formation of a racially exclusive state whose central purpose was the denial of equal citizenship, black nationalists thinkers began to envision contrasting conceptions of liberation. Thus, the construction of an national political community devoid of racial domination has long been a concern of nationalist intellectuals. Indeed, the major reason for founding a national congress (the ANC) was to forge distinct ethnic identities into a unified African people. Within the framework of a nationalist intellectual project, either a black republic or a multiracial union could function as the core utopia for a new society.

Reflecting on the formation of the ANC, I. B. Tabata, founder and theoretician of the Non-European Unity Movement believed that the new organization derived both strengths and weaknesses from the successful transfer of communal authority to itself.[20] In a 1948 letter to Nelson Mandela, Tabata described the genesis of the ANC

in 1912 as "the first creation of an African organization on an individualist basis..."[21] Although he was a vocal critic of its approach to liberation politics, Tabata, recognized that the ANC constituted a decisive step towards an African identity based on individual rights which he considered integral to the realization of majority rule.

Multi-racial unionists envisioned extending citizenship to South Africans of all races while black republicans believed that citizenship should be rooted in African identity and communal values. For the black republican, a true Azanian had to be African either by descent or commitment. To be an Azanian (Azania is the name they would give to a liberated South Africa) implied a genuine identification with the right of the African people to self-rule and to reclaim their ancestral land. It is notable that black republicans employ the term "Azania" to refer to South Africa in a truly liberated state, but the ANC has always rejected the name. Placed in the language of contemporary political theory, the black republican/multiracial dichotomy reflects the distinction between republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship.

For the most part, the CYL represented a new generation of intellectuals who were mainly graduates of Fort Hare College. As the most significant African institution of higher learning in the country, Fort Hare attracted upwardly mobile young men and women from an array of social backgrounds. In their youth, the ANC leader Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe of the PAC, and Gatsha

Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party all attended Fort Hare and all were members of the CYL.

Despite his being surrounded by such capable colleagues, Anton Lembede stands-out as the Youth League's most daring populist theoretician. In his capacity as a journalist during the 1940s, Ngubane described the young Zulu lawyer Lembede as a fanatical nationalist with a narrow conception of nationhood and an uncompromising hostility to the forces of the left.[22] Lembede's position, says Gail Gerhart, "reflected the perspective of the Zulu peasantry for whom the memory of white conquest was fresh and bitter."[23]

CYL intellectuals, like most of their Third World counterparts, were cognizant that nationalism and socialism represented two interrelated forms of revolutionary democratic action. Initially, CYL intellectuals considered both liberalism and Marxist socialism to be white ideologies and they opted for an energetic version of African nationalism. Motivated by the belief that African nationalism was ripe for realignment, the CYL's 1944 Congress Youth League Manifesto represents a determined effort by Lembede and his CYL colleagues to rethink black nationalist theory and practice.

Primarily a black republican document, the Manifesto advanced an African-conscious program for black unity and upliftment in response to racial domination. Inspired by a belief in African spiritual and cultural uniqueness, Youth Leaguers were essentially populist thinkers who demanded that political leaders represent the

will of the African people. Yet, most CYL members were uncomfortable with black racial chauvinism. Making a distinction between two streams of African nationalism, the Manifesto rejected as ultra-revolutionary and too nativistic the Garveyite position that South Africa should be exclusive to black Africans.

Even as it acknowledged that the different racial groups had come to stay, the CYL vowed to extend the franchise to the black majority, thus ridding the country of its "herrenvolk democracy". The Manifesto suggests that black intellectuals had begun to wrestle with competing conceptions of the nation, the people and, unavoidably, citizenship. Moreover, multiracial union as an alternative interpretation of political community was emerging directly from black political experience. In his influential study of black politics, Tom Lodge notes that by the 1950s, the two main issues confronting the black movement were the position of multi-racial SACP and the question of collaboration with non-African organizations.[24]

As long as the young turks of the CYL functioned as radical outsiders pressuring the older Congress leaders toward mass activity, division within the Youth League could be managed. After 1949, as the CYL gradually captured the leadership of Congress, serious problems surfaced within its own ranks. More than any other, the question of multiracial alliances challenged the black republican assumptions of the CYL. This issue eventually split black intellectuals into two rival nationalist traditions which, for the purposes of this discussion, have been termed multiracial

union and black republican. However, it needs to be emphasized that most CYL intellectuals began their political careers as black republicans and only in the course of confrontation politics were they won-over to a multiracial perspective.

