

South Africa in Africa; Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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Introduction

The century-long journey of the ANC is the history of modern African political resistance to settler-colonialism in Southern Africa. For eighty percent of this period the ANC was devoted to the negation of the historical implications of colonialism and the conquest of political power for the marginalized; this process ultimately ended with the political defeat of the Apartheid state in 1994 and the installation of a democratic state. The ANC has from the time of its formation been the mainstream of African nationalist response to settler-colonialism. Till today, it remains so. Indeed, all national elections since 1994 have been carried by about two-thirds of the vote. It is still the political confluence area of the majority of South Africans, particularly among African language-speakers.

The relatively peaceful transition from an institutionally racialized state to a non-racial state defied most expectations and left us all euphoric. Countless observers and researchers got in on the act, performing post-mortems on Apartheid, diagnosing the social pathology of the erstwhile malaise, prognosticating and crystal-ball gazing on what is to be. How was a new South Africa going to fit into Africa? What is Africa after Apartheid? Some efforts were quick off the mark.¹ In a 1991 meeting in Windhoek, Obasanjo remarked that;

The inclusion of South Africa in regional, political and economic organizations must be the first outcome of post-apartheid South Africa. Such an arrangement may mean re-modelling existing organizations to admit a “new” South Africa or the establishment of new organisations. Cooperation, particularly in the economic sector, must mutually and collectively strengthen the economy of the Southern African sub-region. Cooperation must gradually and steadily lead to the integration of the economy with the harmonization of currencies, financial systems and infrastructures. True enough, the

¹ For example the; Conference on the Southern African Economy After Apartheid. University of York. Centre for Southern African Studies. York, UK, 1986.

economy of South Africa is not as strong or as resilient as the economy of the developed and industrialized West, but it is the strongest economy within the sub-region, and neighbouring countries look up to the “new” South Africa as a pre-eminent nation and economy within Southern Africa. Regional development programmes must be given high priority and national development programmes should be harmonized accordingly. Cooperation is not a zero-sum game. Every nation has something to gain in a regional organization in the short, medium, and long-term. Sacrifice must also be made equitably. Perception and reality of an uncaring and dominating South Africa as an oasis in the midst of a desert of poverty and poor economies in the sub-region will be inimical to national security and stability, regional development and cooperation. While the sub-region or the continent may not be a massive motive force for the economy of South Africa, a revitalised economy of post-apartheid South Africa can influence significantly the economies of neighbouring countries and, to some extent, those of countries beyond the sub-region. Cooperation and self-reliance must be the guiding principles for the nations in the region.²

The collapse of the Apartheid idea meant that Africans have realized political power in an area of Africa where for a few hundred years, Western intrusion and dominance had held sway. South Africa’s burial of Apartheid was the end of Western colonialism in Africa. It came last because it was last in the queue; it was the hardest nut to crack.

Interestingly, Obasanjo added the following remarks;

If South Africa will be “the entrepreneur” of Africa, it has to shed the apartheid mentality and culture and demonstrate that it belongs to Africa. The aim must be integration and cooperation rather than domination.³

Until the end of Apartheid, South Africa was the bully-boy of the sub-region. From cross-border raids against freedom fighters in the 80’s, by the late 80’s it had quietly become a global member of the nuclear club. The question of South Africa’s relationship with the rest of Africa continues to intrigue a variety of minds in Africa and the world.

In a review of Adekeye Adebajo, Adebayo Adedeji and Chris Landsberg’s *South Africa in Africa: the Post-Apartheid Era*, Saunders writes that; “The title itself, like that of the earlier volume, can of course be criticised for suggesting that South Africa is not part of Africa, and elsewhere there are odd phrases that jar, such as that since 1994 South Africa ‘has revealed a clear intention to remain in Africa’ ”.⁴ The authors were taking the inherited norm as sacrosanct when it needed to be interrogated. In another review of the same book, Grest observes that;

² In Felix G.N. Mosha (ed). Challenges of Post-Apartheid South Africa. Conclusions and Papers presented at the of the African Leadership Forum. Windhoek. 8th – 10th September. 1991. Pp. 7–16.

³ Ibid. Pp. 7–16.

⁴ Chris Saunders. South Africa in Africa: The Post-Apartheid Era. *South African Historical Journal*. Vol. 59. No. 1. 2007. Pp 261- 285.

