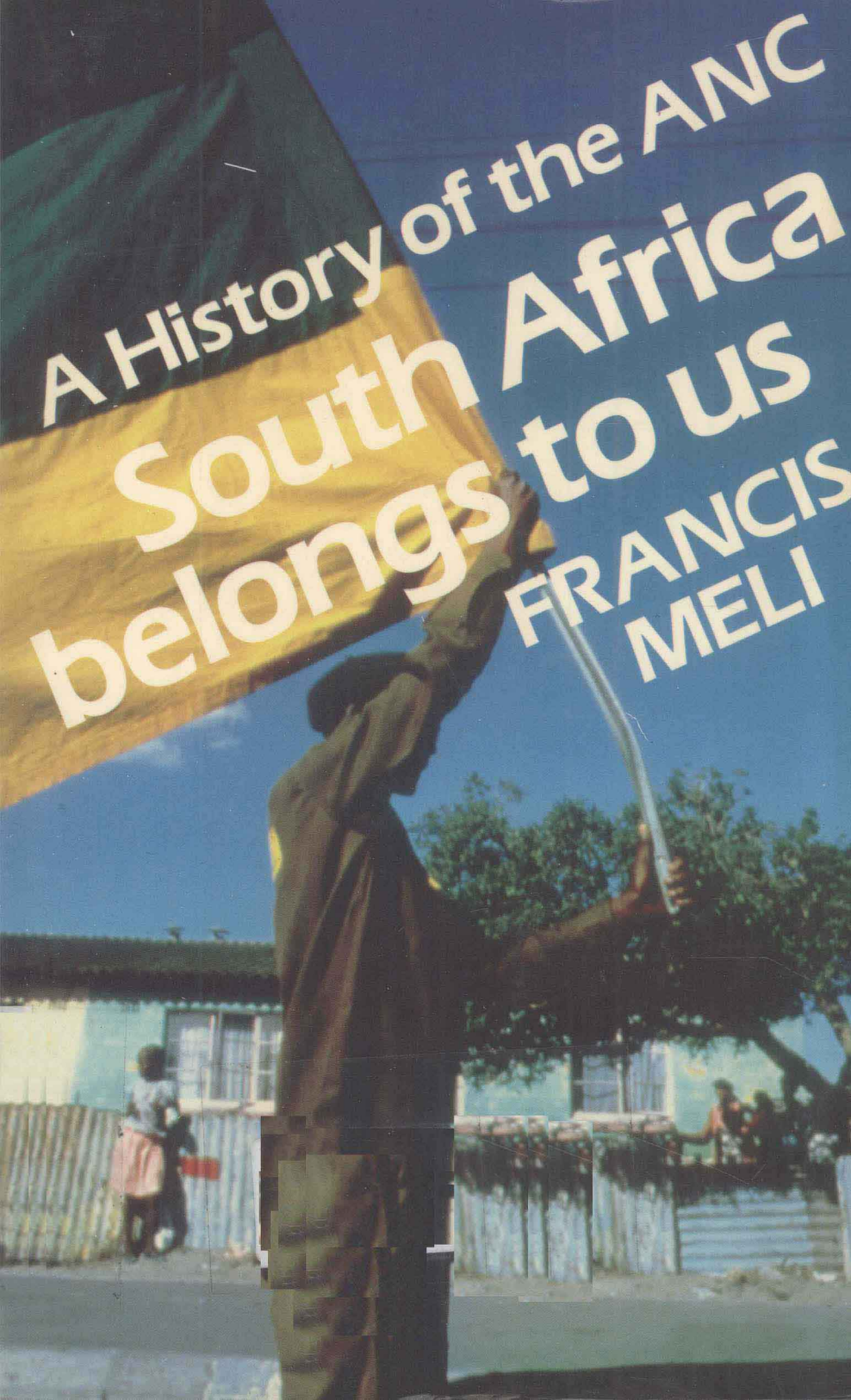
A History of the ANC

South Africa belongs to us

FRANCIS MELI



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Preface

That there has always been a need for a book on the history of the ANC by an ANC member has long been recognized. This book is in partial fulfillment of that demand. This is not to suggest that there has been any paucity of books on the subject, but these have been mostly written by people looking in from the outside. Some of these authors have become experts on the subject, but one of the problems is that not all their theories are acceptable or friendly to us. This is a different book.

There are other reasons which led me to write this book. The innumerable discussions I held with the rank and file of the ANC on this topic led me to the inescapable, unavoidable and inevitable conclusion that one was needed. One of the young comrades once told me, "My life starts with the Soweto uprisings. What happened before that is a dark chapter to me." There was a need, I thought, to throw light on this dark chapter.