The core assumption of black republican or Africanist thought is that the African people constitute the sole source of revolutionary legitimacy. For it was they who South Africa belonged to before European settlers arrived. And, since virtually all classes of whites were allied in support of racial domination, black republicans reasoned that Africans would be well advised to form their own intra-racial multi-class alliance to oppose racial domination. Given its accent on African initiative, the black republican position was often described as one of "going-it-alone" -- a stark contrast with the assumptions of multiracial union.

Africanists were especially upset by the prospect of privileged whites (and to a lesser extent Coloreds and Indians) benefitting from racial oppression and simultaneously being allowed to sway the direction of opposition politics under the auspices of multiracial ideology. Black republican thinkers reacted at a very visceral level to the recasting of African nationalism in conjunction with the assumptions of multiracial unity . Furthermore, black republicans discerned that multiracial citizenship would undermine their most cherished political demand -- that the land be returned to African ownership.

Predisposed to seeing democracy and socialism as inherent in the ways of the African "folk," the black republican worldview is

quintessentially populist. Indeed, black republicans are apt to assert rather than theorize about the historic rights and nature of the African people. Africa and her people were virtuous, their degradation being a consequence of European intrusion and the imposition of alien cultural values. As a consequence of that assumption black republicans conclude that the birth of Azania, either in the form of a new African socialist republic, or a black social democracy, will restore the African's lost sense of dignity.

In contrast to multi-racial unionists who advocate a territorial, and therefore multiracial, view of South African citizenship, black republican underscore African ownership of "the land" -- a concept they imbue with both cultural and spiritual meaning. Whereas these distinctions should not be too rigidly drawn, Africanists have tended to focus on land expropriation and multiracial unionists on the denial of citizenship rights and the capitalist exploitation of black labor.

To complicate matters slightly, the sanctity of African tradition and land ownership often betray a degree of ambiguity between conservative and radical renderings of black nationalism. Defenders of African tradition need not be political conservatives. African traditionalists emphasize the importance of African authenticity, reconciling this view with either black republican or multiracial visions. At the center of traditionalist thought is a well-defined sense of moral outrage at the negative impact racial proletarianization has had on African communal life. Some traditionalist intellectuals offer historical interpretations that

consider urban Africans to have been deprived of their essential African consciousness. Ngubane, therefore, questions the ability of urbanized leaders to foment a revolution that would address the needs of the rural masses.[25]

Ever mindful of the disparity that can develop between the values of urban and rural Africans, Lembede, perhaps more than any other African nationalist intellectual, sought to reconcile modern black nationalism with African tradition. It should come as no surprise that Lembede saw land reclamation as the central demand of African nationalism. He recoiled from the idea that a class struggle of African toilers against their white exploiters should take precedence over the national liberation. In 1947, Lembede spoke eloquently about the inextricable links between the worker struggle and the struggle of the African people. With the communist in mind, he concluded:

> it is an illusion of demented political demagogues to imagine that African workers as such can achieve their emancipation and reach their goal of being recognized by the government on the same footing with European trade unions while the rest of the African nation is still in chains and bondage of segregation, oppression, and colour discrimination.[26]

Lembede's insistence that the emancipation of African workers would only come about in conjunction with total African liberation has been the view of the nationalist movement as a whole and not that of the Africanists alone. More than three decades after Lembede's remarks, the growth of a powerful independent trade union movement occasioned debates between so-called "populists" and

"workerists" that were reminiscent of exchanges between communists and nationalists during Lembede's day.

In contrast to the black republicans, multiracial unionists extended the idea of a multi-racial alliance of workers to include all races, classes, and peoples opposed to Apartheid. Form this perspective, the liberation struggle was construed as a united front against racial domination. In other words, together ANC and SACP intellectuals transformed an idea originally drawn from class relations into a brand of multi-racial populism and a racially inclusive conception of citizenship. From this perspective, "the people" are all those individuals who are willing to work for a nonracial society.