But the biggest silence is on Zimbabwe, where an on-going political crisis is dealt with, more or less in passing, as part of a review of land reform in Africa, and described as an example of “radical redistribution”. If ever there was a case for a careful analysis of South African foreign policy in action in Africa it must be here. The large-scale xenophobic attacks on African migrants in South Africa, which began in May 2008, have to be seen as a major foreign policy failure amongst other failures of governance. What moral claims to be leadership of a Renaissance can be made by leaders who, with their discourse of brotherhood and African identity, have failed to recognise and act to mitigate the scale of human disaster unfolding beneath their noses? The disconnect between the articulated vision of continental renewal and the anger, hatred and criminality on the streets could not be more profound. Certainly, the South African foreign policy community will need carefully to examine the links between a range of internal policies which have caused such disaffection from citizens living on the margins of our society and their own capacity to do a credible job selling South Africa in the rest of the continent.⁵

The issue of Zimbabwe has become a *cause célèbre* for interested parties. The legitimacy for land reform should not be mixed up with either the questionable way some politicians received parcels of land or the political unevenhandedness and violence that has taken place in the country. Too often opponents of land reform have used the excesses of the ZANU-PF regime to pillory the legitimacy of the land reform. The land question in Southern Africa needs to be tackled dispassionately and with fairness to historically dispossessed Africans. There cannot be long term peace in Southern Africa for as long as the colonial gains of settlerism are not corrected; with justice for the dispossessed. Regarding xenophobic attacks of African migrants in South Africa, the record is disgraceful and attention needs to be given to the prevention of attacks and pogroms in the future. In my experience of having lived in 9 countries on this continent, there is hardly any exception to the phenomenon of African-on-African xenophobia in any of the countries I have lived in. The intensity of the expression varies greatly. In some places it is mild and relatively muted and in others it is virulent and sometimes barbaric as was the case in South Africa. We need to understand and address the root causes of such behaviour so that we can properly address and arrest the phenomenon.

Alden and le Pere, in a paper on *South Africa in Africa* concluded that;

As South Africa approaches its fourth democratic election, it must squarely confront the challenges posed by a disappointed electorate and an increasingly sceptical Africa. At home, the majority yearn for a vastly improved social and economic order that is now depressed by fiscal mismanagement, corrupted by elite venality, and haunted by pernicious social insecurity. Even the international community’s faith in South African leadership seems to have been shaken. In the final analysis, South Africa’s future interface with Africa will depend on the extent to which it can confront its own horsemen of the apocalypse in the form of endemic poverty, crime and inequality,

⁵ Jeremy Grest. South Africa in Africa: The Post-Apartheid Era. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*. Number 68. 2008. Pp. 141-150.

address its image deficits by changing its orientation in Africa to one based on genuine partnership, restrain the predatory and acquisitive instincts of its capital, and share its developmental successes with the continent in a fair and equitable manner.⁶

Criticism has often been hard-hitting. Not all of such strictures relate easily to the matter of “South Africa in Africa”. However, an observer like Sidiropoulos has been more generous. She writes that; “President Mbeki became one of the most effective marketers of the concept of an African Renaissance, which required for its success both Africa’s own commitment to change and also the support of the North. While a small country in demographic and economic terms in the world, South Africa was invited by the G8 to join the Group of Five developing countries which meet with the world, not only because of the manner of its birth in 1994, but also because of the manner of its involvement in international affairs, under both President Mandela and Mbeki”⁷.

The Mbeki Era

The Mbeki’s era saw South Africa providing cautious but decisive vision in some ways in Africa. His “I am an African” delineation, articulated on May the 8th, 1996 ruffled some feathers in South Africa. It signalled an orientation and vision for South Africa and also reminded other Africans on the continent that there was a positive inclination to Africanism at the helm of South African affairs. My reaction (1998) was that;

When soon after the promulgation of the constitution for a new post-Apartheid South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, the political heir apparent of President Mandela, made a speech in the Constitutional Assembly, in which he affirmed that “I am an African”. This simple and most obvious affirmation sent ripples of disconcertion in some circles of South African society, while creating elation and enthusiasm in others. What was significant was that, this assertion of being an African, for some reason, for a leader of the stature of Mbeki, who is the prospective President to boot, was for too many people a threatening fact, something not to be said, something to be denied by silence; something South Africa was not yet ready for; something nightmarish, something which for those who in the past had been successfully fed on the myth of the *swarte gevaar* was a signifying message which produces a knee-jerk reaction and sends alarm bells ringing. Those who were elated and enthusiastic were overwhelmingly African. Coming out with “I am an African” for them meant that Mbeki had backbone and was prepared to present his Africaness with pride, no fear, and no shame. Nowhere else in sub-Saharan Africa would the statement “I am an African” trigger the sort of reactions that it set into motion in South Africa. Indeed, for the rest of Africa, to state that “I am an African” would amount to stating so much the obvious, that people would wonder what is wrong with the leader. Has he or she lost his or her marbles? The African character of the rest of

⁶ Chris Alden and Garth le Pere. South Africa in Africa – bound to lead? *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*. April 2006. 36(1). Pp. 145 – 169. P.21.

