

African Americans & African Africans

George M. Fredrickson

Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare
by James H. Cone
Orbis Books, 358 pp., \$22.95

The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa
by Julie Frederikse
Indiana University Press,
294 pp., \$39.95; \$15.95 (paper)

Sobekwe and Apartheid
by Benjamin Pogrod
Rutgers University Press,
406 pp., \$40.00; \$14.95 (paper)

1.
Close comparisons of the "freedom struggles" of African Americans and

campaign, he argued that there was a big difference between a minority's battle for equality in a predominantly white society and a black majority's effort to overthrow the rule of a white minority. The distinction that he made between an essentially reformist civil rights movement and a revolutionary effort to empower a disenfranchised majority seemed totally persuasive.

But the unexpected events of the past two years have blurred this distinction somewhat. By deciding to give up the armed struggle and negotiate with the de Klerk government, the African National Congress has not abandoned its goal of winning power for the black majority, but the methods it must now use to achieve this end may bear comparison with those used

ported by force from one continent to another, and one deriving mainly from conquered peoples, who were dominated and oppressed but left with some shred of autonomy and dignity), black South African leaders and intellectuals have often in the past looked to African American movements and ideologies for inspiration and guidance. Odd as it may seem now, some of the men who founded the African National Congress (originally called the South African Native National Congress) in 1912 were under the spell of Booker T. Washington and his doctrine of black self-help and accommodation to white authority. In his acceptance speech, the first president of the Congress called Washington his "guiding star,"

activities of the NAACP. Dr. A. B. Xuma, president of the ANC from 1940 to 1949, had studied in the United States for thirteen years. (At the University of Minnesota he met Roy Wilkins, the future head of the NAACP, who was to be a lifelong friend.) At the time he headed the ANC, Xuma had an African American wife and remained in close touch with African American developments.¹ During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Black Power movement in the United States provided most of the rhetoric and some of the ideas for the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa.² Julie Frederikse's documentary history of ideological currents in the anti-apartheid struggle, *The Unbreakable Thread*, provides new evidence of how the thinking of young Africans in the early 1970s could be revolutionized from reading Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Eldridge Cleaver.

But there is a conspicuous and revealing gap in the history of an African American influence and example in South Africa. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the nonviolent direct action for equal rights that he represented had relatively little meaning for the anti-apartheid resistance in South Africa. There is nothing mysterious about this. In 1963, three years before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the African National Congress, under a new leadership, including Nelson Mandela, that was more militant and confrontational than the elite that previously ran it, had embarked on a campaign of nonviolent resistance. Ruthless repression, culminating in the massacre at Sharpeville in 1960, convinced the African nationalist leadership that nonviolence would not work in the face of an implacable and unscrupulous racist regime, and that force, initially limited to sabotage but later including guerrilla warfare, would have to be employed.

Thus, at about the time that King was achieving international recognition as an advocate and practitioner of nonviolent direct action, the South African struggle had taken a turn that tended to make his philosophy outdated and irrelevant. In James H. Cone's comparative biography of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, *Martin & Malcolm & America*, we discover that in a 1964 radio talk in Britain Malcolm X used Nelson Mandela's conversion to violence as a reason for describing King's nonviolent

Garvey Movement in South Africa," in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, edited by Shola Marks and Stanley Trapido (Longman, 1987), pp. 209-253.

¹Some of this information comes from my own work in the Xuma papers at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

²See Gail M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (University of California Press, 1978), pp. 273-281.



Malcolm X in 1962

of black South Africans are difficult to make because of the great differences in the situation and the prospects of people of color in the two societies. One fundamental difference was brought home to me in the spring of 1989 when I visited the Reverend Allan Boesak, then a leading figure in the domestic resistance to apartheid, in his office in a "Coloured" suburb of Cape Town. In both his inner and his outer offices, Boesak had hung large portraits of Martin Luther King, Jr. I knew also that he had written a dissertation in theology at the University of Leiden on the ethics of Dr. King and Malcolm X.³ But when I asked him to reflect on the relationship between the black American movements of the Sixties and his own anti-apartheid

by African Americans to dismantle legalized segregation in the 1960s. Up to now, the ANC has not had much success in mobilizing the masses for nonviolent action to put pressure on the government for a new constitution based on one-person-one-vote; it has been preoccupied with violent challenges to its claim to speak for blacks, especially from the Zulu-based Inkatha movement. In its efforts to build an effective and disciplined popular movement—one that can give muscle to the negotiating position of its leaders by giving them the capacity to call forth effective consumer boycotts, general strikes, and mass demonstrations—it may find that the southern Civil Rights movement offers some useful tactical lessons.

Despite the obvious differences in racial demography (and the subtler differences between a population descended from slaves who were trans-

ported by force from one continent to another, and one deriving mainly from conquered peoples, who were dominated and oppressed but left with some shred of autonomy and dignity), black South African leaders and intellectuals have often in the past looked to African American movements and ideologies for inspiration and guidance. Odd as it may seem now, some of the men who founded the African National Congress (originally called the South African Native National Congress) in 1912 were under the spell of Booker T. Washington and his doctrine of black self-help and accommodation to white authority. In his acceptance speech, the first president of the Congress called Washington his "guiding star,"

because he was "the most famous and the best living example of our African's sons."⁴ Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican black nationalist who based his "Africa for the Africans" movement in Harlem and attracted widespread African-American support just after World War I, also had a vogue in South Africa. Besides gaining the admiration of some members of the African elite, he inspired messianic popular movements fed by a prophecy that he would appear at the head of a black American army to overthrow white rule.⁵

In the 1940s, the ANC was led by an American-educated physician who drew inspiration from the civil rights

³Peter Walsbe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952* (University of California Press, 1971), p. 13.

⁴See Robert A. Hill and Gregory A. Piro, "Africa for the Africans": the

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philosophy as "bankrupt." Cone also notes that King was always more popular in Europe than in the third world: "His philosophy of nonviolence was ignored in many Third World countries as their colored inhabitants took up arms against European colonizers."

What happened in the African National Congress between the 1940s and the 1960s—or between the age of Xuma and that of Mandela—was that the struggle was redefined. An earlier, more moderate ANC leadership had viewed their cause as one of gradual reform to achieve equal rights, a clear counterpart to the NAACP's program for the United States; a new and more militant leadership, emerging from the ANC Youth League of the 1940s, moved from nonviolent confrontation to armed struggle, with an increasing conviction that their model was anti-colonialist revolution rather than an American-style civil rights movement. Only when revolutionary, anti-imperialist rhetoric began to come from black Americans in the late 1960s did African American thought again strike a chord with a substantial number of black South African activists.