Initially, the relationship between the ANC and the SACP was purely a marriage of convenience. However, in the process of carrying-out direct action campaigns, ANC leaders such as Mandela, who initially opposed communist involvement in the movement as well as coalitions with Indians and Coloreds, decided that genuine multiracial alliances were possible. Many black nationalists resented the communist contribution to working class organization, but given the impending confrontation with the racist state, the more pragmatic black nationalists were unprepared to ignore the benefits of an alliance with the communists. In 1955, the ANC-SACP backed Congress of the People issued the famous Freedom Charter. By then, Charterism -- the ideology of the ANC-led multi-racial alliance of Africans, Indians, Coloreds, South African Congress of Trade Unions and left wing whites -- had aggravated the

interpretive and tactical differences and polarized proponents of racial, multiracial, and class solidarity.

Pressured by ANC accusations that Africanism was reverse racism, PAC leaders felt compelled to rethink their race-based definition of African identity. Even before the PAC was forced into exile, the potential inclusion of non-Africans supporters prepared to renounce their separate ethnic or racial status presented the theoretical impetus to push Africanism beyond the borders of purely racial identity. A very small number of Indians, Coloreds, and a rare white, were anointed "African." By 1967, the Pan-Africanist Congress in exile had both Indians and Coloreds on its Executive; Patrick Duncan, a radical white Liberal Party member from an eminent family who shared the organization's distrust of Communists, served as PAC representative in Algeria. The PAC regards its own uncompromising African majority rule approach as genuine "nonracialism" and the ANC's approach as "multiracialism" -- a means to continue minority rule under the guise of a racially-based form of proportional representation.

Black Consciousness: Generations and Racial Populism

In addition to race/class and multiracial unionism/black republicanism, a brief analysis of the thought of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the late 1960s calls our attention to another important antinomy -- generation/tradition. Generation implies an historical circumstance in which intellectuals form concrete bonds of co-operation and solidarity as a result of their shared exposure to the social and intellectual

processes of change. Intellectuals usually form more concrete bonds within generational cadres where together they interpret the material of their common experience in ways distinct from other cadres.[27]

In contrast to generation, tradition denotes a set of enduring intellectual issues, questions, and problems which concern a related group of thinkers, no matter how defined. Tradition places stress on the continuities of discursive activity across time periods, while generation emphasizes interpretive distinctions within a single period. However, it is important to recognize, as Russell Hanson reminds us, that intellectual traditions are reproduced by continuous discursive activity rather than by the timelessness of ideas:

> It is common action that binds generations to one another and identifies them as different moments in the same political tradition. The specific arguments that are the product of this activity may or may not show signs of continuity. They are incidental to the activity itself, and it is the activity that constitutes a tradition.[28]

The interplay of generation and tradition forms a vital part of the process by which intellectuals achieve self-awareness and come to associate their ideas with social movements both in their respective nations and internationally.

With the major African nationalist political parties forced into exile and/or underground, the BCM generation considered theoretical reconstruction of the liberation tradition a political necessity. The theoretical innovations of Black Consciousness Philosophy was an intellectual response to a specific historical situation. Looking back, "Terror" Lekota, National Publicity

Secretary of the United Democratic Front (UDF) which during the 1980s was the primary internal ally of the ANC and who presently serves as Premier for the Orange Free State, recalls that the 1960 banning of the most uncompromising opponents of Apartheid opened a wide gap between older leaders and the BCM generation. Lekota says of his generation: "we were determined to discover our history."[29] Later on as a member of the ANC, Lekota reached the conclusion that Black Consciousness Philosophy was woefully inadequate as a liberation ideology and, in that regard, clearly inferior to the writings of the ANC and the SACP.

Nonetheless, Lekota's comments not only confirm the extent to which BCM intellectuals considered the reconstruction of the liberation tradition an urgent task, they reveal a distinct generational identity as well. The BCM and its advocacy of racial populism pose two important questions regarding the relation of innovation and tradition: What constitutes generational innovation in political discourse and how can such innovation be distinguished from the larger tradition of black political thought at a later date? Answers to these questions are generally bedeviled by the fact that intellectual hegemony is often based on the ability of cadres to promote politically self-serving theoretical interpretations while simultaneously debunking the views of rivals. Since debates over the relative merit of generational innovation are usually embodied in the political writings of intellectual partisans, there may be strands of thought which are either downplayed or revised due to shifting power relations within political

movements. This is true to some extent of black consciousness thought particularly with respect to its racial populist content.