⁷ Elizabeth Sidiropoulos. South African Foreign Policy in the Post-Mbeki Period. *South African Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 5. Issue 2. 2008. Pp. 107-120.

sub-Saharan Africa has never been denied. The problem we have here in South Africa is that, the African character of the society has been so suppressed and oppressed that to reveal it in any shape or form is subversive. This is the point about apartheid, which denied Africans citizenship in their own country and pushed them into Bantustans. The existence of Bantustans ensured the currency of the myth that Africans are not a majority in South Africa.⁸

Indeed both of Mbeki's statement; "I am an African" and his notion of an African Renaissance sent out into the rest of Africa an enervating and uplifting impulse. Within the intellectual traditions of the ANC, Mbeki's ideas were an echo back to Pixley Seme who in the opening years of the 20th century, in a speech titled; *The Regeneration of Africa* wrote that;

I have chosen to speak to you on this occasion upon "The Regeneration of Africa". I am an African. ... The African already recognises his anomalous position and desires a change. The brighter day is rising upon Africa. Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Abyssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and of religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities. Her Congo and her Gambia whitened with commerce, her crowded cities sending forth the hum of business, and all her sons employed in advancing the victories of peace – greater and more abiding than the spoils of war. Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new powerful period! By this term, regeneration, I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence.⁹

Mbeki was ideationally attesting to a tradition which has from the start been close to the mainsprings of the ANC. The antecedents are not difficult to unravel. The question is why had a view which had so deeply been embedded in the consciousness of the organization from its earliest years become so surprising to present-day ears?

With respect to the post-Mbeki era, Habib rightly observes that, regarding foreign policy, "... There will of course be some minor changes. But there is unlikely to be any fundamental change in South Africa's foreign policy. It is worth bearing in mind that Jacob Zuma and many of those likely to be in his administration are second generation African nationalists. Also, many in the Zuma camp were integral to the foreign policy apparatus of the Mbeki administration."¹⁰ None of the findings of the various observers I have looked at focusses on South Africa in Africa as

⁸ Who Is An African? *Enterprise Magazine*. Jo'burg. May 1998

⁹ Pixley Isaka Seme. *The Regeneration of Africa*. In, J. Ayo Langley. *Ideologies of Liberation in Black Africa*. 1856 – 1970. Documents of Modern African Political thought from Colonial Times to the Present. Rex Collings. London. 1979. Pp. 261 – 264. Reprinted from the *Journal of the Royal African Society*. Vol.5. 1905-1906. Pp. 404-8. A similar subject with identical title was dealt with in 1908 b Bandle Omoniyi, author of *A Defence of the Ethiopian Movement*, and a medical student at Edinburgh, in chapter IX of the book. That chapter, 'Regeneration of Africa', he said, was based on an article he published in August 1907 in some leading African newspapers.

¹⁰ Adam Habib. *South Africa's Foreign Policy: Hegemonic Aspirations, Neoliberal Orientations and Global Transformation*. *South African Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 6. Issue 2. 2009. Pp. 143-159.

culturally, geographically and historically an organic part of Africa, and makes that a point of departure in their examination of the case.

The Past

South Africa's sombre history of political "pigmentology" which racialized social class, discouraged our appreciation of South Africa's fortunes, from geography to its cultural tapestry. I have elsewhere pointed out that; "The cosmopolitanism of South Africa is inextricably linked with its ethnic mix. It is unrivalled in this respect on the African continent. Nowhere else in Africa would you find this sort of diversity of sizeable communities from all corners of the world. They include apart from various groups of Europeans, Indians¹¹; Chinese¹², Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Christians and other religionists who have historically been thrown together as compatriots. The cultural mix is unique and provides the basis of a shared cultural space which will be the envy of most countries of the world. This richness was fettered under apartheid and rather turned into caste-structures constructed around the notion of *baskap*. ... To maintain the claim of South Africa, for years the myth was advanced by the ideologues of white minority rule that 'whites and blacks came to South Africa at about the same time'. Another variant of this sort of myth-making was that, 'the Bantu are not indigenous, they came in after the Dutch and British' ".¹³

The historical distortions fed into simple minds under apartheid were lethal. A history book, first published in 1958, which catered for secondary school pupils, provides a supreme example of the sort of Apartheid-era knowledge under discussion here. The author wrote that; "The Bushmen, little yellow-skinned people barely 153 cm in height ... the second inhabitants of South Africa, probably having been compelled to migrate from central Southern Asia ... According to one theory, one section, going south-east, occupied the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines and

¹¹ Indian South Africans form about 3 percent of the population of the country. They were brought into the country as indentured labourers for the sugar plantations in Natal from 1860 onwards. Poor treatment and gross exploitation of the Indians was instituted right at the beginning of their presence, and indeed in 1872, the Natal Legislature made rather half-hearted attempts to redress some of these ills. Indian immigration increased slowly from about 10,000 in 1875 to 100,000 by the end of the century. White racism has regarded Indian labour as a threat and restricted employment and occupational opportunities for this community. The threat of repatriation has always been banded around. Since 1914, about 50,000 Indians have been repatriated under various arrangements. For decades, there were restrictions to travel and residence in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and the Cape. See Frene Ginwala. Indian South Africans. Minority Rights Group Report. No.34. London. 1977. See also, C.J. Ferguson-Davie. The Early History of Indians in Natal. Johannesburg. 1977. P.S. Joshi. The Tyranny of Colour. The Indian Problem in South Africa. Durban. 1942. A recent edited text which summarizes the current position of Indians in South African society is provided by; A.J. Arkin, K.P. Magyar and G.J. Pillay. The Indian South Africans. Pinetown. 1989. Quoted here from, Kwesi Kwaa Prah. Beyond the Color Line. Pan-Africanist Disputations, Selected Sketches, Letters, Papers and Reviews. Africa World Press. Trenton. 1998. P.114.