If one looks for the recurring themes in the history of dialogue and cross-fertilization between African American and black South African thought about equality or liberation, it becomes evident that blacks in the two societies have shared a common problem that did not have to be faced by most anti-colonialist revolutionaries. In simplest terms; it was the question of what to do about the whites. Although only a minority in South Africa (currently about 15 percent of the total population), Europeans have been there for almost as long as those in the United States and seem likely to stay. Occasionally there has been talk of pushing the white man into the sea, but prominent intellectual leaders of all ideological persuasions have tended to accept the white presence as an unalterable fact of life.

In the United States, an extreme version of black nationalism has emerged from time to time to call for a total separation of the races through black emigration or by ceding blacks a part of the United States, but most black thinkers and political leaders have assumed that African Americans would continue to live with whites in a common society and under a single government. The difficult question, applicable to both situations, is whether blacks should go it alone in their struggle against white supremacy or whether they should cooperate with those whites who profess a commitment to racial justice. The nationalist position is that blacks have to fight their own battles. White allies will be unreliable because few will be able to overcome completely their culture's and assumption of white superiority, and undesirable because their presence in a black liberation movement will endanger the racial solidarity and spirit of self-determination deemed essential to group pride and mobilization. (Malcolm X's verdict on the white liberal was that "when the chips are down, you'll find that as fixed in him as his bone structure is his sometimes unconscious conviction that he's better than anybody black.")

Interracialists, or (to use the South African terminology) "nonracialists," "The Autobiography of Malcolm X (Grove, 1965), p. 27.

welcome the involvement of some antiracist whites because the cause is defined as a crusade to transcend race in the name of a color-blind conception of democracy. The actual history of a debate over relations with whites is not, however, as neat and simple as this abstract dichotomy would suggest. In practice, the lines between interracialist and separatist nationalism could blur in response to the opportunities or exigencies of the moment. For example, it was sometimes argued that blacks needed to go it alone in the short term in order to develop the strength and self-confidence to interact and make common cause with sympathetic whites at some time in the future—when they could do so on the basis of feeling equal. Because of similarities in the ways such issues were formulated and resolved, there are some instructive analogies between the "separate or together" debate of the Sixties in the United States and the South African debate that began in the 1950s and continues today between "nonracialists" and advocates of "Africanism" or "Black Consciousness."

James H. Cone's *Martin & Malcolm & America* is an illuminating discussion of how the issue of integration vs. separation was played out in the thought of the two most influential black leaders of the 1960s. Although unknown to most whites, Cone himself is a major figure in recent black intellectual history. A professor for many years at Union Theological Seminary, he is usually regarded as the father of "black theology"—the synthesis of Christian belief and Black Power ideology that emerged out of the ferment of the late 1960s. Because he went beyond narrow ethnocentrism and made the plight of blacks in the United States a symbol of black oppression for the poor throughout the world, arguing that Christ's message for the modern age was social revolution, he influenced the founders of Latin American liberation theology (which may explain why his latest book is published by the Maryknoll fathers). He also helped to inspire the development of a Black Theology in South Africa and has engaged in a serious, ongoing dialogue with black South African churchmen opposed to apartheid.

Much of Cone's original inspiration came from Malcolm X, and his early work might be seen as an effort to give a Christian justification to Malcolm's black nationalism. One might therefore expect that his book comparing "Martin and Malcolm" would be a brief for the latter and a rejection of the former. But in fact he tries to show that both were authentic representatives of black America and that their views were not as irreconcilable as is generally supposed. He begins by putting each leader in a particular sociological setting. King embodied the potential for liberation of the southern black middle class. Steeped in the Christian universalism of the southern black church, the self-help, character-building philosophy of Booker T.

"See Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power* (Seabury Press, 1969) and *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Lippincott, 1970).

"See Dwight N. Hopkins, *Black Theology, U.S.A. and South Africa: Politics, Culture, and Liberation* (Orbis Books, 1989).

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Washington, and the progressive civil rights activism of the NAACP, King was in a good position to lead a non-violent campaign against legalized segregation. But in giving voice to the aspirations of southern and middle-class blacks, he failed to address the problems and concerns of lower- or working-class blacks, especially in the northern urban ghettos.

As King himself came to recognize, the desperate and deteriorating economic and social conditions of the ghetto poor could not be remedied by civil rights laws aimed at the southern Jim Crow system. Furthermore, the values to which he appealed on behalf of nonviolence and integration had little meaning to those trapped in the ghetto by structural or institutional forms of racism that made integration seem like a pipe dream. For many blacks whose principal contacts with whites came in the form of police harassment and brutality, a doctrine of integration through nonviolent protest seemed more like a device to pacify blacks and save the consciences of white liberals than a program for black liberation.

According to Cone, Malcolm X gave voice to the genuine feelings and aspirations of the mass of northern urban blacks. By calling on them to value their blackness and separate themselves voluntarily from whites, he provided the only basis for pride and positive identity that was in fact available to them. By sanctioning violence, at least for the purposes of self-defense, he endorsed attitudes toward whites that were more natural and appropriate to the circumstances of most blacks than King's seemingly impossible demand that blacks turn the other cheek and love their oppressors. When Malcolm rejected America and told blacks that they had no stake in what he considered an irretrievably white-supremacist society, he reflected the reality of ghetto life as many blacks felt and perceived it.

It is hard to accept Cone's view that Malcolm's "vituperative language against whites did not mean that he hated whites or that he was trying to make blacks hate them." During his period as a minister for the Nation of Islam, and before he broke with Elijah Muhammad, was he not in effect arguing that whites deserved to be hated? But he had tapped a deep vein of justifiable anger and resentment within the black community. To say that racism breeds counter-racism does not deny the importance of Malcolm X. In exposing whites to the real feelings of many blacks, he revealed the dimensions of the American racial problem to an extent that the King of the early 1960s was unable to do.