Short-lived as a political movement that openly employed a racial populist analysis, the BCM was the most dramatic attempt by a new generation of intellectuals to redefine black identity on terms that undermined the ideological foundations of apartheid.[30] The generation of intellectuals and activists associated with the BCM were forced by political circumstances to reconstruct the fundamental tenets of black political thought. As a result, an examination of Black Consciousness Philosophy can help us to better understand the complex relationship between non-racialism and racial nationalism. Although race-class dynamics stimulated theoretical innovation during previous generations, the BCM comes closest to being a generational cadre of independent black intellectuals. Unlike youth organizations that were auxiliaries of adult-led parties, the black consciousness thought was not directly spawned by an older generation.

Reflecting the social reality of the first generation to reach maturity under the National Party's 1948 policy of Apartheid, the role the BCM assigned to black identity, as distinct from African identity, was a departure from that of previous generations. In this respect, the early BCM contributed as a theoretically innovative analysis of racial consciousness and populist politics. BCM intellectuals responded to the banning of adult leadership and intense government repression with a new synthesis of black liberation thought. Attuned to intellectual

currents within New-Left youth culture, Black Consciousness Philosophy, as BCM discourse was called, advocated a progressive form of race-conscious politics as the basis of a uniquely South African approach to cultural revolution.

Inspired by the goal of black solidarity, the late Steve Biko (1946-1977), the most important theoretician of the BCM, labored to construct a synthesis of black republican and multiracial thought. As a populist approach to the dynamic interaction between racial identity, political domination, and personal life, Black Consciousness Philosophy constituted the most significant expression of the BCM generation's theoretical innovation.[31] While neither the PAC nor the BCM proved to be a match for the powerful members and supporters of the ANC, a new generation of intellectuals were briefly wedded to a populist theory of racial solidarity. With the formulation of Black Consciousness Philosophy, the BCM introduced a subjective dimension into liberation politics. This development, and in particular the emphasis on subjective factors in the struggle for liberation, constituted a short-lived challenge to the black liberation movement's preoccupation with theories of objective conditions.

As a subjective understanding of politics, populism provides a set of values for everyday life and readily lends itself to becoming a strand of thought within liberalism and socialism. What Craig Calhoun sees as the real strength of English populism during the Industrial Revolution can be equally said of black consciousness thought:

> Populism was not so much a distinct set of political opinions as a mobilization of people who shared a common understanding of how life ought to be. Not that all people were mobilized at any one time, but the mode of understanding was wide spread.[32]

Given the centuries long impact of white supremacy, every species political ideology has been forced to come to terms with the existence of race consciousness and racial populism. Thus, it was widely recognized by the older generation that BCM discourse had the potential to activate the deep-seated structure of emotions that existed in black communities as a result of their prolonged experience with racial domination. The struggle to determine how racial resentment and identity is managed has always been, and remains, a crucial dynamic in black politics.

At its best, BCM thought went beyond a mere assertion of racial pride to suggest that racial domination had provided black South Africans the basis of a new sense of peoplehood and solidarity. In that sense, Black Consciousness Philosophy was a racial populist theory of politics and as such created a surprising amount of anxiety in an older generation, as many of its members had shed the racial populist tendencies of their youth. Often divided over the proper response to the ideas of a new generation, the older generation reacted to BCM by adopting strategies of confrontation, containment, or co-optation.

By openly confronting the subjective dimensions of black identity, the BCM had the capacity to rekindle an indigenous tradition of racial populism expelled by the past generation from

the official ambit of the liberation politics. In certain respects, ANC non-racialism, PAC Africanism (to a lesser extent), and SACP and NEUM Marxism had, to borrow James C. Scott's phrase, become the "public transcripts" of an older generation while racial populism remained a "hidden transcript" -- a discourse that takes place beyond the formal political arena.[33]

Populists All?: Indigenous Uses of Populism

Black South African intellectuals have reacted to racist populism with their own populist strategies of racial liberation.[34] By drawing on indigenous social concepts, black intellectuals have infused Eurocentric versions of liberalism and socialism with cultural substance and contextual relevance. Populism can be thought of as a body of syncretic ideas that evolve from the interaction of autochthonous social theory and formal ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, and nationalism. In this regard, the power of popular traditions rests with their ability to provide intellectuals with the raw material needed to create indigenous social theory. For that reason, populism together with liberalism and socialism, has been correctly identified as a fundamental strand of democratic thought.[35]

Innovative uses of social theory have resulted from intellectual efforts to reconcile the complex tradition of popular struggle against racial domination and the no less potent tradition of working class politics. Black intellectuals have employed a variety of populist strategies designed to address the race-class divide. They have chosen to champion the unified spirit of the

African people while seeking to transcend ethnic determinations and, at the same time, uphold the dignity of African tradition; to conceptualize the African masses (and sometimes other strata) as an exploited working class; to stress black solidarity and down-play class and ethnic divisions; and, to define the people of the nation in terms of multiracial opposition to apartheid.