¹² After the Anglo-Boer war, the Milner Administration in response to increasing and festering African dissatisfaction and rejection of mine labour, decided to import Chinese indentured labour. About 60,000 were imported. This labour group proved invaluable to the mining industry, but at the same time the myth and fear of the racist notion of "yellow peril" was raised in both the United Kingdom and South Africa. As a result, in 1906 after the ascendancy of the Liberal government in the UK, the import of Chinese labour was terminated and within 5 years almost all the Chinese were repatriated. Quoted here from, Kwesi Kwaa Prah. Beyond the Color Line. Pan-Africanist Disputations, Selected Sketches, Letters, Papers and Reviews. Africa World Press. Trenton. 1998. P.114.

¹³ C.P. Mulder. "Address to the World Affairs Council". Los Angeles. 6th June 1975. *The UNESCO Courier*. November 1977. P.10. Quoted here from Marianne Cornevin. Apartheid, Power and Historical Falsification. UNESCO. Paris. 1980. Quoted here from, Kwesi Kwaa Prah. Beyond the Color Line. Pan-Africanist Disputations, Selected Sketches, Letters, Papers and Reviews. Africa World Press. Trenton. 1998. P.115.

Australia; another section travelling west, entered Spain; while a third found its way into Africa, where they were gradually pushed south by the stronger Hamites occupying the Nile region. In succession other races entered Africa from the east ... The Hottentots, a people a little bigger and a little darker than the Bushmen, probably originated in Somaliland as a result of admixture between Bushmen and Hamites. According to the generally accepted theory, they migrated south-west to the region of the Great Lakes, where they remained for several centuries, then following the Atlantic coast, they eventually crossed the Orange river. By the 16th century they were to be found along the banks of the Orange ... The Europeans at the Cape did not come into close contact with the Bantu-speaking Africans until well into the 18th century, for they like the Europeans were comparative new-comers to Southern Africa. In all probability their original home was Central Asia. They are believed to have entered Africa in large numbers ...”¹⁴

Anybody with any serious familiarity with the history and organization of African society would marvel at the unstinted falsehood of such historiography. Literally, millions of South Africans, were educationally nurtured at impressionable ages on such “sucked out of the thumb” falsehood. The object was to maintain the idea that, in South Africa and much of Africa, everybody is a “foreigner”. But more importantly, that the Bantu-speaking peoples pitched up in South Africa at about the same time as the Europeans.¹⁵ The truth is that; ...contemporary genomic research suggests *homo sapiens sapiens* emerged in the Angola/Namibia border area. Genetic studies have identified the area as the area with the greatest diversity of human genetic material. Such diversity is an indication of where any species is derived from in the evolutionary process. Iron Age communities have been present in Southern Africa at least as far back as 200 AD. Other even more aboriginal Africans in the area are the Khoi and San ethnicities. North of the 5S latitude these hunter-gatherer groups have often been described as pygmies, in the South they are designated as the Khoi Khoi and San. Inter-marriage and cultural interpenetration between the Khoi, San and Bantu language speakers has been going on from the earliest of times. This is particularly noticeable in the languages of the Khoi and San themselves and the Xhosa-Zulu, Tswana-Sotho, Nama and Berg Damara¹⁶. It needs also to be added that major migrations have taken place in the region and beyond over the past centuries. As early as AD 1000 the two main strands of the Bantu languages in South Africa were discernible, the Nguni and the Sotho. Iron, copper and gold were produced. Complex social systems with state structures were in existence in the southern African region as the Luba and the Mutapa or its predecessor the Great Zimbabwe state. This latter maintained trade relations on long distance

¹⁴ M. S. Geen. *The Making of South Africa*. Maskew Miller. Cape Town. 1958. 1971 edition. Pp. 11-12. Quoted here from K.K. Prah. *Knowledge in Black and White*. CASAS. P.8

¹⁵ K. K. Prah. *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Indeed, the extent of these cultural-linguistic admixture among the Bantu and the Khoisan is much too profound and interpenetrated to be simply a few centuries old. In a private conversation, the Bishop of Kimberley and Kuruman, Bishop Winston Ndungane informed me that, the traditional name of the Khoi Khoi is Ngwai Ngwai, that Khoi Khoi is a corruption of that. G.M. Theal writes that; “The Hottentots termed themselves Khoikhoi, ‘men of men’, as they prided themselves upon their superiority over the other race with which they were best acquainted ... the Bushmen”. See, *The Beginning of South African History*. London. 1902. p.19. Quoted here from, Kwesi Kwaa Prah. *Beyond the Color Line. Pan-Africanist Disputations, Selected Sketches, Letters, Papers and Reviews*. Africa World Press. Trenton. 1998. Pp. 117-118.

