

Race thinking and thinking about race in South Africaⁱ

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In 1985 acting-president of the then-banned and exiled African National Congress, Oliver Tambo was asked, at a press conference, what was meant by the liberation organisation's commitment to 'non-racialism' rather than to 'multi-racialism'. His rambling answer was reproduced in the ANC journal *Mayibuye*, in one of the extremely rare references to race or even to 'non-racialism' in that publication:

There must be a difference. That is why we say non-racial. We could have said multi-racial if we had wanted to. There is a difference. We mean non-racial, rather than multi-racial. We mean non-racial - there is no racism. Multi-racial does not address the question of racism. Non-racial does. There will be no racism of any kind and therefore no discrimination that proceeds *from the fact that people happen to be members of different races*. That is what we understand by non-racial (Tambo 1985, emphasis added).

Such a clearly unthought out answer comes as a surprise from the leader of a movement which has prided itself on its commitment to non-racialism, during the years of struggle against apartheid and in the process of subsequent reconstruction; as, must be said, is the reproduction of the statement. The ANC has used such a commitment as a feature to distinguish it from other anti-apartheid organisations.

Unintentionally Oliver Tambo illustrated a common problem, beyond his evident lack of clear thought about the issue. One of the major difficulties in writing about 'race', and then examining the language used in academic, analytical, and public discourses about the issue, is that there is very little consistency. This has become more obvious the more documents of various types I have consulted. Even a cursory read confirms the confusion in academic writing, letters, speeches, interviews, press reports, etc. I cannot but concur with Wallerstein (1991a:77) in noting the 'incredible inconsistency [in the use of the terms race, nation and ethnic group], leaving quite aside the multitude of other term utilized...' (also see Taylor 1994, Taylor and Foster 1999).

Not only is the term race used inconsistently within discrete arguments or documents, or else employed with the erroneous assumption that all share whatever meaning the author has in mind, but also that many apparent synonyms and euphemisms are employed for what, in the context, can only be some unstated understanding of race – ethnic groups, national and population groups, communities, blacks and whites, Africans, the demographics of society, to name but a few, all often serve the same or similar purposes. An aspect of my research is to note the language of race in South African public, analytic and/or political discourse, to the extent that it illustrates race thinking.ⁱⁱ But it goes further than simply a confusion about language and the way in which that has prevented appropriately addressing of the issue of race thinking. I argue, in addition, that the way in which the notion of race was brought into the debate in South Africa generally stood in the way of in-depth analysis of the meaning of race, *especially* in a society permeated with racialism and racism. Common sense most often took the place of analysis.

In this paper I focus on the commitment to 'non-racialism' by the ANC (and mention some other positions and organisations), a commitment called the 'unbreakable thread' of decades of struggle against white domination (Frederikse 1990). I will, in effect, take issue with the application of the term non-racialism to describe the position of the ANC, which is much more accurately termed multi-racialism, despite Tambo's rejection of such an interpretation. In conclusion I will suggest some of the implications of such misuse, most importantly that it cannot be the basis for 'the primary goal [of] a completely restructured society' (Frederikse 1988:3-4).ⁱⁱⁱ

Race thinking is embedded in our everyday thinking. It is located in racialised social identities, lived through what has been variously referred to as 'stories of everyday life' (Wright 1985:15; Heller 1982)^{iv}, the 'minutiae of everyday existence' (Comaroff 1996:166), the 'banality' of 'living within' the 'assumptions and common-sense habits' (Billig 1995:37)^v of a society permeated with race thinking. Such racialism will have to be disembedded from there, through deliberate social practice, institutional and legal change, and finding ways of subverting, rather than corroborating, daily experience and ways of making sense. We operate with race as a collective identity, and as the articulating or organising principle for other identities and/or moments when we draw on other identities – gender, sexual, etc. Non-racialism remains without content if neither the past nor the present moved or moves beyond a largely unexamined rhetorical commitment to that ideal.

At the same time, however, it is necessary immediately to note that my argument does not deny, in any way, the extreme dehumanisation and domination suffered under the system of apartheid, or under any racism. Nor does it deny, as should be clear, that race thinking is located in real social conditions, and makes sense of the way in which people have experienced, and continue to experience, that social reality, within a changing pattern of domination. On the contrary, my argument *depends* on recognising the strength of pervasive racialism and racism, and demands, and forms the basis, for investigating racism. I will return to this point.

My argument, here, is as follows:

- that the struggle against apartheid was waged against a system of racism, in structures and social relations, and of racial domination and class exploitation;
- that that struggle was theorised, within resistance to apartheid, at an abstract level, or frequently and vividly exposed at a descriptive level, that either took the existence of 'races' for granted or, infrequently, when questioning such existence, did not examine how the construction of the racialised-self and racialised-other would affect both the process of struggle and the post-apartheid future;
- that by creating and fixing the 'race-class' couplet, race was theorised (thought through) at the same level as was class, when these are not equivalent concepts – which meant that race was not located, in the first instance, at the ideological level, at the level of social construction, but nearly exclusively in structures and institutions and policies, most often as imposed from above, from outside, with little concern for the ideological effects;^{vi}

- that we continue, in South Africa, overwhelmingly in public discourse as well as in common sense thinking about everyday existence and social and official practice, to take the existence of `races' for granted (the forms of which remain very much an unexamined field);
- that it is, therefore, impossible not to have a racially fragmented society with eruptions and experiences that confirm race, and racism, as the first and sufficient explanation, justification and motivation for action, as evidenced in a multitude of cases that could be offered by way of illustration;
- the implication is that, to break out of such a circle, *the very notion of `race' must deliberately be undermined* in various ways, without losing sight of redress of gross (and growing) inequalities (measured on every available scale), created through policies within the racist and racialised segregation and apartheid systems.

This argument relates also to the manner in which racialised identities, and any social (collective) identities, are created, maintained, reinforced - the way in which they are reflexive, adaptable to suit new requirements, and not simply, or only, imposed as an ideological project. Questions of what we mean by `race', and how the notion relates to theories of social identity are present in this task, even if not addressed directly. How do we live our lives with notions of the racialised self in everyday life? This means that to construct an alternative perspective on race, not only class, but also gender and other aspects of social identity formation, such as age and sexuality, would have to be introduced explicitly, in their articulation with notions of race, in our stories of making sense. It would appear that a common sense^{vii} approach to the existence of races was accepted which, while understandable within a society so comprehensively racialised as South Africa was and is, cannot be allowed to rest unexamined.

Analysis and representation of `race': the race-class debate *Analytical thinking about race*

In South Africa an important aspect in the (mostly unintentional) maintenance of race thinking has been through *academic/ intellectual* debate, and through *activist/ organic intellectual* discourses on race within organisations and in political practice. While the former often influenced, frequently served the shared aims of, and shaped thinking within organisations, or supplied justification for the forms of organised struggle *against* (and, of course, *for*) apartheid, such debate and analysis cannot be collapsed into the way in which activists experienced and understood the struggle against apartheid. My overall concern, within which this paper offers some exploratory thoughts, is with the manner in which intellectuals have deliberately addressed the issue of race, activists have employed the term, and the manner in which these reflect the manner in which people generally live their everyday lives with stories that employ notions of race.

I will look at the central theoretical argument about race and the pitfalls therein, especially as captured within the colonialism of a special type thesis, devised as one of the most important perspectives to attempt an integration of the race and class. I will also refer to some of the few examples of perspectives that break with the dominant

theoretical approach.