Often manifest as a fusion of socialism and populism, black liberation thought reflects the interplay of class and national, racial, or, to a lesser extent, ethnic consciousness. Populism ultimately places emphasis on national, racial, or ethnic identity, and often shares an anti-capitalist orientation with socialism. On the other hand, both nationalist and socialist intellectuals have had to include race-conscious or non-racial populist themes in their respective mass appeals.

Since it can be difficult to distinguish voluntary support for traditional authority from the social engineering of successive white governments, the interaction of racial populism and ethnicity, or, for that matter, class consciousness and ethnicity are pertinent to an understanding of black political thought. The role of African traditional authority has long been a source of political controversy. Thus, the politics of Zulu nationalism which culminated in the Inkatha Freedom Party's demand for regional autonomy for the Zulu people and constitutional recognition of the Zulu King provides a dramatic illustration of the ways that ethnic populism can serve as a foundation for political action and for an indigenous conservatism.

Furthermore, the transformation of traditional ethnic patriarchal authority has been identified as a crucial dimension of gender politics. Gender relations are affected by traditional authority since both Roman Dutch Law as well as different systems of African customary law tend to perpetuate asymmetrical gender relations, thus contributing to the subordination of women. To the extent that masses of women are deemed an inherently progressive force in political systems corrupted by male domination, there is the potential for a feminist version of populist thought.[36]

As racially divided working and bourgeois classes developed in South Africa, two forms of populist ideology became evident: a nationalist populism which tends to reduce class differences to assertions of national, racial, multiracial, or even ethnic solidarity; and, a socialist populism which asserts that the termination of capitalism will, automatically or in successive stages, resolve the dilemmas of racial inequality and ethnic conflict. Socialist populism refers to the wide-range of Marxist-inspired analyses of the relation of class and race struggles.[37]

Similar to debates within African nationalism, whether to define "the people" in multi-racial or racial nationalist terms has also punctuated socialist debate. During the 1980s, the populist -- workerist dichotomy gained prominence as debates raged over what role black trade unions should play in the larger anti-Apartheid struggle. In particular, trade union intellectuals voiced their concerns about the pitfalls of socialist-populism -- the amalgamation of socialist and black nationalist ideas. The advent

of a tradition of socialist-populism within both the CPSA and the NEUM accentuate the force of racial proletarianization on theoretical innovation in South African Marxism. Socialist thought has had an impact on racial nationalism, but the reverse has been equally true.

In South Africa, socialist discourse has been transformed by what has been characterized as "the interpenetration of political and labour movements."[38] With respect to more resent political language, populism connotes worker or trade union involvement in political movements with broader social bases of support. Although "populism" is used pejoratively by rival "workerists", it suggest movements of workers, intellectuals, youth, and community activists whose political alliance reflects the interplay of racial militancy and class consciousness.

For workerists, like most class analysts, populist movements pose normative as well as analytic questions. For example, do populist movements embody progressive or parochial forms of consciousness? Are populist movements easily transformed into support for ruling classes? According to Ernesto Laclau, progressive populist movements are the result of those instances where working classes themselves incorporate context-specific popular-democratic themes into a defense of egalitarian values rather than merely defending national, ethnic or racial chauvinism.[39] However, the central point to be made is that in most cases populist movements combine both intellectual and mass action.

Conclusion: Citizenship -- Some Contemporary Dimensions

As a result of the prolonged struggle for political rights, black South African attitudes toward citizenship will inevitably be influenced by indigenous conceptions of liberation as well as by controversies over the meaning of equality in capitalist society. Since the organizing metaphor of most black liberation movements has been the radical equality of the people, these movements can be thought of as citizenship movements. However, whether such movements should fight for citizenship rights in a newly constituted democratic order or for political autonomy has been a central debate in black liberation discourse.