basis as far as the Mozambican coast. In the northern reaches of the region during the 15th century Shona influence and power was considerable under the Mwana Mutapa kings.¹⁷

The idea of Bantu migrations needs to be more cautiously handled and interpreted. Without doubt, extensive migrations of groups have over the eons of time taken place across Africa. But, I argue that it is more cultures which move, rather than people. Dominant cultures tend to overrun and supersede weaker cultures through acculturation and assimilation. Culture and biology remain separate and distinct. For example, the major aboriginal peoples of Southern Africa, the Khoi and the San peoples and the Bantu speakers, cannot be recognized or grouped as physical types. There is some variation, but more amalgam than variation. There has been an enormous amount of cultural and biological interpenetration. The differences today are more cultural than physical. It is important not to confuse cultural with biological ones. Throughout Africa the aboriginal peoples were culturally more Khoi and San related. However, over the past 3000 years the more advanced pastoralist and sedentary cultures of the Bantu have overridden these aboriginal cultures. Khoi speakers in East Africa do not look like the generalized image of Khoi or San speakers in Southern Africa. This strongly backs up the argument that cultures move more than people. But it also points to the organically and historically integrated character of the great deal of African societies.

In sum, the idea that South Africa is somehow outside Africa is born out of the settler colonial phenomenon. In the apartheid era, the Bantustans/Homelands and Groups Areas as consequences created the fiction of a South Africa which was not African. This historic lie was lived to the full by the Apartheid state and educated masses of people to believe that somehow South Africa was not part of Africa. This is how the absurdity of the statement “I am going to Africa”, from South Africans was inculcated.

ANC Roots

In 1911, Pixley ka Isaka Seme called on Africans to forget the differences of the past and unite together in one national organisation to defend the rights and interests of Africans. His words were that; *“We are one people. These divisions, these jealousies, are the cause of all our woes today.”* On January 8th 1912, a mixture of traditional leaders, church groups and some prominents assembled in Bloemfontein and formed what was to become the African National Congress. Its initial name was the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The organization was renamed the ANC eleven years later, in 1923. The ANC declared its aim as; “to bring all Africans together as one people to defend their rights and freedoms”. The historical circumstances of its formation were important. The organization was created at a time when South Africa was becoming the mining hub of the region; when mining and industrial capital was spawning a proletariat. Diamonds had been discovered in 1867 and gold two decades later in 1886. Mine labour was in great demand. Laws and taxes were designed to force people to leave their land and get into wage labour. Conditions of African labourers in the Rand became an important consideration in the organization of the 1st Pan-African Congress in London in 1900, under the

¹⁷ K.K. Prah. Ibid.

leadership of Sylvester Williams. Western industrial enterprise was already on a scale not to be found anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The opening decades of the ANC were organizationally phlegmatic and politically listless. This was in part due to its financially challenging circumstances, however, equally problematic in no small measure was the internecine bickering and squabbles over office which affected the work style and effectiveness of the movement. It was however, the looming threat of monolithic and self-righteous white power which brought greater sense of purpose and direction into the affairs of the organization. The establishment of apartheid in 1948, its bare-faced racism and easy willingness to affirm racial segregation enforced by ruthless state-sponsored violence against Black people brought home to the organization the venality of the adversary who would stop at nothing, but nothing, to consolidate *baaskap*. A plethora of laws were passed to buttress the Apartheid idea.

The most grievous law against African interests in the near half-century before the establishment of the Apartheid state was the 1913 Land Act. The land dispossession of Africans became a centre-piece of the system of white dominance and has remained so till the present day. This enactment prevented Africans from purchasing, renting, or using land or generally transacting in land matters, except in designated over-crowded reserves; the precursors of the Bantustans. Many communities or families immediately lost their holdings as a result of the Land Act. Impoverishment swept through and poverty blighted the African communities. For millions of Africans it became very difficult to live off the land. In 1914 delegations were sent out to Britain to protest the Land Act without success. In 1919 similar delegations were fruitless. The Land Act and other laws and taxes were a great fillip to the growth of wage labour and the migrant labour system. It forced people to seek work in mines and on the white farms. The movement of Africans was restricted and constrained through a Pass System which ensured that Africans were principally either on the mines or on the farms. The pass laws also prevented Africans from leaving their jobs or going on strike.

In 1919 the ANC in Transvaal organized a campaign against the pass laws. In 1920, they supported a mineworkers strike. Some of the leadership ANC leaders disagreed with militant actions such as strikes and protests, arguing that the ANC should achieve its aims by more genteel means. Indeed, the 1920s represented a low ebb for the organization. Kadalie's *The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU)* - a general union formed in 1919 - was the most active organization of the period. However, by the late 1920s had become politically a spent force. The Communist Party was formed in 1921.

