CONCLUSION

SOUTH AFRICA

Toward Democracy and Development

Seek first the kingdom of money and the ownership of the soil and many things will be added unto you.

—DDT Jabavu, cited in Peter Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism

The transition was business saying: ‘we will keep everything and you [the ANC] will rule in name. . . . You can have political power, you can have the façade of governing, but the real governance will take place somewhere else’. . . new governments are, in effect, given the keys to the house but not the combination to the safe.

—Yasmin Sooka, South African human rights activist, quoted in Klein, 2007: 203–4

THE BASIC ARGUMENT OF THIS STUDY IS THAT LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN South Africa accommodated and left unresolved the major contradictions inherent in South African capitalism and the apartheid economy, as well as in the ANC’s multiracial nationalist ideology and discourse. In particular, the delivery of equal human, civil, and political rights in the new democratic dispensation was premised on the acceptance of essentially unequal economic and social relations among different social classes, racial, and gender groups. In addition, the NP was forced to negotiate with the ANC by a combination of domestic and international political and economic factors, foremost amongst which were divergent political and economic views with Afrikaner nationalism, sustained international pressure for change from the United States and the former Soviet Union, and structural changes in the global economy. The fall of the Soviet Union and the demise of socialism marginalized the Marxist elements within the ANC and facilitated the transition to the liberal democracy capitalist model of political and economic development. By instantly providing the

M. w. Muiu, The Pitfalls of Liberal Democracy and Late Nationalism in South Africa
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African majority with basic human, civil, and political rights (including the right to vote), this model offered an acceptable basis and framework for peaceful interracial coexistence. Furthermore, the South African middle-class (or bourgeoisie), irrespective of race and ethnicity, is threatened by a variety of social and economic forces and demands emanating from above and below. Pressures from the national and international business community severely limited the African middle class’s room for maneuver and forced it to make major compromises at the expense of the economic and social interests, priorities, and needs of the African majority. The latter’s constant demands for improved socioeconomic conditions forced the ANC government to partially satisfy their requests. These basic economic and social realities will continue to inform the ANC’s attempts at transformation for the foreseeable future. By and large, the validity of the argument is confirmed by my findings.

I conducted a comparative study of African and Afrikaner nationalisms as represented by the African National Congress and the National Party using a long-term historical perspective. This work focused on all the actors involved by analyzing how each was influenced by British imperialism in different ways. This study also examined the status and role of marginalized people, particularly the African urban and rural poor, through the lens of race, class, and gender. This method enabled us to see how different socioeconomic forces, such as liberalism, capitalism, education, and religion, influenced African nationalism and liberal democracy in post-apartheid South Africa. We observed that far from being static and constant, nationalism changed according to various influences, the issues at stake, and the changing power relations within and between various actors and social groups. Our analytical framework also allowed us to examine power relations within Afrikaner and African nationalisms, between these two ideologies, and between Afrikaner and African nationalisms and other racially or ethnically based nationalisms in South Africa. Finally, our method of analysis revealed some of the major contradictions inherent in nationalism, particularly the gap between representation and reality.

Several factors shaped both the African and Afrikaner imagined communities between 1867 and 1948. First, the way the two communities were known and represented shaped their boundaries. These factors, in turn, influenced missionary education, which further shaped the thinking of the African middle-class. These representations placed the white race at the top of the pyramid, as the ideal against which all other racial groups were measured. Such representations also informed the Afrikaner imagined community, which viewed itself as part of an eminently civilized and superior nation.

Second, African and Afrikaner communities were imagined within racial parameters. Afrikaners imagined themselves as white and, therefore, as inherently superior. Third, these imagined communities were informed by class as well as gender. When confronted by outsiders, all classes within Afrikaner or African nationalism would unite. Afrikaner nationalism used the suffering of Afrikaner women to mobilize the Afrikaner “volk” against British imperialism. The representation of these imagined communities was also shaped by power relations. Representations included women without giving them equal rights with men both at home and at work. While they unanimously rallied behind the ANC, African women’s representation was confined to their own organization within the party, namely the ANC’s Women’s League. Class also determined