There is obviously an extensive intellectual literature on race in South Africa, as well as on the relationship between race and class, although, as Harold Wolpe, theorist and activist, in a summary work (1988:1), points out, analytical writing was always scarcer than descriptive work. Certain points are central to the argument I wish to present on this occasion. Wolpe, writes: 'The central theoretical question in the analysis of the South African social formation is how the relationship between race and class should be understood' (1988:10).

The debate on the class/race relationship was largely dealt with at a fairly high level of abstraction, with the consequent neglect of race as a factor in the construction of the collective identities of both white and black. This happened for two important reasons. The first was because the terms were often treated as equivalents; the second was through coupling it with class, most often within a left paradigm, class was prioritised as having causal effect, with consequent neglect of racialism as a distinct phenomenon. In addition race was, for much of the past 30 years, located within an analysis of the structures, institutions and legal framework of apartheid society. From the moment that race was accepted as (largely) a given, a common sense term, it appears to have been given the same theoretical status (albeit unexamined) as class and/or an aspect of class exploitation (and here I am not making a political, but an analytical and theoretical point). This excluded the need to treat notions of race as also to be understood and contested in relation to struggle and social reconstruction.

What do I mean? As I have argued previously (Maré 1993:39-42) social categories such as race and ethnicity function on different levels from class. Classes exist (class in itself) without class conscious social actors (class for itself). Races and ethnic groups, on the other hand, do not exist outside of social identities. They are products of social construction, which certainly does not make them less real in terms of motivating and justifying action. There is no *structured* position in society that determines an individual's membership of an ethnic group, in the way that economic relations determine class positions. Wallerstein argues the same point: 'Classes are "objective" categories, that is, analytic categories, statements about contradictions in an historical system, and not descriptions of social communities' (1991a:84). However, and this is of enormous importance in the case of race, this demands that we situate race and the power relations around racialism and racism within a context of material conditions and gender relations. The class-race debate often operates with the two items treated, implicitly, as theoretical equivalents, albeit hierarchically intertwined.

Despite occasional qualifications, such as the definition of race, in passing, by Wolpe (1988:2-3), it occurs without examining the implications of the definition. Wolpe writes: The term 'race' is used strictly to refer to social categories. That is to say, however much biological notions are employed to justify the definition of racial groups in South Africa, those groups are actually constituted by a process of social definition which employs biological terms to define social not biological groups... Given this conception, no distinction is made between 'race' and

`ethnicity' for the purposes of this book, except where this may be required by the context.

I find it problematic, in the first place, that no distinction should be made between race and ethnicity (another political point with extensive policy and analytical implications), but also that race categorisation should be seen as simply a top-down process of justification of policies. In addition, the implications of the social construction of race are never addressed or referred to in this summary work on the debates of the relationship between class and race within both radical and liberal positions.

When race is given an apparent existence separate from class, which may then lead to a separate discussion of race itself, it becomes `the modality ... in which class is "lived"', in Stuart Hall's words quoted favourably by Wolpe, or `Race may, under determinate conditions, become interiorised in class struggles in both the sphere of the economy as well as the sphere of politics' (1988:52). The couplet is restated, obviating the necessity of discussing race `for itself', as it exists here, in the race-class debate, only in relation to class. It is not that Wolpe had maintained a consistent position on the relationship class/race. Bundy (1988:10) notes that while Wolpe, in 1975, criticised CST for its inability `to explain the relationship between class relations and race or ethnic, etc., relation"', `more recently [in the 1988 book referred to here] Wolpe has very substantially softened his critique' (also see Freund 1986).

Wolpe (1988:25), in a critical review of what he calls `liberal modernisation theory', argues that `it is incorrect and unilluminating to see the political order as being organised exclusively or overwhelmingly around the principle of race'. However, within a similar marxist approach Davies et al (1984: 2) are less cautious, and write that `The national oppression of black people [and racism] in South Africa is a product of, and was indeed the *necessary* historical condition for, the development of capitalism in that country' (emphasis added). Without wishing to enter this debate retrospectively, it must be noted that such a formulation closed off the debate on the content, and the effects, of shared notions of race. The `problem' and the answer was then located within the class-race relationship debate, instead of also addressing race as social identity, race within social agency, racialism of the oppressor and of the oppressed (in these two overview volumes by Davies, O'Meara and Dlamini the index features `racism' only in the first ten of more than 400 pages, and `race' never).

The class-race debate existed in various manifestations: colonialism of a special type (also referred to as internal colonialism); the national question; national democratic revolution; liberal modernisation theory; revisionist history; the O'Dowd thesis; and so on. Without going into detail on the debate,^{viii} all I wish to do is to note the terms employed and the lacuna when it came to thinking through the implications of the frequent `acceptance of a reified social reality' of race groupings (Singh and Vawda 1988). I argue that it is possible to see constant implicit, and even explicit, *acceptance of the existence of races* within debates that address the race-class relationship. In other words, the debate did not only, in effect, *silence an examination of race thinking*, but that uncritical *acceptance of race categories* featured in the debate. A brief reference to the theory of colonialism of a special type (CST) will illustrate this point.

CST (and the related national democratic revolution) is an important example in that it became formal SACP policy in 1962, features centrally in Wolpe's summary in 1988, and has not been retracted to date as far as I am aware. Van den Berghe (1974:6) writes that 'Internal colonialism can be said to exist if, within the contiguous territory of a state, there exists identifiable ethnic groups which are territorially distinct, which are granted differential legal status, and which have a differential relationship of asymmetrical interdependence in both the political and economic spheres'. The approach called 'internal colonialism' (also referred to as 'colonialism of a special type') is applied to a set of relations that are said to approximate those of colonialism, but where there is no territorial separation between the colonisers and the colonised. Furthermore, it is usually applied to indicate and analyse 'patterns of ethnic and racial dominance' (Stone 1979:255). Stone writes that the use of the concept can be traced 'at least as far back as the 1930s when it was used to characterize the relations between North and South in the United States'. It has been applied not only in settler colonial countries, but also in Europe (see, for example, the oft-referred to work by Michael Hechter 1975). Proponents of the concept have argued that it was a 'salt water fallacy' that colonialism should be limited to distant colonies.

But the concept has not only been applied to instances of colonial conquest and economic exploitation and continued political domination. With the rise of ethno-nationalism in Europe and elsewhere, CST found new adherents. Stone (1979:256) writes:

... by defining inter-regional [or race] relationships as 'colonial', nationalist leaders have tried to inspire popular support for movements designed to promote greater autonomy, if not outright secession.

To pull together some of the common strands of the wide variety of situations within which CST was employed:

- it refers to relationships between 'groups' that are not purely class relations, but could also or predominantly be ethnic, national or race relations;
- it refers to relationships of exploitation, political domination, and cultural discrimination, within a single social formation;
- it also, by implication, refers to ways of opposing these relations (see Bundy 1988).

One strand of the use of the notion of CST in South Africa lies firmly in liberal thought and liberal action. While Wolpe (1988:29) attributes the earliest use of the term 'internal colonialism' to Leo Marquard in 1957, I have found clear reference to the idea, if not the term, in Marquard's writing in 1950 (Marquard 1952:238-41). Marquard, founder of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and activist within left-liberal politics, wrote of South Africa as an 'imperialist' power in relation to the 'Union's "colonies"' (the title of a chapter). In conclusion and, therefore, tantalisingly briefly, he wrote:

Perhaps the strongest contradiction, and the one that explains a good deal of what is happening in South Africa, is that this union of four former colonial possessions has itself become a colonial power, with all the problems that face those European states that hold dominion over non-European people... No seas separate the governed from the governors... The European South African is in daily contact with his colonial African subjects.