Alan Scott notes that, in many instances, a wing of a social movement comes to view the fight for citizenship rights as a co-optation strategy designed to blunt the radical edge of the struggle.[40] The ANC-led government clearly understands that it must successfully incorporate the social forces that have propelled black opposition into a legitimate legal order and, in that respect, democratic transition is a highly-charged political process. The stated objective of the government of national unity is to establish the foundation for nonracial citizenship in a democratic South Africa.

Yet for many who hold black republican sentiments, "nonracial citizenship" does not address the deeper political and psychological needs of an African majority battered by decades of racial and class oppression. True to the republican view of citizenship, they do not believe that nonracial citizenship as a

legal formality can provide the social basis for the political renovation of the black community life. Therefore, in the new South Africa, as in the old, an important challenge will be to find a constructive role for both nonracial and race-conscious politics, and in particular the often uncomfortable sentiments of the latter outlook must not be suppressed under the rhetoric of national reconciliation. Thus, the interpretation given to citizenship will be crucial to the evolution of an indigenous subjective content and meaning for South African democracy.

Given South Africa's deep racial and class divisions, the most profound task will be the creation of a political community built on the foundations of cooperation rather than merely extending formal citizenship rights that do not make a direct difference in the daily lives of the black majority. The new government is faced with the task of having to immediately implement radical education reform, solve the housing crisis, work to eliminate poverty, address massive black unemployment, and find ways to encourage greater economic democracy.

The disparity between the legal inclusion of a regime of rights and the economic exclusion of the class system in capitalist societies has become the main concern of the scholarship on citizenship.[41] Undoubtedly, South Africans will have to revisit the time-honored citizenship controversy, especially the difficult relationship between political rights, economic equality, and social justice.

ENDNOTES

1. I am aware of the contentious nature of the terms "multiracial" and "nonracial" within the context of black South African party-political debate. Nonetheless, I have decided to use the term "multiracial union" because, in my judgement, it provides a more realistic picture of the actual appeal and vision of this strand of thought. I do not necessarily exclude either black republicans or multiracial unionists from the belief in the ideal of a nonracial society.

2. While Cox himself does not use the phrase "racial proletarianization," I am indebted to his work for this conceptualization, see his Caste, Class and Race (1948; New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1970), p. 344.

3. Charles Tilly, As Sociology Meets History (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1981), p. 181.

4. Stanley Trapido, "South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialization" Journal of Development Studies 7, 3 (April, 1971), pp. 313-314. The phases Trapido notes are: commercial agriculture; diamond and gold mining; manufacturing industry; Afrikaner financial and industrial capital.

5. For advocates of the Black Consciousness Movement the term "black" includes Africans, Coloreds and Indians. Likewise, in this article, the term "black" refers to all three groupings.

6. Most mulitracial unionists are also Charterists, a designation which refers to adherents to the ANC's 1955 Freedom Charter. At the time the Freedom Charter was adopted, the major Charterist allies of the ANC included: The South African Indian Congress; the South African Coloured People's Organization; the Congress of Democrats; the South African Communist Party; and, the South African Congress of Trade Unions. In addition, to the PAC, the black republican tradition includes groups like the Non-European Unity Movement, the South African Students Organization, and the Azanian Peoples Organization. Advocates of either tradition may be socialist or non-socialist in orientation.

7. Neville Hogan,"The Posthumous Vindication of Zachariah Gqishela:Reflections on the Politics of Dependence at the Cape in the Nineteenth Century" S. Marks and A. Atmore, eds., Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa (London:Longman,1980), pp. 276-277. I draw from Hogan the important insight that an understanding of black political thought cannot be achieved by solely focusing on the politics of resistance and nationalism (populism) while ignoring the dialectical dimension of assimilation and cooperation (liberalism).

8. Peter Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952 (London: C. Hurst & Co. 1970), p. 25.

9. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 73.

10. Ibid.

11. Marian Lacey, Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa (Johannesburg: Ravan Press,1981).

12. Saul Dubow, Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36 (New York: St. Martins Press, 1989) provides a current and comprehensive discussion of the extensive literature on segregation, for an early discussion of African-American influence see R. Hunt Davis, The Black American Component in Southern Africa:Responses to Colonialism in South Africa, ca. 1890-1914" Journal of Southern African Affairs 3,1(January 1978),pp. 65-84 and more recently R.A. Hill and G.A. Pirio," 'Africa for the Africans':the Garvey Movement in South Africa, 1920-1940,"in S. Marks and S. Trapido, eds.,The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa (London & New York:Longman,1987), pp. 209-253.