Cone's contrast of King's position before 1965 and Malcolm's before he broke with the Black Muslims in 1964 contains few surprises for anyone who has a keen memory of the events of the period—although it is useful to have such a vivid reminder of the fierce debates of the time. More original and potentially more controversial is Cone's contention that both men changed their views late in their tragically abbreviated lives in ways that substantially narrowed the gap between them and removed the necessity to choose between their philosophies. After breaking with Elijah Muhammad and becoming an orthodox

Muslim, Malcolm X emphatically repudiated his cosmic racialism and admitted his thinking a conception of human brotherhood. He even conceded that all white Americans were not "devils" and that some whites might contribute positively to the cause of African American liberation—not however by joining black organizations, such as Malcolm's own Organization for Afro-American Unity, but rather by working to combat racism within their own communities.

Malcolm remained a separatist and black nationalist, and his new nonsectarian version of black self-determination was perhaps the main intellectual source for the Black Power movement that arose after his death in 1965. But his categorical antipathy to whites—which has to be considered racist—was abandoned, along with his assumption that blacks had no conceivable place in America. He now seemed to entertain the hope, if not the expectation, that a unified black community might be able to transform America itself into some kind of democratic plural society in which blacks could feel at home without having to reject their identity as people with African roots and a distinctive culture.

Malcolm's movement toward a qualified, pluralistic form of interracialism is well known to hundreds of thousands of readers of his autobiography. Less well recognized is King's acknowledgment toward the end of his life that all forms of black separatism and self-segregation were not bad. The disillusionment with America that set in after the Watts riot of 1965, the failure of his Chicago open housing campaign, and the nation's deepening commitment to what he came to regard as an imperialist war in Vietnam did not make King repudiate his dream of an integrated America, but it did force a reassessment of how hard it would be to get there.

The plight of black America, he began to realize, was inseparable from the inequities of a capitalist society; true equality would require more than the abolition of legalized segregation and the protection of black civil rights. Along with the well-documented turn toward democratic socialism went a certain disenchantment with the mainstream white liberals who had backed the Civil Rights Act but had no stomach for the elimination of poverty through the redistribution of wealth.

Cone shows that King also softened his opposition to black separatism. In 1967 and 1968, he acknowledged the need for "temporary segregation" in cases where desegregation was not, for the time being, a practical possibility (as in the inner cities), or where integration meant a loss of group power. "There may be periods," he told a Miami audience in February 1968, "where segregation may be a temporary way-station to an integrated society," and expressed the fear that in cases of desegregation in which the dissolution of black-run institutions or associations was

The radicalization of King's social and economic thought is demonstrated effectively in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (Morrow, 1986).

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involved, blacks might be "integrated out of power."

In the last analysis, despite Cone's efforts, King does not make a very convincing black nationalist, and it is hard to believe that he and Malcolm would ever have fully agreed on the separate-or-together issue even if both had lived to a ripe old age. On one question, as Cone readily concedes, they remained in deep disagreement—the choice of violence or nonviolence as the path to black liberation in the United States. And here, somewhat surprisingly, in view of his endorsements of black violence in his early expositions of Black Theology, Cone comes down on the side of King. He also proclaims that King's vision of a "beloved community" united across racial lines by Christian love remains "the ultimate goal" of the black freedom movement:

As important as black nationalism is for the African-American struggle, it cannot be the ultimate goal. The beloved community must remain the primary objective for which we are striving. On this point Martin was right: "For better or worse we are all on this particular land together at the same time, and we have to work it out together."

Cone concludes by invoking the contemporary image of America as a multicultural "rainbow" composed of diverse "members of one human family," in which no group claims genetic or cultural superiority over the others. From his perspective of the 1990s, Cone argues that the achievement of King's beloved community requires not only elimination of the racism that he and Malcolm understood and fought so courageously, but also the "classism" that they more dimly perceived, and the "sexism" that they completely failed to recognize and struggle against.

Cone's attempt to synthesize the ideas of King and Malcolm and update their insights to conform with more recent trends in "liberationist" thought is a major contribution to the discussion of race and ethnicity in modern America. But one unresolved tension in his thinking exposed the philosophical problem at the root of current debates about cultural pluralism. At one point, Cone seems to be criticizing King for his "universalism" and praising Malcolm for his ethnic particularism:

Malcolm's faith was universal; that is, it was meant to embrace everybody, which meant, in the modern world of Euro-America, that it was ultimately defined by white people and those who shared their values. Malcolm had to reinterpret a white religion, designed to enslave blacks, into a religion of black liberation. Malcolm, however, contended that black people "need a religious expression that is not dictated and controlled by their enemies," but rather by themselves.

Cone praises Malcolm X for rejecting Black Muslim ideas and turning to orthodox Islam, because this allowed him to "move toward a universal perspective on humanity that was centered on his commitment to the black

liberation struggle in America." Cone seems to assume that a universalism derived from the European tradition is fatally contaminated by racism, whereas one that is based on a non-Western source such as Islam is justified because of its putative link to the struggle against white or Western domination.

Beyond the obvious question of how Cone justifies his own adherence to Christianity, there is the more serious issue of the complex relationship of "Western values" to the liberation struggles of people of non-Western origins. Although racism, broadly defined, may not be uniquely Western, the rationalized, pseudo-scientific

appropriation of those that seem truly universal in their capacity to liberate and humanize "everybody," seems to me self-denying and possibly self-defeating. It is difficult to see what else can serve as the basis for the egalitarian rainbow society that Cone proclaims as his ultimate goal.

2.

Julie Frederikse's *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racism in South Africa* demonstrates that the South African anti-apartheid movement has rejected racial separatism, even as a temporary phase of the struggle, and



ANC rally, Johannesburg, October 1989

form of racism that served to justify a worldwide system of domination and exploitation undoubtedly is. But antiracism and the ideal of universal human rights are at least in their characteristic modern formulations also products of Western civilization. Those non-Western struggles for freedom or self-determination that have proclaimed some form of democracy as their objective have appealed to conceptions of human rights first abstractly set forth by eighteenth-century European or American thinkers and revolutionaries; and they were given new social and economic content by nineteenth-century European socialists. It is no more accurate to say that Western thought is inherently racist than to say that is inherently antiracist. It can be either, depending on how it is interpreted and on what is regarded as essential and what is seen as the betrayal of its essence.