...

All African colonial powers have had to evolve colonial policies... Today colonial policy means primarily a system of government designed to train Africans for self-government... But... Britain's colonial subjects demand self-government, not a share in the government at Westminster. South Africa's colonial subjects demand a share in the government at Cape Town.

Already, then, Marquard said that while apartheid was being advanced as the answer to internal colonialism (by the end of the 1950s the bantustan policy would be unambiguously justified in those terms (Moodie 1980:264)), it could not succeed, for social and economic reasons. It is also not as though the liberal, Marquard, was locating this approach in race only. In 1957 (the speech referred to by Wolpe) Marquard said that the condition of the colonised meant that they were psychologically oppressed, but also 'were usually doubly exploited, *first* as labourer and secondly as native' (1957:3, emphasis added). It seems, therefore, that (in South Africa at least) CST served first for liberals to locate the class-race couplet, in terms remarkably similar to the subsequent adoption by the SACP.

By 1957, within the SA Communist Party, CST was being put forward (see, for example, Michael Harmel in Drew 1997: document 53), and in 1962 became part of the SACP's programme. Debates during the 1950s were heavily influenced by Stalinist approaches to notions of nation and nationality and at times approximated apartheid arguments, distinguished from that racist system by the supposed individual freedom of movement that existed within the Stalinist notion and practice!

However, what is relevant here is that policy formulations and theoretical approaches within this debate reflected multi-racialism (nations or national groups were essentially racialised) (see Drew 1997:24-27 and relevant documents).^{ix} I would suggest that within a situation characterised as 'internal colonialism' or 'colonialism of a special type', a racialised interpellation of 'race nations' was inevitable and much more commonsensically plausible than a class account. Pallo Jordan, to take one of many possible examples, noted that 'the people of South Africa today constitute two antagonistic blocs (one being the colonizer, the other the colonized)'. Those two 'blocs' are defined repeatedly in other contributions to the volume edited by Van Diepen (1988), mainly by ANC members, as 'race' blocs - confirming that 'non-racialism' is most often seen as *non-antagonistic relations between races* (initially between individual members of races other than 'African' and the indigenous race) - more accurately multi-racialism, or even just the absence of racism.

Jordan does continue to say that the resolution of the 'antagonism is through democracy'. But, because the organising principle of the CST-approach is 'race', democracy has also been inadequately theorised and hence remains racialised - the achievement of democracy in South Africa (and, hence, the resolution of CST?) is the inclusion of *races* within a common political process, a common argument within various positions over the years, 'fixed' strongly within the Freedom Charter (see next section); or, else, within the notion of the national democratic revolution, the achievement of a racialised majority.

The poles of the 'centre-periphery contradiction', applied by John Saul to analyse ethnic and nationalist mobilisation in colonial societies, was played out in South Africa as a racialised polarisation to match the 'racially' oppressive *and internal colonial* system. It mirrored what it found, hardly unexpectedly. As Saul comments on imperialism's duality in its penetration of the world:

There is, on the one hand, the tendency to create globally the production relations and class structures characteristic of the capitalist mode of production *per se*. On the other hand, this process of penetration also tends to polarize 'center' and 'periphery' within the global system, to create colonial and neocolonial relationships ... (T)he point to be made here is that, for actors in this drama, *both* of these realities spawn *realms of 'ideological discourse' which can begin to make sense of the world* (1979:400, last emphasis added).

Saul adapts Ernesto Laclau's (1977) 'people' and 'power bloc' polarisation to a centre-periphery contradiction - within which an 'ethnic interpellation is at least as likely a possibility as a "new nation" interpellation' (1979:401). Saul, in addition, accepts Laclau's argument that such an interpellation (call or appeal) is as possible as a class interpellation. And in South Africa we have had the even more feasible 'non-racialist' race-bloc interpellation, especially if located within the polarisation of the colonialism of a special type description. How the races were constructed and maintained is not given any attention within the CST approach, which would have been a fair question if the different uses of the approach, in widely different situations and at different times, had been acknowledged and examined. What, for example, has been the ideological dimension of the relationship between the English and the Scots? Did South Africa's supposed uniqueness stand in the way of deeper understanding here too?

To have South Africa defined as a colonial situation also seemed to have implications within international politics, such as through the United Nations, but I will not enter that field here.

The implications for political practice are obvious: it is difficult to see how the 'colonisers' (bearers of both the dominant and discriminatory race, and the exploitative class elements in the race-class debate) can become fellow citizens with more than formal equality – a perception often existing in the eyes of the colonisers, but especially in the eyes of the 'colonised'. The process of transition to 'non-racialism' in collective racialised identity was not made clear, or even addressed, and that failure seems to be confirmed in everyday life in contemporary South Africa, even more so as the *class* element within the couplet has been effectively shed.

The temptation, even if not yet the consistent or overt practice, in the absence of a deliberate policy to the contrary, will be to see democracy as a victory of a race majority, in other words completion of the 'national democratic revolution', the resolution of CST, where a majority national group or bloc (read race) achieves power. It does, it must be granted, attempt to win over other *races* (most especially the coloured and indian *communities*) to the democratic majority, but is not consistently done because it is not central to the national democratic revolution (see the crudeness of campaigns in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal during both the 1994 and 1999 elections, and the

obscene ease with which race representative Amichand Rajbansi was brought into the ANC).

Is it then surprising that Frederikse (1990:29), in her comments on and contextualisation of the interview material she had collected finds 'non-racialism' even within 'community-specific' organisations, such as the NIC discussed by Singh and Vawda, when these are deliberately based on race. Such a perspective is possible only within the limited and confusing notion of 'non-racialism' that she and most of her interviewees employed – confusing, even if totally understandable within the common sense of life within a racist South Africa and a world of racialism:

While the new militancy in the ANC [with the signifying moment of the formation of the ANCYL in 1944] emanated from the growing cooperation between young African intellectuals and workers, Indians, coloureds and whites of all social backgrounds were also part of the political rejuvenation of the war years. The evolving forms of resistance *in each of these communities* were similar in the non-racial and cross-class associations they forged to counter the state's divide-and-rule tactics (emphasis added).

Two years earlier Singh and Vawda (1988:10) write, in response to the argument by NIC intellectuals, such as Yunus Carrim (also an SACP member), that intra-community politics is necessary 'because of the manner in which apartheid society has been historically constructed':

While it would be naive to deny the reality and power of the ethnic socialization and consciousness generated by apartheid structures and institutions [and the lived reality of a racialised everyday life - gm], it is false to base one's political practice on the total acceptance of a reified social reality.

'Non-racialism' was the commitment, but races remained the building blocks, not only of apartheid society, but also of resistance organisations and the theoretical and strategic thinking that informed analysis and practice within attempts to restructure the society.

Wolpe warns against taking refuge in the first instance in race as an explanatory factor, but does so to bring the matter back to the 'relationship of class and race' (1988:13):

Race-based theories [for example, 'some interpretations of internal colonialism'] conceive of race (whether regarded as primordial or otherwise given, or as socially constructed) as the irreducible constituent and determinant of social structure and relations.... the interests of racial groups are derived from, and are formulated exclusively in terms of , their racial attributes.

Strictly construed, this leads directly to a conception of the existing social order in which the racial entities which comprise the social structure are analytically treated as if they are internally homogeneous and undifferentiated, at least in any material respects (1988:12).