13. Leo Kuper, "African Nationalism in South Africa, 1910-1964," Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa (Vol. 2), p. 433.

14. Ibid., p. 74.

15. Jordan K. Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 193, see also I. B. Tabata "Why Compromise?" in his The Awakening of the People (London: Spokesman Books, 1974), pp. 24-33.

16. For a recent discussion of the indigenous meanings of liberalism, see C.J. Driver, "Between the Hammer and the Anvil: The Quandary of Liberalism in South Africa" in R. Hunt Davis, Jr., ed., Apartheid Unravels (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991), pp. 58-76.

17. Fatima Meer, "African Nationalism -- Inhibiting Factors" in Heribert Adam, ed., South Africa, Sociological Perspectives (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 125-26.

18. R.E. van der Ross, The Rise and Decline of Apartheid (Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers, 1986), p. 174.

19. Gavin Lewis, Between the Wall and the Wire: A History of South African "Coloured" Politics (Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1987), p. 215.

20. Tabata, The Awakening of a People, p. 85.

21. I. B. Tabata, "On the Organization of the African People: Extracts from a Letter to a Friend (Nelson Mandela)" June 16, 1948, p. 2. Beineke Rare Manuscripts Collection, Yale University.

22. Kanyisa (J. Ngubane), "Congress at the Crossroads," Inkundla ya Bantu (March 13, 1947).

23. Gail Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 74.

24. Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (London: Longman,1983), p. 36.

25. Jordan Ngubane, Ushaba: The Hurtle to Blood River (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1974), p. 160.

26. A.M. Lembede, "African Trade Unions" (1947; in G. Gerhart Collection), Beineke Rare Manuscripts Collection, Yale University.

27. Karl Mannheim, "What is a Social Generation," Anthony Esler, ed., Conflict of Generations in Modern History (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath, 1974). This essay was previously published in an unedited version, see Karl Mannheim, Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, Paul Kecskemeti, ed. and trans. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953).

28. Russell Hanson, The American Imagination:Conversations With Our Past (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 24.

29. Terror' Mosiuoa Patrick Lekota, "A Personal Account," in Thirty Years of the Freedom Charter, comp. Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), p. 197.

30. For a detailed account of the debates within the liberation movement during the 1980s that led to the BCM abandoning a race analysis in favor of a class perspective, see Anthony Marks, The Lessons of Struggle (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

31. I develop this argument in my "Black Consciousness Philosophy: An Interpretation," Barney Pityana, et al (eds.) The Bounds of Possibility: Steve Biko and the Legacy of Black Consciousness(London: Zed Books, 1992).

32.Craig Calhoun, The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 98.

33. For a remarkably insightful analysis of the interaction of discourses of power and subordination, James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

34. For an important distinction between racist social movements and movements of racial liberation, see Eugene Victor Wolfenstein, "Race, Racism, and Racial Liberation." Western Political Quarterly 30, 1 (March 1977): 163-182.

35. C. B. Macpherson, The Real World of Democracy (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

36. For a discussion of the role of chieftaincy in a democratic South Africa that confronts the inequality of women under customary law, see Khanya B. Motshabi and Shreen G. Volks, "Towards Democratic Chieftaincy: Principles and Procedures," Acta Juridica (1991), pp. 104-115.

37. I first encountered the terminology "socialist-populism" in Ernesto Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism," in his Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory (London: Verso, 1977). With reference to South Africa, Alex Callinicos, "Marxism and Revolution in South Africa," International Socialism, 2, 31 (Spring, 1986) considers the South African Communist Party, the ANC and United Democratic Front to be a part of the dominant populist tradition and the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement to be a part of the minority populist tradition. John Saul, "South Africa: the Question of Strategy," New Left Review, #160 (November-December, 1986), pp. 3-21, insists that the tension inherent within a popular-democratic program defies simplistic characterizations such as "workerist" and "populist."

38. Lodge, Black Politics, p. 80.

39. Laclau, Politics and Ideology p. 174.

40. Alan Scott, Ideology and the New Social Movements (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 24.

41. See for example, I and B.S. Turner, Citizenship and Social Theory (London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1993).