The 1920s saw more draconian and racist policies. Such policies stopped blacks from holding semi-skilled jobs in many industries. Black workers were paid lower wages. J.T. Gumede, who was elected President of the ANC in 1927 tried to restructure the ANC in order to fight these racist policies. However, in 1930, Gumede was voted out of office. The ANC became relatively inactive in the 1930s. The 1940s saw a change of fortune for the organization. In 1947, the ANC and the Indian Congresses signed an understanding giving full support for each other's

campaigns. It became a mass movement in the 50s fired by the determined militancy of the Youth League.

The ANC Youth League was formed in 1944. The leaders of the Youth League - among them Lembede, Mandela, Sisulu, Mda and Tambo, Sobukwe and others, based their ideas and political considerations on African nationalism. They believed Africans would be freed only by their own efforts. The Youth League produced a Programme of Action which called for strikes, boycotts and defiance. This programme was adopted in 1949, and led to the Defiance Campaign of the 1950s.¹⁸ The 1960s, 70s and 80s were years of exile and militancy. Tambo's leadership was crucial in holding the organization together. The build-up to a potential conflagration became increasing obvious, but in the end South Africans were spared the agony of war. In the early 90s the process of dismantling Apartheid was set into motion.

The end of Apartheid came with the installation of one of the most democratic constitutions conceptualized in our times. We have been able to maintain it without revision for twenty years. Its provisions support the entrenchment of human rights, the rule of law, multi-partyism and the instrumentalities of an open society. The standard it sets is of benefit not only for South Africans, but also the rest of Africa and the world.

We have seen almost twenty years of ANC rule with both positive and negative results. The ugly institutionalised racism which had for years made South Africa the polecat of the human community was buried with the dispensation of 1994; with it went the elaborate legal infrastructure on which myth of Apartheid was constructed.

The Progeny and Africanist Tendency

During the century of its existence almost all other African political formations and leading political leaders in South Africa and a good part of Southern Africa have arisen either directly or indirectly out of the ANC. The ANC has been the tree from which new political and ideological branches grew. It is not accidental that *Nkosi Sikelele Afrika*, for most of its history, as an anthem of African freedom, was sung and used regionally; in South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, it was the acknowledged anthem of African nationalism, and remains, till today, the national anthem in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania (with Swahili lyrics) and Zambia (with English lyrics). It is indeed, arguably the greatest candidate for anthem, for a united Africa.

Most of the political leadership of the independence movement in English-speaking Southern Africa won their spurs under the inspiration of the Congress movement of South Africa. Harry Nkumbula (Zambia) Joshua Nkomo of Zimbabwe started politics as members or acolytes of the

¹⁸ . The Defiance Campaign can be seen as the beginning of the mass movement against apartheid. This period saw active cooperation between the ANC and the SA Indian Congress. New significant organizations were created; the SA Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and a new organization of whites called the Congress of Democrats (COD). These organizations, in concert with the SA Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) formed the Congress Alliance. The Congress Alliance organized the Congress of the People. This was a major conference of all the people of South Africa. Their vision and expectations were enshrined in the Freedom Charter which was adopted by the Congress of the People at Kliptown on the 26th June 1955. The Africanists disapproved of the implications of the Freedom Charter.

ANC (South Africa). Herbert Chitepo (Zimbabwe) and Ntsu Mokgetlhe (Lesotho) were members of the ANC Youth League. Chief Buthelezi the founder of the Inkhatha Freedom Party first gained political recognition as a member of the ANC Youth League. For decades, the ANC has been a “broad church” drawing political support from a wide spectrum of social elements, Christians, Muslims, and Jews; the political left and tempered right; evolutionists and revolutionists.

Throughout its lifetime, the nationalist argument has remained a challenging tendency within the ANC. With its first roots and manifestation in the 1920s, decade after decade it has resurfaced in other forms and guises. In the post-1948 era, the most enduring and assertive of the Africanist tendency is associated with the emergence of the PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement, the ANC (African nationalists – Group of Eight).

Under the influence of the Comintern in 1928 the Communists were made to adopt the Native Republic thesis which held that South Africa was a country belonging to the Natives, that is, the Africans. The Party thus reoriented itself at its 1924 Party Congress towards organizing black workers and “Africanizing” the party. By 1928, 1,600 of the party’s 1,750 members were Black. In 1929, the party adopted a “strategic line” which posited that “The most direct line of advance to socialism runs through the mass struggle for majority rule”. By 1948 the Party had officially abandoned the Native Republic thesis.

The “Africanists” of the ANC broke from the parent body to form the Pan-African Congress in 1959, in opposition to the creation of a five member Congress Alliance executive that reduced the 100,000 member ANC to the same status as the 500 strong (white) Congress of Democrats and three other small organizations. The PAC proved to have little organizational capacity. It had only an 11 months life before it was banned; exile followed.¹⁹ In exile it lost its sense of direction.