Wolpe is well aware of the implications of the pluralist 'group relations' approach. He warns (1988:13) that this 'defines away the central question which requires examination in the South African context - the relationship of class and race'. The 'defining away' of class in contemporary South Africa, in favour, often, of race, is there for all to see.

However, that is for another discussion.

Within the class-race debate, unless race is treated separately and at another (ideological) level, and *not only* in the couplet, race continues to exist as a term to refer to a homogeneous social (and, most often, biological-cultural) category, even if we acknowledge differentiation of gender and class within the shared biological characteristic. Both class and gender approaches may find arguments that make something slightly qualified of race, but the 'basic' social groups, nonetheless, remain those of race, and then usually within a masculinist and non-working class context. While Wolpe is addressing this issue in relation to theoretical approaches, it also applies, as I have argued, with equal effect in everyday race thinking – in its most direct form in contemporary essentialising discourses. In common with the theoretical approaches with which Wolpe takes issue, here too attention is deflected away from class (and gender) interests into race populism.

Of course, there were exceptions to the acceptance of 'race' as an unproblematic social category, and I have already referred to Singh and Vawda (1988). Through an analysis of the political discourse employed within and by activists within the Natal Indian Congress from 1971 to the 1980s, they illustrate the contradiction between the organisation's commitment to 'non-racialism', but its 'frequent lapses into the images of multi-racialism' (1988:6). They conclude that

Within a struggle towards non-racialism, identifying a political constituency like 'Indian Community' is not as neutral as choosing to organise among women or workers or students or health care workers

...

... the commitment to non-racialism requires that such political organisations define the issues and interests around which they organise in ways that cut across racial and 'cultural' divisions rather than reproduce these (1988:17-18).

Another of the very few references to social identity and to the fact that some black people may well have come to accept aspects of the apartheid version of tradition and ethnicity (iow that ideology has political implications), came in the Surplus People Project report on the Transvaal (SPP 1983:3-13). There it is noted, for example, that there was struggle within the ideological field as well:

Ideologically one form that disorganisation [of dominated classes] takes is that of breaking the common bonds between the dominated classes and instead appealing to 'ethnic' identities, to 'homelands', to 'national awakenings' etc. In other words appealing to individuals to live their lives as members of fragmented ethnic units with claims circumscribed by this unit, the areas it occupies, and the apparatuses that govern it. This appeal of fragmentation would be set against counter appeals asking people to live their lives as 'blacks', as 'the oppressed', as 'the workers', as 'africans' etc. These appeals are antagonistic to 'ethnic' appeals because they call on a wider constituency that could counter the power of the central State and the dominant classes (1983:6).

What the SPP team did not note was that whatever sub-mobilisation was attempted, by the state and within resistance, it occurred within the ether of a racialised society.

Belinda Bozzoli, too, set out to examine, deliberately, 'hegemony', 'consciousness' and 'ideology', in coming to an understanding of the views held by the people she and her assistant interviewed. She adds: '... the humanist focus of this book makes it imperative that the element of human will and purpose contained within the notion of "consciousness," be embraced' (1991:244, endnote 7). Earlier she pointedly wrote that we 'should not assume that subjectivity only exists, or is important, when it is manifested in organisations' (1991:2). In her conclusion Bozzoli (1991:239) notes:

This study shows that at the more intimate levels at which meaning is constructed, even such seemingly obvious concepts as 'race' are ambiguous, forged through a series of processes and shot through with both class and gender attributes. It suggests that consciousness is formed historically, within the nexus of structures (yes, structures), experiences, relationships and events, all of which are seized upon by the self-aware woman seeking to pursue her own life strategy, and that it cannot be understood using a purely structural or synchronic method of analysis.

To mention another, from a different field, Phillip Tobias. Professor of Anatomy and Human Biology at the Medical School of the University of the Witwatersrand, Tobias has, for many years questioned the validity of the notion of 'race', even within the biological sciences with their need for classification and categorisation, also of human types (importantly Tobias 1961; also see Dubow 1995, Miles 1989:70). Later, in an article published in 1985, Tobias notes that '... even among experts, no less than in the public mind, the concept of race is being re-examined and that no consensus, let alone unanimity, among specialists on the validity or the usefulness of the race concept appears to exist at the present time' (Tobias 1991:345).

Race thinking, activism and organisational practice

While the race-class relationship was an issue of debate amongst intellectuals aligned with various organisations and tendencies, it also served in various forms within activist political discourse and practice. While it centred around the issues of the national question, CST and multi-racialism (and even non-racialism) (see, for example, documents and discussion in Drew 1997, Karis and Carter 1997), it frequently boiled down to the place of whites (as a racialised category), especially through the Communist Party, within or allied to the central liberation organisation, the ANC.^x While unexamined notions of the existence of races were implicit in most of these discussions, here too (amongst activists and within intra-organisational debates), as with the intellectual debate, we can find arguments and practices that deny the validity of race as a meaningful category and that opposed racialism in oppositional practice. Robert Sobukwe argued for such a position (Drew 1997:287, 25), but the dominant trend within the PAC remained one of multi-racialism; as did the ANC in Natal in response to the Freedom Charter (Karis and Carter 1997:65-66, 94 fn 202)^{xi}; and the NEUM and other tendencies largely in the Cape (Drew 1997:24 and related documents; No Sizwe 1979:59; Alexander 1985), to take a few examples.

While the repeated commitment was to 'non-racialism', in effect the discourses reflected

common sense thinking based on the existence of races – hence multi-racialism rather than non-racialism, with clear implications for strategy and policy. It is ironic then that Frederikse (1990:20-21) argues, in effect, that the position of liberals in SA, such as Edgar Brookes, amounted to ‘multi-racialism’, which was different from the ‘non-racialism’ of the ‘popular movements’, using quotations from Brookes and from the SACP’s Bram Fischer to support this claim. Brookes, quoted from a 1933 lecture, certainly does not support such a position there at all, and, in fact, argues for the creation of a ‘multiplication of common interests’ to overcome racialism, and the avoidance of linking class to ‘something definite and tangible as colour’. Fischer, in his 1966 address from the dock, may indeed be committed to ‘non-racialism’ through creating common interests, but accepts the existence of ‘races’ as the building blocks of society! Anecdotally he offers ‘the wise old African’, who argues against the idea that the separation of ‘the races’ will lead to peace and harmony - instead this ‘old ANC leader’ argues that such separation can make people forget their shared humanity, with suspicion then generating racism. Concludes Fischer, ‘Only contact between the races can eliminate suspicion and fear; ...’ In these quotations at least, there seems remarkably little to distinguish the liberal from the communist, except that the position of the former is termed ‘multi’- and the latter is ‘non’-racialism, by Frederikse.

The possibility of moving beyond ‘race’ as providing the primary perspective on society, and South African in particular, lay in the union movement. Here primacy was usually, but certainly not exclusively, given to class, sometimes in such a manner that accepted notions of race were undermined. For the working class the common bond of experience in the workplace and a shared relationship to capital offered the *potential* of a society perceived of in a different way. It must be stressed that this remains a potential, as it has to move beyond the structurally shared position into a perception of what is implied by shared class location. Analysis in South Africa too is littered with examples of attributing over-riding shared class consciousness to workers against such divisive identities and mobilisations as race or ethnicity, or even gender groups.