King's creative appropriation of Christian altruism and the social gospel was a powerful and persuasive argument for black liberation from Jim Crow, just as Frederick Douglass's appropriation of Enlightenment conceptions of natural rights furthered the cause of abolitionism in the nineteenth century. Wholesale rejection of Western values, as opposed to the ap-

proach of those that seem truly universal in their capacity to liberate and humanize "everybody," seems to me self-denying and possibly self-defeating. It is difficult to see what else can serve as the basis for the egalitarian rainbow society that Cone proclaims as his ultimate goal.

Julie Frederikse's *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racism in South Africa* demonstrates that the South African anti-apartheid movement has rejected racial separatism, even as a temporary phase of the struggle, and

has embraced a color-blind universalism without warring about its cultural antecedents. Frederikse, who has been a correspondent for National Public Radio in South Africa, uses oral history interviews and documents to demonstrate that the black nationalist or Afrocentric conceptions of the cause have had a hearing but have remained a minority viewpoint and that the main currents of the movement have remained resolutely "non-racialist" in outlook. If King's nonviolence and specifically Christian form of universalism put limits on his capacity to inspire anti-apartheid freedom fighters in South Africa, a secular ideology of human liberation that is mainly Western in derivation has resolved the "separate or together" issue by choosing a form of "integration" that seems, on the surface at least, akin to what King was fighting for. Malcolm X and his Black Power disciples appear in this account in the role of pied pipers who led some young South African blacks away from the straight-and-narrow path of non-racism in the 1970s by promulgating "Black Consciousness"; fortunately, in Frederikse's view, most of these young militants later found their way back to the true cause of color-blind liberation.

Americans, especially liberal whites, who look back with nostalgia on the "black and white together" spirit of the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s might be tempted to contrast South African non-racism with the tendency toward race consciousness and separatism that has persisted in African-American politics and ideology since the late Sixties (a black nationalist strain that is evident not only in Cone's book but also in the popular films of Spike Lee and in the social relations that are visible on every college campus) and to wonder how we might emulate the South African spirit of togetherness.

It would be a serious mistake, however, to make Frederikse's "non-racism" a synonym for what was usually meant by "integration" in the 1960s. Integration meant primarily the assimilation of African Americans with middle-class credentials into the white middle class. Frederikse firmly repudiates such a program for incorporating a black bourgeoisie into the existing social and economic system. She identifies such a doctrine with a South African liberal tradition that sought to maintain white supremacy and avoid the liberation of the black masses by creating and coopting a black capitalist elite. Frederikse's version of non-racism is unlikely to travel well to the United States, because its fundamental assumptions are Marxist rather than liberal-capitalist.

The Unbreakable Thread presents a kind of conversion narrative in which an advocate of Black Consciousness comes to realize that the basis of apartheid is "class" not "race" and that racism is caused by capitalism. It follows that racism can only be eliminated by the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist order. The kind of whites who can hope to become brothers-or-sisters-in-arms with blacks in the anti-apartheid struggle are described succinctly and clearly in the ANC policy document of 1969 admitting whites for the first time to full membership in the organization:

Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions. Firstly, they must not be ambiguous on the primary role of the most oppressed African mass, and secondly, those belonging to other oppressed groups and those few white revolutionaries [my italics] who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality.

In practice "white revolutionaries" has usually meant white members of the South African Communist Party. One of them, Joe Slovo, has since risen to a top leadership position. For the most part, the ANC's version of an "integrated" movement has meant the incorporation of the only whites the leadership found trustworthy, those who were committed to a Marxist conception of the struggle. White liberals and social democrats, even those who joined the integrated and resolutely non-racial Liberal party in the 1950s and 1960s, were not, for the most part, considered potential allies mainly because their anticommunism was viewed as divisive.

As Frederike's documentary history were the whole story of non-racism one might have legitimate reason to view her ideas as merely an extrapolation from Marxist doctrine and might also conclude that the ANC is a thoroughly Communist-dominated organization. But the somewhat slighter the other main source of the non-racist tradition—the South African variant of the social Christianity that influenced Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States. Entirely absent from the documents demonstrating the meaning of non-racism are extracts from the speeches of Albert Lutuli, the non-Marxist Christian who was president-general of the ANC from 1952 to 1967, or testimony from notable Christian supporters of the ANC who could have been interviewed, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev. Allan Boesak, and the Reverend Beyers Naude.

It is useful to hear the views of the white leftists who are featured in the volume, but their secular and materialist perspective does not exhaust the meaning of non-racism. The decision of the ANC leadership to include Naude, an Afrikaner ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church, as one of two whites on its negotiating team shows the leadership is more sensitive than Frederike is to the contribution of Christians who were led by their faith into anti-apartheid activism. But one should not anticipate a conflict between the Christians and the Marxists in the organization. For the most part the Christian element in the ANC is committed to a liberation theology, similar to that of Latin American cler-

ical revolutionaries, and therefore views a struggle against capitalism on behalf of God's poor as a fulfillment of the Gospel.¹⁰

In sharp contrast to Conc's effort to synthesize aspects of the nationalist and integrationist traditions in African-American thought, Frederike treats the black nationalist strain in the struggle against apartheid as an unfortunate deviation from the non-racism triumphant in the ANC. She provides documents reflecting the views of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), founded in 1959 by a group of former ANC activists who objected to the kind of cooperation between Africans and radical whites and Indians that the ANC was then prescribing. She includes an account of the Black Consciousness movement of the late 1960s and 1970s that broadened the definition of "black" to include Indians and "Coloureds," but rejected association with white opponents of apartheid. But the testimony presented from recent interviews with people who were involved with such movements in the past stresses the extent to which they outgrew such a limiting philosophy. Some of them see Black Consciousness as a stage that had to be gone through on the path to non-racism, while others have come to the conclusion that such notions were misguided from the beginning. A good example of the ANC view of Black Consciousness comes from Steve Tshwete, who was imprisoned

See Louise Kretzchnar, *The Voice of Black Theology in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).

on Robben Island from 1964 to 1970 and who had much to do with changing the views of the Black Consciousness advocates who were added to the community of political prisoners in the late 1970s.

We knew that it was the responsibility of the revolutionary movement to direct the Black Consciousness Movement into more progressive positions. I mean, we certainly knew that BC could give problems in the long run, by reason of it being colour politics. Colour politics are dangerous. They are just as bad as tribal politics, you know. That's why we know that the imperialist countries were very much interested in boosting Black Consciousness, knowing that politics of the skin are going to blind the revolutionary drive of the working class, and in particular, the anti-imperialist nature of the struggle.