In 1975, in Morogoro, Tanzania the ANC had again to confront the African nationalist tendency within its ranks. Eight of its senior members were kicked out of the organization. These included, Jonas Matlou, Tami Bonga, A.K. Mqota, George Mbele, Tennyson Makiwane, Ambrose Makiwane, Pascal Ngakane, O.K. Setlapelo.

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which arose in 1968 called on the Black people to unite because they are all oppressed, exploited and discriminated against, whether they are Bantu, Coloured or Indian by the regime of the white settler colonialists. The policy of Africanism

¹⁹Anti-pass campaigns were taken up by both the ANC and the PAC in 1960. The PAC campaign began on the 21st March. People were asked to leave their passes at home and gather at police stations to be arrested. People gathered in large numbers at Sharpeville in the Vaal and at Nyanga and Langa near Cape Town. At Sharpeville the police opened fire on the unarmed and peaceful crowd, killing 69 and wounding 186. The massacre of peaceful protestors at Sharpeville brought a decade of peaceful protest to an end. On 30 March 1960, ten days after the Sharpeville massacre, the government banned the ANC and the PAC. They declared a state of emergency and arrested thousands of Congress and PAC activists. The Sharpeville massacre was a water-shed whatever lingering sentiment of non-violent resistance receded.

however, informed the black student uprisings of the mid and late 1970s. The leading elements of the BCM such as Biko, Pityana, Mohapi and Mthuli ka Shezi urged Black people to affirm their identity as Africans with a history and culture they can be proud of. They canvassed support for unity and encouraged Africans not to be intimidated by whites or agree to be led by whites in the struggle of Black people.

The freedom and emancipatory transformations which have come to South Africa under the aegis of the ANC based on a century's track record can only be built on. It cannot be dismissed or wished away. Strategically, the trajectory of the emancipation process points in the direction of freedom from restriction or restraint, particularly political, religious, social or legal restraint; in short, the release of citizenry from the control of institutionalized constraints of all kinds. The emancipation principle implies that there should be equal status of individual citizens in relation to the state, equality before the law, regardless of religion, property, or other "private" characteristics of individual people. Emancipatory processes can stagnate, temporarily regress, but they can never in the experience of humanity be permanently halted.

Africanism, understood as an emancipation principle, cannot be stopped because over 80% of South Africans are African language-speaking. Democracy and their advancement can for them only be based on their languages and cultures. National minorities must have the same rights and should be helped to accommodate or embrace Africanism not as assimilation or the denial of the rights of minorities, but as an instrument for creating democracy in a divided world. Africanism needs to be logically explained and packaged to make it possible for all minorities to see in it not threats, but mass empowerment, not fear, but mass emancipation for all. So that Africa makes the best contribution it can make to African and human advancement. Emancipatory processes may be local but always have implicitly universal implications. Thus South Africa's liberation from fascism freed humanity as a whole from a burden constructed through centuries of oppression.

South Africa in Africa

On a continent characterized by scientific and technological backwardness, South Africa's exceptionally developed technological infrastructure in many ways can rival some of the best in the world. It continues to make scientific headway in some ways and with means which are currently unavailable to most other countries on the African continent.

What is however even more remarkable is that the cultural base for this scientific, technological and infrastructural prowess is located exclusively in the cultures and languages of the white minorities. Scientific construction is only in Afrikaans and English. The cultures and languages of almost 85% of the population are excluded. These latter are in many ways as scientifically and technologically bereft as the other African societies on this continent. The question is, can South Africa proceed in a societally sustainable way on such narrowly based social constituencies? My argument to you is that this scenario is for the longer term unsustainable. South Africa would need to revalidate the relevance of the cultures of its majorities. The cultural upliftment of the majorities must happen the same way it is for its Afrikaans and English-speaking minorities.

Development requires the upliftment of the whole society. No culture should be left out, especially the majorities. The energies, talents and creativity of all South Africans have to be developed to and on an equal footing. The historical lessons are not too hard to find or draw.

In contestation with Anglophilism and Anglo-lingualism, D.F. Malan correctly advised Afrikaners that “lift the language and you lift the people”. The point he was making is that, the marginalization and the witting or unwitting suppression of the development of the language or languages spoken by people will mean the suppression of the people. The freedom of people is tied to the freedom to develop in their languages. Therefore the development of language itself is a measure of the development of people. The message for us becomes “lift the African languages and you lift the African people”. By their very nature these languages straddle and cross-borders. They should therefore not be compartmentalized or ineptly packed into the post-colonial borders as we have them today. Cooperation across borders is essential in order to achieve economies of scale which will ensure the economic viability of such endeavours. Cross-border literature as newspapers, scientific literature and general literature should be favoured. This approach is also a healthy and powerful integrative instrument which brings us into greater integrative mould with our near neighbours and further afield.