A couple of early examples of the potential of a different perspective on society will suffice: a couple of months before the Freedom Charter was accepted at Kliptown, with its commitment that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, ...’, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was founded, with a commitment that ‘We firmly declare that the interests of all workers are alike, whether they be European, African Coloured, Indian, English, Afrikaans or Jewish ... “An injury to one is an injury to all”’ (Frederikse 1990:65, 64). While the motivation behind, and the discussion of the formulation of this commitment by SACTU is not known to me, what is clear is that the eclectic mix of race, ethnic, cultural and language categories employed here move beyond the simplicity of the privileged four-race divide of the Freedom Charter.

In an interview trade unionist and CPSA member of the late 1930s and 1940s, Dan Tloome, also focused on the essence of the matter from a class perspective (Frederikse 1990:24-25):

My concept of non-racialism is quite different from what many people think about it being an issue between white and black [this follows criticism by him of the

ANCYL and the position of 'throwing the white man into the sea' - see, for example, interview with Stanley Mabizela, ANCYL member, Frederikse 1990:27]. My approach is that this whole thing means a question of profits... People talk about racism, but I'm not so much bothered about it - I'm bothered about *the motive* of it (emphasis added).

For Tloome the factor of motivation for racism was important, a position that went beyond the common sense acceptance of racism and race thinking as 'natural', as an attribute of a specific group, beyond the need for investigation.

Even more so than colonialism of a special type, the Freedom Charter served to map the direction of the anti-apartheid struggle from 1954. The Freedom Charter served for 40 years as the central document within the struggle against apartheid and towards a desirable future society. It would be difficult to under-estimate the importance and the effects of this document. Organisations split, the wheat was at various stages separated from the chaff around interpretations or adherence and rejection of the Charter, but the Charter served as the lodestar of the struggle. Although it generated a variety of responses, the Freedom Charter itself is clear about the race perspective with which it operates: 'There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts, and in the schools for all national groups and races'. In other words, there shall be no discrimination within the policies and institutions of state between already-existing races. The sentence following that quoted above gives 'national groups' a 'race', as well as 'national pride' that can be insulted and that would therefore be protected through laws.

It is certainly not to impose a present perspective on the past, but to indicate the limited notions, then and now (I am arguing), of what could be meant by 'non-racialism', that I make these points. Rusty Bernstein, in his refreshingly down-to-earth autobiography, admits that he wrote the Charter from the multitude of submissions, and that, despite noble intentions, it was never even discussed properly before being accepted at the Congress of the People (COP) at Kliptown. The discussion and dissection was to come later, in political trials, journals, speeches, platforms, and organisational splits (see Karis and Carter 1977:60, for a slightly different version of events). Bernstein, reflecting on that period, writes:

The new conditions [around the Treason Trial from 1956] are changing relations inside the movement too, between its separate, ethnically-based African, Indian, Coloured and white components. Co-operation and a sense of unity between them which had germinated in shared campaigns like the COP, had been mainly at committee level. Even the closest and older relationship, between the ANC and Indian Congress, has scarcely percolated down to membership below committee level. Separate ethnic organisations have kept alive mutual distrust, and doubts about the commitments of others - doubts which are strongest against the latest entry to the partnership, the [white] COD [Congress of Democrats] (1999:179).

The issue of such separation and suspicion was still a point to be addressed in the 1980s (see Singh and Vawda 1988). Bernstein writes that 'Inter-racial trust and co-operation is a difficult plant to cultivate in the racially poisoned soil outside', when discussing the partners in the broad liberation movement (1999:179). Nonetheless, he also, like Frederikse, lauds the 'uncompromising non-racialism' of the ANC, and dates it back to

the PAC split from the ANC after vigorous criticism of the phrase in the Freedom Charter that South Africa belonged to all, quoted above. Here too, the idea that the notion of race in itself was not questioned, becomes clear. Bernstein notes that the logo chosen, both for the COP and for the *Isitwandwe* medal for heroism adopted by the Congress alliance, was 'a four-spoked wheel ..., symbolising the unity of the four Congresses and the country's four racial groups' (1999:151; also Karis and Carter 1977:61).

In the introductory quotation from Oliver Tambo 'non-racialism' merely means that such 'racial' categories will not form the basis of discrimination in a future society (for earlier criticism of this position, see, for example, No Sizwe [Alexander] 1979; Alexander 1996). That seems to be extremely weak and certainly unexamined, coming from the president of a movement that claims to have been staunchly committed to such a position. Luli Callinicos, in a paper drawing on her work towards a biography of Tambo, writes:

Oliver Tambo's achievement was to have kept this movement [the ANC] together during the struggles against the common enemy of apartheid by down-playing class cleavages.

But the ANC is not only a multi-class movement; it is also a multi-racial – or 'non-racial' – movement. The race question, however, has always been more demanding: down-playing race (as well as ethnicity) in a sharply divided society such as South Africa is an even more exacting task (1999:130).

In this article Callinicos, too, moves carelessly between non- and multi-racial, between race and nation. What is revealing is that she refers to a letter written by Tambo in 1970, wherein he argued that as class offered a 'powerful potential for mobilisation', so, in similar fashion, the ANC 'wanted to cultivate a concept of race in order to generate in all the oppressed a "race consciousness"' (1999:132). How much weight should the reader then give a claim, on the same page, that Tambo's post-Morogoro (1969) 'concept of African *nationalism* demonstrated a further change. It now embraced a wider, more inclusive and *non-racial* definition, ... Although "*non-Africans*" were not permitted to serve on the ANC's National Executive, by admitting members of *all races* into the ANC itself, Morogoro had otherwise shaken off the *multi-racial* nature of the alliance structure so frequently criticised by the PAC and other Africanists' (1999:132, also 148, emphases added).

This can be contrasted to Albie Sachs' humanist approach when he said in an interview on the ANC's policy:

It is much more than non-racialism in that bland, neutral sense [of being anti-racist]. Non-racialism doesn't mean that it is a society of "non"-something. It means you are eliminating all the apartheid barriers, in terms of access to government, in terms of freedom to move, and then you feel that this is your country. But it doesn't describe the quality and personality of the country and people. That is not a non-something - that is a something, and that is a South African personality that is being constructed (Frederikse 1990:268).

What Sachs does is to acknowledge the minimum that is usually all that is implied by 'non-racialism', the elimination of apartheid barriers, and then adds something, albeit it vague, about a new 'personality' to that.

Much more hopeful, too, because of examining the language employed, was the approach advocated by SAYCO in 1987. Here, at least, the term 'national groups', as it appears in the Freedom Charter, is not taken as a synonym for race, but given a different content. However, race is still accepted as something that should not count within race relations in the South Africa that is being constructed:

The Charter refers to the coloured people, the Indian people, the African community and the white community as 'national groups'. National groups have nothing to do with races, but they have everything to do with the divisions which exist in South Africa today, created by apartheid. They are the building blocks of the future South African nation that will be neither coloured, Indian, African or white - it will be a South African nation. We need to understand how each of these apartheid-differentiated national groups have come to lose their rights in history. This helps us not to gloss over these apartheid-created divisions by simply ignoring them in quasi-revolutionary sloganeering.

It is this understanding that has actually helped us to formulate clearly and unambiguously the only solution to these divisions, which is unity of our people as a people, *irrespective of race*, colour, creed and sex: non-racialism. In this respect, non-racialism is the only possible South African liberation scenario which calls for the complete destruction of racism and ethnicity, and which is derived from the realities of the South African situation itself (Frederikse 1990:259, emphasis added, extract from 'SAYCO speaks on the Charter', *SASPU National* publication on the Freedom Charter, 1987).