Advocacy of non-racism has served the anti-apartheid cause well. It has given the movement an ethical legitimacy in the eyes of most of the world that a particularistic, black nationalist emphasis could not have provided. In its specifically Marxist formulation, well reflected in Tshwete's comments, it identified the movement with an international struggle against capitalism and imperialism and consequently evoked substantial aid from the "socialist nations" and became a favorite cause of the far left in Western societies. But since it could also be interpreted as an embodiment of

Christian ethics or liberal humanism, it attracted support well beyond the anticapitalist left and became the great international cause célèbre that in the 1980s led Western capitalist democracies to impose sanctions against South Africa, thereby helping to force the white supremacist regime to begin dismantling apartheid.

Frederike's book, coming as it does at a time when the left throughout the world has been forced to reevaluate some of its traditional positions, invites a harder look at the ANC conception of non-racism than one might have been inclined to take a few years ago. Viewed simply as a judgment that racism is a great evil and that a just society has no place for racial and ethnic discrimination, it is unexceptionable. But the way the concept is used by Frederike—which is also how it is used by an influential element in the ANC—poses a number of problems. At a time when orthodox Marxism is in retreat throughout the world, can it provide a workable philosophy for a post-apartheid South Africa? If not, what can take its place, given the fact that the most dedicated and effective opponents of apartheid have bled their opposition to white racism and black chauvinism on essentially Marxist assumptions?

I was struck two years ago when I participated in a seminar on South African history and politics at Oxford that the students, most of whom were South Africans representing the full spectrum of racial groups, tended to embrace a Marxist fundamentalism that seemed totally impervious to what was then occurring in Eastern

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Europe. This was especially true of the whites among them. In visiting South African campuses at about the same time, I found more adherence to orthodox Marxism among white students and faculty than one would be likely to find in any American university.

What this phenomenon reflects, I think, is a long tradition of viewing the struggle as an either/or choice of socialist revolution or racist capitalism. As a practical matter, given the characteristic weakness and indecisiveness of liberals in South Africa and the exacting ideological standards that the ANC applied to white adherents, virtually the only way that antiracist whites have been able to attach themselves directly to the black-led struggle against apartheid was to affiliate with or support the South African Communist Party. Frederikse's book clearly reflects this circumstance, since most of the examples of white non-racialism that she presents are from Communists or their sympathizers. But, it seems necessary to ask, can a genuinely non-racial South Africa be built on such an apparently outmoded sectarianism? As the ANC itself seems increasingly willing to concede, its socialist inclinations will have to be restrained if it is to reach accommodation with the white government and share in the fruits of a South African economy. (Which is not to say that it must or can accept the opposite extreme of unfettered free-market capitalism.)

Another problem with the conception of non-racialism emerges from *The Unbreakable Thread*. It carries the concept to the point that denies all significance to race and ethnicity. It is one thing to say that race is a social and cultural construction rather than a natural phenomenon that pre-determines the relations among people. It is another to maintain, as some of the activists in this book do, that one can forget about it entirely in planning the future of what historically has been an ethnically and racially divided society.¹¹ Consciousness of race or ethnicity reflects the historical experiences of whites and blacks, Afrikaners and English, Xhosa and Zulu. To some extent ethnic loyalties or identities have broken down over the homogenizing effects of industrialization and urbanization, but they remain psychologically powerful and will continue to be influential long after the legal basis of group differentiation has been removed. Simply denying their importance—as Frederikse's non-racialists tend to do—would seem to be a prescription for disappointment and disillusionment. A non-Utopian approach to non-racialism would acknowledge the validity of ethnic loyalties and identities that do not actually involve racism—i.e., the impulse to maintain or establish domination over other groups.

¹¹A useful corrective to this view is Donald L. Horowitz's important new book, *A Democratic South Africa? Political Engineering in a Divided Society* (University of California Press, 1991). But in my opinion Horowitz goes too far in the opposite direction when he makes racial and ethnic divisions all-powerful determinants, ignoring the extent to which the class relationships of an industrial society complicate and modify group conflicts in South Africa.

The Unbreakable Thread nowhere seems to acknowledge that an egalitarian cultural pluralism could have a part in the struggle against racism. The notion that class consciousness will totally supplant race consciousness in a democratic South Africa seems naive, and is contradicted by much historical experience.

Perhaps proponents of black liberation in South Africa have something to learn from African American thinkers with roots in the black nationalist tradition, like James Cone. If Frederikse's non-racialism were to be advanced as a solution for the American race problem, it is likely that Cone and many other African-American intellectuals would reject it out of hand as a threat to black identity and pride. Of course a black minority is in a very different situation from a black majority. South African blacks have little reason to be worried about being swallowed up or assimilated out of existence. But a democratic and majoritarian South Africa will contain large

ground—his mother was a Xhosa, his father a Sotho—who joined the militant ANC Youth League while a student at South African Native College at Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape Province during the late 1940s. In the 1950s, first as a teacher in African high schools and then as a lecturer in African languages at the white University of the Witwatersrand, he took an increasingly dim view of the decision by the new ANC leaders, mainly former Youth Leaguers like himself, to compromise the original Youth League aim of turning the ANC into an orthodox nationalist movement for liberation from colonial domination, similar to those emerging elsewhere in Africa.

What Sobukwe and his supporters found intolerable was the tendency to downgrade black African nationalism and the right of Africans to self-determination that resulted from ANC collaboration with radical members of other racial groups. He objected most strongly to the conspicuous role



Robert Sobukwe's funeral, Graaff Reinet, South Africa, 1978

white, Indian, and Coloured minorities. One-person-one-vote will not automatically protect their right to cultural freedom. One limitation of the dominant form of non-racialism is that it gives little or no thought to such matters. Until recently, it can be argued, it was tactically unwise to pay attention to divisions among the oppressed, and unnecessary or beside the point, to worry about how white communities would fare in a black-dominated South Africa. But as negotiations begin, such issues have to be confronted. It is doubtful that an orthodox-Marxist version of non-racialism provides an adequate basis to deal with them justly and effectively.