This brings me to the question of the methodology, sources and language in the book. I have attempted to show the roots of the ANC which run deep in the history of our people. There were problems which confronted me in this regard. The theme of the book is not the history of South African resistance, but the history of the ANC that is part of that resistance. But it is impossible to deal with the history of the ANC without dealing with the resistance prior to the formation of the ANC. Where does one start? How far can one deal with organizations which existed independently of the ANC? What about their impact and influence on the ANC and vice versa? Does this not detract from the main theme of the book? Connected with this was a problem of length. This explains why some incidents in the book are touched upon at times by way of passing reference. Indeed, in some cases this book takes the form of chapters in the history of the ANC. This was a difficult dilemma to solve.

I decided not to include coverage of early African resistance to colonial rule although this also needs to be written about. But one or two important points need to be said about this period. Above all, South Africa was not "discovered" by Jan van Riebeeck. Black people

lived in the region long before Europe came to know about it. They resisted the imposition of colonial rule in many different ways, the first recorded war of resistance starting in May 1659, seven years after the occupation of the western Cape. But in the end the superior weaponry of the colonialists assured their dominance. Despite the valiant resistance of the indigenous people, by the 1880s practically all the independent African kingdoms had been conquered. This connects with another problem in South African historiography: did colonial wars result in racism or were they a product of racism? The interconnection between racism and colonialism is dealt with in this book. Whilst writing it I had in mind the Bulgarian saying, "The living close the eyes of the dead. The dead open the eyes of the living."

The chronology of the text was another problem. Although the chapters follow a strict chronology - by historical periods - within the chapters the chronology takes a different form. I have decided to deal with the epoch in each chapter by separating the events on a non-chronological basis, e.g. Africans, Indians, Coloureds, workers and so on within the epoch. The consequence of this is that the chronology shifts back from the end of the epoch to the beginning as each new category of events is dealt with. This approach or treatment of events might seem to obscure the broad sweep of historical events and developments which have their making among the categories of people and organizations at any one time, with each organization influencing and being influenced by others and its experiences rubbing off on, or being disregarded or overturned by others.

A history of a movement should take in account the interaction and inner relation of events which occur in parallel even if not in direct association. Some could argue that my approach might disrupt the patterns of assessment, remove events from their context, or allow societal factors to get lost. But in a book of this nature - a popular book - it is not easy to give a general picture of the growth, development and interaction of historical forces without losing some of the details which a non-historian might need. I decided to break periods and events down into thematic sections. There was also the need to prove historically the contribution of the Indian and Coloured communities to the history of the struggle., So as not to be misinterpreted, I am far from saying that the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa is a black man's history. A section of the white working class did play a role at the beginning of this century.

In this book I have attempted to explain where we come from as an introduction to the main theme which is the history and policy of the ANC and, what is more, our goal, perspective and future and consciousness. I did strive to destroy enemy values and ideology with the

aim of explaining the values of our ideology in a form acceptable and understandable to the people. After all, history and history-writing are not neutral but partisan and this explains why this book is, in the best sense of the term, less academic, less of a research work and more of a narrative, bearing in mind, of course, that being academic does not necessarily mean being scientific.

I have attempted to present the reader with ideas and reasons; I have attempted to formulate, explain and spread the ideas of the ANC - its teachings, theoretical propositions, political theories and lessons. I have attempted to inform, comment, evaluate and analyse the information that was available to me. In a sense, this book is also an attempt to transform theoretical knowledge into mass consciousness. My approach is influenced by and based on the conviction that history can only be relevant when it helps us to understand the present so as to master the future. There is a connection between the past, present and future, and the history of the ANC demonstrates that vividly.

Something should be said about the language in the book. To illustrate this let us take the 1969 Morogoro Conference of the ANC. I studied all the documents presented to and speeches made at the conference. This has been my approach through the book. That is why the language in the book is the language of the ANC. Some people may differ with me on this approach. It could be said that the arguments are then only self-serving justifications made by the actors themselves, not historical explanations of the processes that produced policies. Are the explanations of the actors acceptable, valid or are they not *post-facto* rationalizations? Is it not the task of a historian to interpret, instead of merely quoting the explanations of the motives given by the participants in events? A synthesis of the two approaches seemed to me the solution to avoid the problem of projecting a subjective or detached history of the ANC.

Although in this book I do not deal directly with enemy structures, philosophy, ideology and practical politics, I do deal with these questions in so far as they relate to and affect the liberation struggle. However, my approach is different from that of the idealists who maintain that racism is a "human feeling" which should be divorced from the politics and economics of apartheid. The ANC is not nebulous on the issue of racism. It analyses the economic roots of racism, its class character, its social effects and how to uproot it.

In this book I have paid attention to both the leaders of the ANC and the masses. This is because I believe any dichotomy between the leaders and the masses in the ANC is artificial. This is not to suggest

that tensions and even conflicts between the two have not emerged in the past or present. But to denounce the founding fathers as "elitist" and "reformist" is tantamount to doing our history an injustice. Mokgethi Motlhabi in his book, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid,* goes so far as to maintain that the early ANC was;

> "a Congress of defeated people . . . Throughout the early years, therefore, the strategy of the ANC was based on beggar-tactics, making the early history of the movement that of obsequious representations and cap-in-hand deputations . . . Since 1882 until this time the Black struggle had . . . experienced nothing but failure in its aims. Yet the ANC had not once attempted to revise its approach.[1]

This is not how I understand the writing of history. Wishful thinking cannot replace the hard facts of life.