Race remains firmly located within most of these discourses, leaving us with multi-racialism and race relations, but certainly not non-racialism.

Restructuring society and rethinking race in South Africa

A South Africa within which formal political rights have been extended to all citizens, irrespective of race (a form of pluralism), is, of course, a vastly different context within which the legacies of the past play themselves out. At the most fundamental level power relations have been altered through inclusive citizenship and alterations in the form of state. In this way, perceived as 'equal status', 'non-racialism' or the constitutional right to equal treatment in relation to the institutions of state and equality of citizenship, has indeed been achieved. The task, however, is to understand both the breaks as well as the continuities, even though they may well exist in very different form, with different effects. In addition we have to confront the new dynamics within race thinking that cannot simply be attributed to the past as though there is an unproblematic (if selective and often unexamined) continuity from apartheid South Africa to the present. Xenophobia is simply one of the most obvious forms. If the issue of race was so obvious that it need never have been properly confronted in the past, it makes it even more imperative that we do so now.

Let me briefly (this is an area of future investigation) mention some of the visible areas

within which race thinking is confirmed as appropriate in a democratic 'non-racial' South Africa. The most obvious are those which are implemented to address past discrimination – *regstellende aksie* (corrective action), as it is referred to in Afrikaans: black economic empowerment, affirmative action, employment equity, quotas in sports teams and sports management, and then the national census and other forms of racialised book-keeping that are necessary for keeping track of these policies. The effect is, for example, that the personnel section of a major bank selects employees to reflect the race demographics of the branch districts within which they operate, and so on. Second, there are policies or initiatives based on what is frequently an essentialised or essentialising notion of culture. These would include: 'diversity management' (a growth area in publishing, employment and consultancy work, and in essence a term for getting the most out of African workers, or any of a number of 'minorities' elsewhere in the world); 'African management'; at times debates around the African renaissance and those on who can claim to be an African, also reflect race-culture notions that approach essentialism; as do some instances when 'tradition' is called upon.^{xii} Third, there continue to exist race-defined organisations, especially of professionals in sharp contrast to the long-standing attempts by working class organisations to organise on the basis of non-racialism. New such organisations are being formed. Fourth, it is common to explain events in racialised terms, even when these may not be appropriate at all, or that may be more complex than a singular explanation would imply.

What would need to be done is to locate an explanation of some of the continuities and discontinuities in race thinking within a context of cultural, political and economic change in South Africa. Here, for example, rapid and deliberate class formation amongst black people through certain forms of affirmative action and black economic empowerment, continuation of massive racialised social inequalities, the concerns of the trade union movement, the nature of the state and its successes and failures in transforming the institutions of government, attempts at nation building, and the effects of regionalisation and globalisation, will all need to be addressed. For example, while advertisers present the 'demographics' of the society in their assault on consumers (which are seen to be racialised in the extreme), at the same time the effects of globalisation level out in terms of a shared (class-informed and predominantly consumer) culture.^{xiii}

Stuart Hall (1997a:240) pointed out how the racialised other was brought into the Victorian lounge through advertising. In contemporary South Africa we have racialised 'demographics' (a word commonly used to indicate race numbers) brought into our lounges through television advertising – South Africans will be familiar with beer, motor oil, fax machine and cellular telephone advertisements, to mention a few, that maintain (or, at times, daringly confirm through subversion) that we are a society of races.

Jacoby (1994:123) has argued that the 'myth of multi-culturalism' serves to hide, for example, that 'America's multiple "cultures" exist within a single consumer society'. While it is certainly not the case that apartheid-enforced multi-culturalism, albeit based on existing notions of distinction, such as language and custom, and the absence for many people of an all-pervasive consumer society, allows the same claims to be made as easily in South Africa as in the USA, South Africa has extensive shared cultural practices and

leveling experiences that are mostly ignored. These shared cultural aspects may be as shallow as imported American consumerism (media, music, material), or the ideological effects of television and radio. What must be looked at as well, then, is the racialisation of USA society, and the manner in which the largely uncontested notion of race exists there even more – without even a commitment to ‘non-racialism’!. The global culture in large part conveys and reinforces racialism, and a shared consumerism.

Race thinking and thinking about race – concluding thoughts

My argument has been that we have not taken any meaningful steps in the direction of non-racialism, if we mean by that the rejection of race thinking, of racialism, or even, minimally, opening up a debate about race. What we have done, to some extent, is to look at the effects of racism and racial discrimination, at the descriptive level, approaches that serve to support (totally unintentionally) common sense race thinking. To put it crudely, we have not accepted, within the strict meaning of non-racialism, that there are no such things as objectively verifiable, biologically/ genetically-determined and, hence, inherently *socially*-meaningful categories called races.

If we had, if non-racialism had been acknowledged to be just that, the denial of race, then the debate, or at least a central part of it, would have been, and should be about the meanings *and practices* which have come to be attached to races and the manner and reasons for such past and continuing attribution – through signification and stereotyping and representation. The discussion would be about attributions and representations, no matter how inappropriate, their effects, past and present, and what practical steps are to be initiated to alter those, and to address the past without falling into mirroring the past at the same time. Yes, much has been written about the origins of racism and of race thinking (within the rise of capitalism, within colonialism and imperialism, etc), but this has to be an ongoing process of investigation into the processes of constructing racialised subjects. Race thinking and race identities are constantly in process of being formed. Similarly, then, the elimination of race thinking has to be an on-going process. In South Africa we have much of the discussion and description of the practices of race thinking and of racism, with the TRC hearings being the most recent and most graphic of such hearings and writings. The meanings, and how they have been acquired and continue to be constructed, have been neglected.

Instead we have continued with *an acceptance that there are races*, implicitly and explicitly, and then the discussion is really just about the relevance of race: should this determine citizenship, land ownership, cultural funding, census categories, etc; does it apply to intelligence, physical ability, cultural traits; which of the multitude of daily experiences are we to explain through attaching the race label; and so on? Where, and how, do we draw the line between what applies and what not? For example, the intelligence debate is extremely sensitive, but cultural race-essentialism appears not to be, and openly appears uncontested in radio discussions, television programmes, etc.^{xiv}

There are at least two issues that have to be separated: first, the thinking that lies behind

perceiving matters in racialised terms – located in ideas about the existence of races as social categories that are culturally and in many other ways different because they belong to different biologically-defined races.^{xv} In other words, race thinking, or racialism. Second, practices (including ideological practices, such as apartheid) that are based on race, of which racism is the most vicious, but not the only one at all.

Race practices, too, have to be divided. Firstly, those that arise out of race thinking, out of racialism, where the most common are those that determine the minutiae of daily existence, or banal racialism. Our interpretation of our daily experience, the manner in which we attribute motives, read the news, tell jokes, construct and confirm stereotypes, explain what is happening to us and to those around us or within the society, are all influenced by race thinking as they are by gender and class. Secondly, there are those practices that derive from attempts to address a racialised and racist past, but which, in turn, feed back and confirm racialised thinking, because they do not ever deny the existence of races. Here I have in mind affirmative action (as it is at present practised and/or experienced in South Africa), black economic empowerment, employment equity, sports quotas, but also the banality of bureaucratic forms. In two weeks, at the University of Natal recently I had to complete three separate forms which asked me to select from four race categories – the four-spoked wheel lives on – in each case totally inappropriate to the issue at hand. Also the first census in a democratic South Africa asked us, again, to indicate one of four categories - there was not even space for 'other', here without even the heated debates that have characterised the selection and definition of 'ethnic' categories to be utilised in census taking in the USA.