Benjamin Pogrud's *Sobukwe and Apartheid* gives us the opportunity to evaluate other visions of the struggle against apartheid. The author is a white liberal journalist, and the subject, Robert Sobukwe, was the leading proponent of an "Africanist" alternative to the ANC's brand of non-racialism in the late 1950s. Somewhat in the vein of Donald Woods's book about Steve Biko,¹² it is the history of a friendship across racial and ideological lines as well as a biography.

Robert Sobukwe was an intellectual and politician of mixed tribal back-

ground. His mother was a Xhosa, his father a Sotho—who joined the militant ANC Youth League while a student at South African Native College at Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape Province during the late 1940s. In the 1950s, first as a teacher in African high schools and then as a lecturer in African languages at the white University of the Witwatersrand, he took an increasingly dim view of the decision by the new ANC leaders, mainly former Youth Leaguers like himself, to compromise the original Youth League aim of turning the ANC into an orthodox nationalist movement for liberation from colonial domination, similar to those emerging elsewhere in Africa.

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that white Communists seemed to be playing in the "multi-racial" Congress Alliance of the mid-to-late 1950s.¹³ Like Malcolm X and his black nationalist successors in the United States, Sobukwe distrusted whites who embraced the black cause and sought to keep them at arm's length. He feared they would blunt the edge of black solidarity and self-reliance by influencing the movement to pursue goals that blacks had not established for themselves. He did not, however, make the kind of vituperative attacks on whites as a race that earned Malcolm X his reputation as a black supremacist, and he proclaimed that the ultimate goal of his racially based struggle was a truly non-racial society in which each person would be accorded equal rights regardless of color or ethnicity. Indeed, he criticized the leadership of the ANC in the 1950s for its tactic of multiracial federalism in which Afri-

¹²The Congress Alliance, which was responsible for the Freedom Charter of 1955 (a document that remains to this day the official creed of the ANC and its allies), was a cooperative relationship between four organizations, each representing one of the main racial groupings in South Africa. Besides the ANC, the alliance consisted of the white Congress of Democrats, the South African Coloured People's Association, and the South African Indian Congress.

¹³Donald Woods, *Biko* (Vintage Books, 1979).

cans, Coloureds, Indians, and whites organized themselves separately and were viewed as having rights as groups.¹⁴ Although sympathetic to some form of socialism that would reflect African communal traditions, he regarded Marxism as an alien, European ideology that would distort the meaning of African liberation from racial oppression. In other words, he dissented vigorously from the orthodox non-racialism canonized by Frederikse. In a letter to Pogrud, sent from Robben Island, where Sobukwe was imprisoned in the 1960s, he summed up his lifelong conviction that race, not class, was the central element in the South African struggle:

The point is, Benjie, when we talk of European experiences, we talk in terms of class.... But in Africa, particularly, though I believe this goes for Asia too, to a large extent, class interests are either non-existent or irrelevant or muted. The oppression and the struggles are group oppressions and group struggles. In Europe when a member of the middle class wrote about the lower classes, he was writing about a different people. In this country the dichotomy is a colour one. Class distinctions within the group are muted and perhaps even discouraged and emphasis is placed on the solidarity and unity of the group.

In 1958, Sobukwe called for the secession of the Africanist faction from the ANC, and in 1959 he was elected the first president of the rival Pan-Africanist Congress. In 1960, he mounted the extensive campaign of civil disobedience to apartheid that led to the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of both the PAC and the ANC. Arrested for his part in the protest, Sobukwe was sentenced to prison for three years. When his term had been served, his imprisonment was extended indefinitely as the result of a special act of parliament. He was finally released from prison in 1969 but was kept under house arrest at his home in Kimberley until he died of cancer in 1978.

Pogrud first met Sobukwe in Johannesburg in 1957, and a friendship developed that would last until Sobukwe's death. At the time of their meeting, Pogrud was active in the Liberal party, a racially integrated organization founded by anti-apartheid whites who had come to disapprove of the ANC's officially sanctioned white auxiliary, the Congress of Democrats, because of a well-founded belief that the latter was Communist-dominated. Pogrud and Sobukwe agreed that communism was an inherently undemocratic doctrine that would substitute one form of oppression for another, but they obviously could not agree on whether the struggle against apartheid should be an interracial or all-African affair.

Contrary to his popular image, Pogrud assures us, Sobukwe was not a black racist who hated all white people.

¹⁴The Freedom Charter seemed to be advocating some form of ethnic federalism as the blueprint for a post-apartheid South Africa when it called for "equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races." Currently the ANC is opposed to all forms of group representation.

His commitment to the idea that Africans should go it alone was based on the tactical consideration that only a racially exclusive nationalist orientation would address the realities of racial oppression in South Africa and bring the masses of black people into the struggle. Pogrand argued in vain that racial consciousness and hostility to whites were not attitudes that could be easily changed after white domination was ended: like other liberals, he worried about the danger of white supremacy turning into black supremacy and was not reassured by Sobukwe's personal commitment to the "ultimate" achievement of a non-racial, egalitarian society.

Although Pogrand does not make a point of it, Sobukwe can also be criticized for his disastrous miscalculation of the possibilities for sudden black liberation in 1960. Unlike the ANC, which had learned from earlier campaigns that the apartheid regime should not be confronted by widespread direct action until the people at the grass roots had been effectively organized and educated, the PAC leadership believed that promulgating the correct liberationist doctrine (essentially that Africans should rise up to reclaim their birthrights as masters of their ancestral homeland), and the exemplary action of PAC supporters going to jail rather than obey racist laws, would evoke a spontaneous uprising of the masses that would quickly bring the apartheid regime to its knees.

When the PAC led crowds of Africans to turn in their passes and ac-

cept imprisonment, hoping that the movement would grow when they did so, they failed to take account of the readiness to shoot down unarmed blacks that the police would demonstrate at Sharpeville and the capacity of the government to respond in a repressive fashion to the violence and disorder that its propaganda subsequently blamed on the African protesters. They also overestimated the readiness of the masses to risk everything in a bid for liberation. Their romantic, populist conception of black revolution led to the banning and virtual decimation of their own organization and also forced the rival ANC underground and into exile.¹⁴

Whatever limitations might be found in its ideology, the ANC was, and has remained, a more realistic and tactically supple organization than the PAC. (The characteristic idealism and rigidity of the PAC is currently being manifested in its opposition to all agreements with the white government.) Communist influence in the ANC has probably contributed to this pragmatism and flexibility, just as it has helped to sustain the ideal of non-racialism. Communist doctrine has no place for "premature revolutionaries" or for "propaganda of the deed." It also favors "popular fronts" with non-Communist "progressive" forces at times when revolutionary conditions do not exist. Paradoxically,

¹⁴See Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1965* (Longman, 1983), pp. 201-230.

therefore, the Communists have been, on the whole, a moderating and steadying element in the ANC; however objectionable their underlying ideology and ultimate objectives may be, they have contributed to the discipline and cohesiveness of the ANC as a liberation movement.