South Africa must rediscover herself as an African country. Over 80% of its population are African language-speaking with cultures which cross borders and radiate into the whole sub-region and beyond. The majority of Batswana are not in Botswana, but in South Africa. The total numbers of Sotho-Tswana cultural elements are more weighted in South Africa than Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho (countries where Sotho-Tswana speakers exist in reasonable numbers) combined. Nguni language speakers are to be found in South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. Khoi groups are in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and further afield in Tanzania and the Somali-Kenyan border area. Such linkages ethno-linguistic affinities are deeply buried in time and history and profoundly mark the cultures and social psychology of the people. South Africa’s place in Africa is not based on recent history, but goes back into the depths of time, long before the idea of “a South African nation was conceived”. The retrieval of South Africa’s belongings within the South African region and beyond will bring South African society in harmony with the rest of Africa. Holistic progress cannot be made without this reach beyond borders in culture and history.

From time immemorial the African languages-speaking peoples of South Africa have been part of the wider African regional cultural tapestry. The clan and lineage systems of the people go far beyond any of the current borders in the region. The cultural patterns, speech forms, customary usages and values of the people extend across the region and beyond. Clans like the Ndlovu (elephant people), the Bakwena (crocodile people) extend from Eastern Africa into Southern Africa. These clan systems overlap for both Nguni and Sotho-Tswana language speakers. The modes of livelihood have historically been very similar. Trade and other relations extended across wide areas within and beyond the continent. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive of South Africa historically without accepting the fact that it has always been part of the African world.

Language and Progress

Effectively, the languages and cultures of South Africans are shared with people far beyond immediate borders. If development must come to Africa it must come in the cultural features of Africans; it must come in African languages. We need to be reminded that no language is from Adam a language of science and technology. Languages become modern and scientific in their competence because people decide to make them so and push into them the requisite resources to make them so. In the UNESCO Report of the Commission on Culture and Development (1995) the point is adequately made that; “All languages are equal in the sense that they are an instrument of communication and every language has the same potential as a world language. The realization of this potential depends on the opportunities it is given. It was once believed that languages are like living creatures; they are born, grow, decline and die. This picture is false. Languages are wholly both instruments for and results of the societies in which they are used, or abandoned. The fate of all languages is the result of the social and political environment, above all of power relations.”²⁰ We need to terminologically equip our languages to embrace modern science and technology; that is essential to the work of intellectually extending the frontiers of African languages to embrace modernity. South Africa needs to take the lead in this in the region.

We should be able to carry our languages and cultures as funds with which we construct viable scientifically and technologically enabled cultures. African languages need to be intellectualized so that the constituency which consists of upwards of 80% of our population can be culturally and scientifically uplifted into modernity. It is also important to underline the need to respect the rights of others; cultural minorities. All must have the same rights. South Africa’s democracy and the creation of a democratic culture cannot be built in languages not understood by the overwhelming majorities. For a truly democratic culture to develop, democratic processes would need to be communicated in languages understood by the greatest numbers of people. That would give strength to the making of a democratic culture. This is true for the whole of the African world. In this endeavour, South Africa must affirm herself as an African country. Extended and deepened societal progress involving its African cultural groups cannot be achieved without this.

South Africa and the African Struggle for Unity

Africa faces one strategic objective. This is the objective of unity. Many have argued that without unity there is no future for Africa. Africa needs to develop a large market which allows capital and labour to move freely. Without this, economic competitiveness with others will be, in future, near impossible. Greater effort needs to be made at creating the social institutional framework for accumulation on large scales based on the most modern forms of corporations. South Africa could give a positive and leading hand in this because it is the most endowed and structurally capacitated to do this.

²⁰ Our Creative Diversity. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development. UNESCO. Chapter 3. 1996. P.179.

Under Mbeki's leadership, South Africa was able to take the initiative out of the hands of Libya's Gadhafi to establish the African Union (AU) Parliament in South Africa. This has been one of the boldest and most meaningful initiatives undertaken by South Africa in Africa in the post-apartheid era. It has spared us the confusion in the overlap between the Arab world and the African world. Greater effort will have to be made to decide the necessary steps to be taken in the direction of eventual unity. South Africa can have a central and creative role in the way forward.

The unity of Africa, for economic, political, social and cultural reasons, is in South Africa's interest. It is in a united Africa that the fuller potential of South Africa to grow in influence can find scope and relevance. To find a worthwhile role in the world South Africa must move forward with an African constituency.

Closing Remarks

South Africa has made a good start on the road to the consolidation of democracy and respect for human rights. On a continent where in the past and present, often, scant respect is given to human rights, it is important that South African leadership in the adherence to human and people's rights is maintained and cultivated.

But, South Africa has also got to be mindful of corrupting influences in its backyard which can damage its ability to serve as a bulwark for democracy and human rights. For progress to come to South Africa and Africa, graft, pilferage and the looting of the exchequer needs to be vigorously combatted. Constant news about corruption demoralizes the populace and discredits South Africa in the other Africans and the world. The enormous gap between rich and poor needs to be lessened. Discipline, transparency and accountability needs to be more determinedly cultivated in the ANC, but more structural concerns led by answers to the agrarian question will also need thorough address. South Africa must succeed. Its success cannot be separated from the success of the whole of Africa.