My argument is that if we start off with the acceptance that race is a social construct, that the individual is imagined to be the bearer of a social identity as member of a race, reflexive to 'suit' different times and needs (most centrally that of making sense of the world through representation (Hall 1997)), then the manner in which we approach the daily experiences of racism and of race thinking, and of practices and policies based on the easy acceptance of race categories, will be quite different. It will challenge, instead of reinforcing or leaving unexamined, within our own race thinking, the basis on which we construct identities. What has occurred in South Africa, despite claims to an unbroken commitment to 'non-racialism', is that race identity has firmly remained part of the 'tool kit of options made available by our culture and society' (Appiah 1994:155). As Appiah notes, 'We do make choices, but we do not determine the options among which we choose', and a thoroughly racialised society will continue to 'demand' the race tool as common sense option (on common sense thinking see Baumann 1997). Here it matters not so much that the 'flag-waving' commitment to 'non-racialism' should be foregrounded, but that 'banal' race thinking and race action continues largely unchallenged (on 'banal nationalism' see Michael Billig 1995). Maybe the conceit that we are a unique society, with a universally distinct past, where claims of success equal the achievement thereof (and beware those who cast doubt), prevent us from moving beyond our own common sense. When a tired world, itself desperate for miracles, then applauds our small victory, who can continue to ask big questions.

Even when we voice the abstract commitment to belonging to a single race, that of the

human race, what we are doing is expressing humankind 'in itself', and not 'for itself' - stating the fact, when we need to commit to the achievement. Here I borrow from Agnes Heller (1982:34), in her argument for a necessary 'planetary responsibility' in human social conduct. In the meantime, the day-to-day existence is one that confirms the particularities of races. Here lies the depressing reality that we will have to face if we finally confront the struggle for non-racialism as more than political rhetoric or, at best, as more than multi-racialism and sensible race relations.

Patrick Wright acknowledges Agnes Heller in his argument, and comments that 'she remarks that everyday life is full of *stories* and that these (as Walter Benjamin also knew) are concerned with being-in-the-world rather than abstractly defined truth' (1985:14, emphasis original). This is where the gap between the lived reality of racialisation, and the rhetorical commitment to the abstract truth of non-racialism becomes clear. Wright adds that the 'essential thing for a story is that it should be *plausible...*', that stories 'play a prominent part in the everyday activity of *making sense*. They help to bring things into the order of *our* world - to thematise events, making them explicable in a way which also defines our present relation to them', working 'by *naming* things and events... and it has a powerful sense of what is *probable* or *possible*' (1985:15, emphases original). The plausibility lies in common sense, a state of affairs that allows us to experience (and, we believe, explain) our everyday reality in racialised terms. The story is race thinking, it is racialism.

There is an absolute necessity to rename our daily existence, away from the stories that are, understandably, located in 'being-in-the-world'. Appiah responds to criticisms leveled at him, that there is a very good reason for starting with the denial of the existence of races: '... we need the truth if we are to work out appropriate strategies' to combat racism (Appiah 1989:40). Need I repeat that this is not to argue that racism does not exist, or that it can or needs to be denied in the greater service of some utopian 'raceless' world. That would be grossly insensitive to those who have and continued to suffer and to die because of racism, inaccurate, and also analytically extremely short-sighted. Race thinking, my concern here, allows racism.^{xvi} As Appiah notes, in parentheses, '(You don't have to believe in witchcraft, after all, to believe that women were persecuted as witches in colonial Massachusetts.)'! (1989:40)

Appiah writes that 'the final repudiation of race as a term of difference' could be rejected on several grounds. First, that such rejection is incorrect, and that there are, in fact, biologically identifiable races, with social effect. In the case of South Africa it would be interesting to see who would articulate this as an article of faith, and not as an implied common sense within everyday life. Second, Appiah notes it may be argued 'that a statement of this truth is politically inopportune'. However, he responds:

I am enough of a scholar to think that the truth is worth telling and enough of a political animal to recognize that there are places where the truth does more harm than good. But, so far as the United States is concerned, I can see no reason to believe that racism is advanced by denying the existence of races (1989:40).

Third, what Appiah believes to have informed attacks on him from some African-Americans was that 'its [the notion of race] absence simply threatens to leave too vast a

discursive void' (1989:41). That, I would tentatively argue, is the unstated reason for the presence in previous strategies and for the unproblematic continuation of race thinking, also in the stories that compose social identities: an everyday life without the simplifying (and comfortable) common sense of races is beyond easy grasp. How much will we not have to shed, and to explain in alternative ways, if we reject the seeming obviousness of the existence of races and the tremendous explanatory power that that implies. However, how much are we sacrificing by not taking the first small step in such a bold journey?

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ⁱ What I am presenting here are elements of an argument in the process of being developed in a more extensive form. While it does not document the multitude of events and trends that have given rise to the concerns expressed in this paper, these are being analysed in detail. What I have not had time to do, nor the space to do it here, is a comprehensive overview of perspectives on race within different political movements and documents, nor a review of the writing and research that has taken place on the issue of racism and racialism in contemporary South Africa. This paper was first presented at the conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific, Perth (Australia), November 1999.

ⁱⁱ In my own research task I am having to establish an internally-consistent language that will be employed in order to allow a shared debate. It is all too easy to assume that we impute the same meaning to the same words. That is certainly not the case with 'race', as will become clear, even in the summary presentation in this paper (also see Howe 1998:ix-x).

The first issue is the use of quotation marks to indicate that the author, or even the speaker (as indicated by raised hands and the delicate but deliberate movement of index fingers), distances him- or herself from any possible implied meaning or association. What does it mean when we use the marks, and what does it mean when we leave them out? Let me be clear: even without written or body-language quotation marks I do not accept that there are biologically differentiated social groups called races, to which we can attach any generalisable attributes of culture or intelligence or whatever (see the very clear separation by Philip Tobias (1961:4) of biological/anatomical classification and 'leaping from anatomy to intelligence, language or religion'). I will, therefore, not employ quotation marks to make this point, except when I wish to indicate that I am discussing the concept, the notion 'race', or where others have used the term. I will certainly try to indicate what I think other people mean when they speak of race or an alternate, especially when interpretation is important and necessary. I associate myself with the position that there are no essentially meaningful categories such as those to which we have attached the label 'race' ('race exists only as a statistical correlation, not as an objective fact', writes Kenan Malik, 1996:4).

When I use the term *race* it will be to refer to the outcome of the social processes described by Miles (1989:69-73) as 'signification' (see Hall 1997 on 'representation'), which in this case involves two selections: first, 'of biological or somatic characteristics in general as a means of classification and categorisation'; and, second, selecting the specific somatic characteristics 'as signifying a supposed difference between human beings'. I would add, as a third selection, or rather attribution, namely that of specific cultural traits or abilities or inabilities to the races, previously signified (Miles 1989:71).

It can be seen how Miles' approach, also of 'racialisation', finds partial echo in Appiah's notion of 'racialism' (1992:13): a term for acceptance 'that there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, which allow us to divide them into small sets of races ...'. Within this perspective, then, non-racialism should mean the rejection of racialism, and not non-racism or multi-racialism, as it nearly always means in both analytical and activist discourses and analysis (see below). It is in the form of racialism that 'race thinking' operates most extensively, at least as can be gathered through fragmented research, and through public discourse. I will be using the terms 'race thinking' and 'racialism' interchangeably at certain times.