It is not surprising therefore that those non-Communist African nationalists who have rejected the romantic, all-or-nothing revolutionism of the PAC and have objected on Christian or humanistic grounds to its racial chauvinism have found Communists to be congenial and useful allies. Thus Sobukwe and Pogrand deserve credit for their recognition of the antidemocratic implications of Communist ideology, but it also needs to be said that their polemics had the practical consequence of dividing and weakening the anti-apartheid forces. Whether the long-standing alliance of the ANC and the South African Communist Party is still functional and mutually advantageous under current conditions in South Africa is another question. But there is no doubt in my mind that the long-standing marriage of convenience between Communists and democratic nationalists will be difficult to dissolve.

Pogrand exonerates the imprisoned Sobukwe from any responsibility for the often disastrous career of the PAC after 1960. He maintains that Sobukwe neither authorized nor approved of the random terrorism carried out by Pogo, the PAC's underground offshoot in the early 1960s, and it is self-evident that he cannot be held ac-

countable for the blunders, including the terrorist policy itself, that virtually destroyed the movement within a few years of its banning. More surprising is Pogrand's claim that Sobukwe recanted his separatist Africanism and professed a new willingness to admit whites into the liberation movement.

What apparently persuaded him that a go-it-alone strategy should be abandoned was what he learned from Pogrand about the courageous actions of some white liberals during the Sharpeville crisis: In Cape Town, where huge PAC-led demonstrations protesting the massacre penetrated the center of the city and made the apartheid regime seem temporarily fragile and in retreat, a close working relationship developed between members of the left wing of the Liberal party and young, inexperienced PAC leaders. Liberals smuggled food to townships that were cordoned off and blockaded by government forces, made all their offices and facilities available to the PAC, and, in defiance of the State of Emergency, used their own journal to disseminate information about the protests. Their leader, Patrick Duncan (who later became the first white member of the PAC), also helped to avert bloodshed by acting as an intermediary between demonstrators and the police. Other accounts of these events do not present the role of the Liberals in so favorable a light.¹⁵

¹⁵Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, pp. 210-223, is an example of the less flattering assessments of how helpful the Liberals really were.

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But whatever the facts may have been, Sobukwe reportedly concluded from the accounts he received in prison that

A number of whites had given clear proof of their willingness to work as equals with blacks in a completely disinterested spirit....

If the PAC were to be re-formed now, it would in his view be on a wholly non-racial basis.

One can only speculate what might have happened had Sobukwe gotten out of detention, lived longer, and been allowed to work politically either in South Africa or in exile. Perhaps he would have been able to create an anti-Communist, anti-apartheid, alliance of white social democrats and black nationalists. (Frederick's cursory attention to the Liberal party shows at least that its position on economic reform in the 1990s was clearly social-democratic rather than liberal-capitalist.)¹⁷ Such a grouping does not exist in contemporary South Africa, and there seems to be little basis for its emergence. There may be reason to regard this gap in the political spectrum as a misfortune.

Sobukwe's funeral in 1978, as described by Pogrand, was the scene of events that foreshadowed recent developments with great accuracy. A small riot occurred when Sobukwe's young admirers forcibly ejected Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and some other attending black dignitaries who were adjudged to be collaborators with the apartheid regime. (Pogrand himself remained throughout the services but was prevented from delivering the eulogy that he had prepared.) This incident helps to shed light on the violent animosities currently surrounding Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement. Before he accepted office in KwaZulu homelands created by apartheid legislation, Buthelezi had been a supporter of Nelson Mandela and the ANC. For several years, Pogrand and Sobukwe had a running argument on whether Buthelezi's decision to work within the apartheid system was justified. Sobukwe, even earlier than the African National Congress, concluded that Buthelezi was a traitor to the cause of African liberation because of his willingness to accept office under the regime and because of the way he based his influence on kinship and ethnic claims. Pogrand, unlike most South African liberals, eventually came converted to the negative view of Buthelezi that Sobukwe shared with the ANC, the Black Consciousness movement, and virtually all other Africans with strong claims to being part of the liberation struggle.

The recent violence between Inkatha and supporters of the ANC in townships has complex origins. Government backing for Inkatha, as demonstrated conclusively by the recent revelations in the *Road Work* trial, encouraged Inkatha attacks on ANC supporters, often with the active support of the police. But an essential part of the background was the widespread view outside Inkatha (even

¹⁷In a pamphlet of 1966, the Liberal party called for "a combination of private enterprise and public ownership" and a program for redistributing land to African peasants. Two years later the party dissolved rather than comply with a new law prohibiting interracial political organizations.

before the scandal over government financing of Inkatha broke this summer) that Buthelezi had betrayed the cause and collaborated with the enemy. However reasonable he may sound to many Americans, Buthelezi is absolutely anathema to a substantial part of the politically conscious African population, including many Zulus. Asking that he be seated on their side of the table during the negotiations over a new constitution invites a reaction roughly similar to what would have happened if Americans had been asked to accept Benedict Arnold as one of their negotiators at the peace conference to establish American independence from Great Britain. The recent revelations that the Klerk government subsidized Inkatha activities in 1989 and 1990 give new substance to the old charge that Buthelezi is a government stooge.¹⁸

During his imprisonment, Sobukwe developed a keen interest in American affairs, which he followed in the newspapers and magazines to which he was allowed access. Most remarkably, he became a devoted admirer of President Lyndon B. Johnson, to whom he gave much of the credit for the civil rights breakthrough in the United States. In a letter to Pogrand, apparently written in 1965, he characterized US and South African race policies as polar opposites. Johnson, he opined, "is implementing his policy of complete equality determinedly and successfully," much to the chagrin of the South African government, which he believed that racial integration could never work. Hendrick Verwoerd, the South African prime minister at the time, stood at the head of white supremacist forces throughout the

"The Buthelezi problem deserves extended treatment but cannot receive it here because of the extent to which it raises issues that fall outside a comparison of black liberationist thought in the United States and South Africa. As the prime minister of a semi-independent homeland and the leader of a territorially and ethnically based movement, Buthelezi has no conceivable analog among African American leaders past or present. His importance reflects the limits of such comparisons and draws attention to differences in the history and trajectory of group relations in the two societies. His political and economic thought, as set forth in his recent book, *South Africa: My Vision of the Future* (St. Martin's, 1990), appeals to democratic liberals by stressing the need for multi-party democracy in South Africa and disavowing both socialist solutions and those of "the neoconservatives whose extreme economic libertarianism lets the devil take the hindmost" (p. 28).