A term that will be employed regularly is that of *racialisation*, to refer to the process of interpreting events, motivations, and so on, in race terms, even if these are not necessarily or not all to be ascribed to the race of the people involved. For example, blaming the coverage of corruption involving black people to subliminal racism; immediately attributing the failure to secure a job to affirmative action policies; attributing driving characteristics to the colour (or gender!) of a person.

By *racism* I mean racialisation of people on the basis of some visible sign, such as skin colour, and then attributing negative and/or inferior qualities to people who meet the physical criteria for

categorisation, in the eyes of the classifier. *Racial domination/ discrimination/ etc* would then refer to practices, policies or systems that employ notions of racially distinct groups to explain or justify those practices. It should be clear from this brief clarification that racism, in my use of the term, does not refer to something that any particular set of people are incapable of – iow the *practices* that flow from racism may well relate directly to power imbalances in society, but this does not exclude the powerless from holding notions that would be called racist. An unemployed white South African could be a racist, as could a bourgeois black South African. Powerlessness could well be an explanatory factor in the racism of the former.

ⁱⁱⁱ Frederikse's approach was quite different from most of what had been written about 'race' in South Africa, as will become clear in the paper, in that she addressed people's perceptions through interviews. What I take issue with is describing this as 'non-racialism'. See Terkel 1993 for a similar exercise in giving people voice on race matters. Mala Singh and Shahed Vawda's (1988) critical study of the Natal Indian Congress' commitment to 'non-racialism' and defense of sectional political practice, resting fairly firmly on notions of race, approaches this matter through discourse analysis.

^{iv} Patrick Wright employs this notion, from Agnes Heller, in his discussion, not of race but of conservative nationalism in Thatcherite Britain.

^v Social psychologist Michael Billig is dealing with the 'unwaved flag' of 'banal nationalism' in his book, but the approach richly lends itself to what I am attempting at present.

^{vi} Frantz Fanon did deal with the effect on the colonised – on the acceptance of inferiority and aspirations to find worth in the world of the coloniser. However, his writings seem to have been ignored in hegemonic resistance thinking, perhaps due to the way in which they were implicitly and explicitly taken up within the black consciousness movement in South Africa, for which the ANC had little sympathy, even terming it a 'third force' at one stage. Grahame Hayes has suggested to me that what might (also) be involved is 'a dialectic (dynamic) of denial of the effects - at the level of the individual/s - of racism. It *damages* us'. This area clearly needs much more work. Kuper (1974:21-26) is interesting on this aspect.

^{vii} The term 'common sense' serves explicitly and implicitly in Posel's (1999) paper on racial classification in apartheid South Africa. She concludes: 'Herein lies arguably one of the most intractable and uncomfortable legacies of the apartheid system: the extent to which official racial designations were internalised by daily experience, and therefore continue to live on beyond the demise of the apartheid system itself' (1999:25).

^{viii} I cannot resist, however, to add this note. Wolpe (1988:7) notes confidently that 'According to liberal modernisation theory, there is a necessary contradiction between capitalism and racism', and returns to this in chapter 2 (1988:25-28). However, see Welsh 1987:188 'Liberal scholars, ..., adhere to no philosophy of history as explicit as that of Marxists; ... But few would adopt a countermodel that sees capitalism and racism as fundamentally antagonistic' (also see Lipton 1985).

^{ix} Early rejection of this conceptualisation is to be found in the writing of people who were to be drawn into the NEUM (see Drew 1997:24).

^x Debate around Indian and coloured South Africans, especially recently, has added complexity that could be avoided through the link white-settler/ oppressor and the discussion of whites within organisations committed to non-racialism.

^{xi} The ANC in Natal used the term 'multi-racialism' to refer to the Freedom Charter position, even though the Charter used the term 'non-racialism'. As I have argued, *multi-racialism* much more accurately captured most of the debates and usages from the 1950s on.

^{xii} In Catherine Campbell's (1992:145-6) study, which included interviews with 20 young African men, seven admitted that they had been 'unfaithful' to their partners, but 'justified their behaviour in terms of the African tradition that it was common for a man to have more than one wife'. More recently a case was made against parents who had sold their pre-teen daughter to an old man, who justified his actions in terms of African custom. The rejection of homo-sexuality as un-African, by such leaders as Museveni and Mugabe, reflects the same cultural essentialism. For an interesting collection of essays on the issue of multiculturalism, see Gutmann (ed) (1994).

^{xiii} Market researcher Beatrice Kubheka notes ('Black people don't need ethnic pasta', in *Independent on Saturday*, September 25, 1999) that 'This was one example (pasta tastes) of many instances where black middle class consumers have become indistinguishable from those of other racial groups' - but note that the existence of 'racial groups' is still presented here and in many 'demographically sensitive' advertisements in South Africa. That remains, not surprisingly, the starting point of any further leveling-out.

^{xiv} Recently, for example, I have listened to a radio discussion programme in which the learned guests argued for an African style of management which would take into account the African sense of time (much looser, no sense of a future, circular, etc), and watched a four-part television series which used 'instinct' three times in the first episode in discussing distinctive cultural practices of African people in South Africa.

^{xv} A recent study that I supervised (Miller 1999) illustrated the contradictory perceptions that apply in race thinking – attributing race to both socialisation, and also to inherent characteristics with which we are born. The latter was the stronger of the two explanations for notions of race. It is hoped to repeat this study several times.

^{xvi} To give serious consideration to the argument that to argue against 'race' could be to argue for racism, I will (elsewhere) respond to such a position by examining Gordon and Newfeld and their attack on what they call '*liberal* racism' (1995:380, emphasis original; see prior article and response to these authors by Walter Benn Michaels). Here it would be worthwhile to read, not only Appiah's (1989) response to his critics (referred to below), but also the 'Prologue' by Jared Diamond (1999).

It's not surprising that, only 20 years after the end of apartheid, South Africa should be consumed by the question of race. But the publication of a provocative letter to white South Africans at the start of the year turned the heat up on the conversation, provoking passionate responses from all sides. "Because your holier-than-thou attitude is really tiresome" to the less so: "The situation in South Africa is very complicated due to the 'white man' always trying to co-exist with the natives in harmony. If the 'white man' just killed the majority of the natives (as in other countries) then it would not be complicated at all." "I was most perplexed to read fellow Thought Leader Sarah Britten's "What are vile white practices?" written in response to Gillian Schutte's "Dear White People". "The Black race will be exterminated if it does not build a Black(African) Superpower in Africa by the end of this Century." Chinweidzu. Reading up on Wilson is an eye opener for us, if we will ever have the gall and guts to face our weakened state of being. Wilson writes "Our culture should guide our thinking. Our custom condition our behavior; our tradition enable us to determine ourselves as a people and nation. We cannot afford to be hoodwinked by television, and other western cultural imperial artifacts and gadgets." We cannot think like we are of European origin in our psyche and other distorted cultural unrealities we so apt to adopt and pine for, at the expense of our own indigenous cultures, traditions, customs and so forth. 'Madness(Mental Illness) And Rage'. Ties that Bind: Race and the politics of friendship in South Africa. Shannon walsh. Jon soske. In the wake of countrywide student protests calling for decolonisation of the university, and reignited debates around racial inequality, this timely volume insists that the history of South African politics has always already been about friendship. Written in an accessible and engaging style, Ties that Bind will interest a wide audience of scholars, students and activists, as well as general readers curious about contemporary South African debates around race and intimacy. Indexed in Clarivate Analytics Book Citation Index (Web of Science Core Collection).