But Buthelezi needs to be judged by his deeds as well as by his words. His leadership of Inkatha and KwaZulu is decidedly authoritarian; as would a democrat in theory he is hardly one in practice. One might also question the appropriateness of his negotiating with the government on behalf of the African majority when he strongly opposed the economic sanctions that, more than anything else, brought the government to the bargaining table in the first place. (To say nothing of the fact that his opposition to the ANC and its policies has been bankrolled by the government.) But Buthelezi will undoubtedly play a role in deciding the future of South Africa. What is doubtful is whether it will be a useful one.

world, while Johnson was "the hope of all those who stand for non-racism." Even Johnson's deepening and debilitating involvement in Vietnam did not completely dampen Sobukwe's enthusiasm for the much-maligned Texan. In 1968, he expressed regret that Robert Kennedy was reportedly on the verge of challenging LBJ for the Democratic nomination and argued that if Johnson had followed his own instincts rather than the advice he had been receiving, he would have readily negotiated his way out of Vietnam.

He has one outstanding virtue for which I like him. He feels. Some say he is sentimental. And that is the man for me any day. A man who can be moved; a man who can feel anger; who can feel deep compassion. But above all a man who can weep in the presence of great sorrow and suffering.

This tribute from a South African revolutionary in solitary confinement to a reformist American President who was being repudiated by the left in his own country is unexpected and idiosyncratic, but it is nevertheless worth attention. It recalls that amazing moment in 1965 when Johnson appeared on television to give strong support to the Voting Rights Act. When the President, his voice quivering with emotion, appropriated the slogan of the Civil Rights movement, "We Shall Overcome," Martin Luther King, Jr., watching at a friend's house, reportedly burst into tears. According to King's most authoritative biographer, "His colleagues and friends had never seen him cry before." From the perspective of subsequent events that dimmed Johnson's luster and made him seem a tragic figure to his former admirers and merely pathetic to more cynical observers, it is difficult to recapture what may have been the finest single moment in the history of the American presidency. Somehow, Robert Sobukwe sensed the authenticity of LBJ's flash of greatness and identified with it.

The contrast that Sobukwe found between a United States heading resolutely toward racial equality and a South Africa dominated by a bigoted, racist government was a reasonable interpretation of the state of affairs in the two countries in 1965. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, mostly the achievement of the Civil Rights movement but requiring the endorsement and political skills of Lyndon Johnson, to turn the chants of protesters into the law of the land, had indeed "overcome" the American equivalent of South Africa's apartheid legislation. And for a time, it seemed that the struggle for equality might be broadened and carried to fruition by becoming a war on poverty and, more specifically, on the economic disadvantage entailed on African Americans by three or more centuries of slavery and racial discrimination. This at least was what Johnson forcefully advocated in his notable address to the graduates of Howard University in June 1965.

You do not make a person who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "You are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe you have been completely fair."

the others," and still justly believe you have been completely fair."

But, as James H. Cone shows in his account of Martin Luther King's disillusionment before the triumph of 1965 and his assassination in 1968, national leadership faltered as the war in Vietnam made racial justice of less national concern and white opinion turned against measures to deal with the misery of northern urban blacks that was so dramatically exposed in the ghetto riots of those years. King's dream of integration and the beloved community faded; a quarter century later it has not been recaptured. The current ideal of "multi-culturalism" that Cone endorses is not really an equivalent because it emphasizes what differentiates Americans rather than what might unite them.

Those Americans who still yearn for a unifying vision, a conception of integration that avoids the biases of class and culture that made the Sixties version vulnerable to the attacks of Malcolm X and the black nationalists, might learn something from South Africa. For reasons already set forth, the conception of "non-racism," stressed in Julie Frederikke's *Unbreakable Thread* carries ideological freight that makes it questionable for South Africa and clearly inapplicable to American circumstances. But Robert Sobukwe's non-Marxist version of the concept—whatever one thinks of his belief that Lyndon Johnson was its exemplar—might serve as a passable ideal for both societies. Sobukwe's goal (which would be shared today by the moderate, non-Communist wing of the ANC) was a society committed to the rights of the individual, in which race or ethnicity will in no way be a disadvantage. What most limits such a society is a commitment to the essentially liberal ideal of personal freedom and equality. By protecting the rights of the individual, it gives to voluntary associations of individuals the ability to maintain distinctive religious or cultural traditions but it gives no formal, constitutional recognition to cultural pluralism. Equal rights as a fair distribution of opportunities may require the curtailment of economic laissez faire; but freedom of thought and association makes cultural laissez faire a necessity.

It might be objected that such a system of beliefs is merely a restatement of conventional Western liberalism and is what theoretically already exists in the United States. But the fact remains that we have failed to apply such values successfully to hierarchies of race, as well as to other persistent inequalities that can be defined as denial of equal rights. The problem facing both the United States and South Africa is how to make rights a reality and not merely pro forma. Existing concentrations of power and privilege, even when they are no longer sanctioned by law, make this exceedingly difficult—some would say impossible. But if we survey the historical and contemporary examples of societies based on different principles—ranging from dictatorship of the proletariat to the various modes of constitutional privilege and empowerment based on race, ethnicity, or religion—no better model is likely to be found.

¹Quoted in Hugh David Graham, *The Civil Rights Era* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 174.

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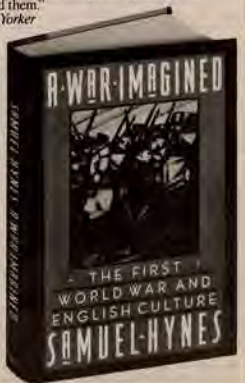
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