Those Africans who managed under difficult conditions to get a university (or any other form of) education were, and are, a pride to our people. By their very existence as a social stratum, without doing anything except working in their professional occupations, they helped to shatter the racist myth of the inherent or biological inferiority of Africans. Some went beyond that and formed the ANC and fought for the improvement of the lot of Africans. What I am saying is that there is no historical justification for an artificial demarcation between the ANC of today and the "early ANC". There was, and still is, development, change and continuity. To illustrate this point let me cite the example of the second ANC National Consultative Conference, held in Zambia in 1985. The doors of the ANC were opened to all South African revolutionaries irrespective of race, colour or creed. The ANC assumed the responsibility of being the leader not only of the Africans, but also of all forces in our society who are nationally oppressed, economically exploited and socially discriminated against. The question of national liberation and social emancipation of all South Africans, irrespective of race and colour became - in a quite clearer way than before - the two sides of the same coin. Thus, the ANC became a truly national liberation organization of all like-minded people - united in their hatred of colonialism, racism, exploitation and national degradation, sharing a common goal - and whose activities consist in propagating its ideas amongst the people and fighting in a constituency which it itself defines. President O.R. Tambo has been central in all these innovations and developments.

Talking about the contemporary history of the ANC, it is important to mention that there is a proliferation of theories which have nothing to do with reality. In his book, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, Tom Lodge talks of the "solidly middle class respectability of the Tambo leadership" and goes on to state (without providing any facts

for his assertion) that "the current enthusiasm for the Freedom Charter" and the apparent downgrading of the more radical "Strategy and Tactics" adopted at Morogoro may also be indicative of a realistic perception of the danger of alienating the steadily growing black middle class."[2] While in this book I do not directly respond to all these theories (although in some cases I do) I have attempted to stick to one goal - putting the record straight.

This brings me to the question of the Pan African Congress (PAC). Does the story of the PAC belong to the history of the ANC? Yes, because it shows the contradications inherent in African nationalism. No, because its emergence was against the laws of social development which reflected themselves in the history of the ANC. I could not deal with this phenomenon at length, as it would only help to disrupt the flow of the narrative and detract from the main issue without contributing anything. In practical politics the ANC is becoming tired of carrying the PAC on its back, more so because it is said dead wood is very heavy. I see no reason in carrying that weight in this book.

The undocumented nature of this history in the post-1960 period is explained by the illegality of the ANC. This might give a false impression that at this time legal work was more substantial and had greater popular response and appeal than illegal work. This seems to reinforce and emphasize the relatively widespread belief in the ANC that the history of our struggle will be written at home. There is no reason to query that. We must liberate our country so that we can write our history. But this does not mean that we should "wait" for liberation before we start writing that history. Our endeavours today can only be a pointer - or a little more than that - to what has to be done. There are a number of grey areas in the research on the history of the ANC. We, ourselves are not unanimous on these questions, and I believe they will only finally be resolved when we write our history in a free and liberated South Africa. But we must start now. This book serves to do just that.

This book was written in the midst of a busy schedule. Our priority and preoccupation is the struggle for the liberation of our people and although writing this book is part of that struggle, it was definitely not my priority. I hope this book will help stimulate (or be part of the ongoing) debate and discussion.

I have said that the language used in this book is that of the ANC. But terminology which today is no longer acceptable or in use is also to be found in this book, either in quoted speeches or in articles or books of the time. I could do nothing about that. From 1912 to 1925 the ANC called itself the South African Native National Congress. But in this

book I have consistently used the designation African National Congress. This is not a matter of political or policy decision - it is merely a question of convenience.

Hilary Rabkin, Beryl Baker and Jackie Hoogendyk typed the manuscript, while the comments made by Jack Simons were very valuable. Lionel "Rusty" Bernstein, Pallo Jordan and Jane Katjavivi, in different ways, contributed to the final shape of the book. There are other comrades who also helped me with their criticisms of and comments on the manuscript. But this is my book. It is not an "official history" of the ANC and definitely not the last word on the subject. This is not because I have any reason to think that the ANC will or might disown any of my views. I just want to emphasize that the opinions in this book are those of the author, not of the ANC. It is true that I, myself, am a product of the ANC and I have learnt a lot from my comrades in the ANC, but these are my ideas. It is important to emphasize this because some of my comrades will differ with me on a number of questions, including points of emphasis. But that is natural.

The idea of publishing this book in Zimbabwe was incidental. In general terms one can say the victory of the Zimbabwean people's struggle in 1980 made this possible, and in that broad sense this book is a product of the struggles of the people of Southern Africa: it is part of their struggles; it tells their story - a painful but inspiring story.

Whilst I was writing this book I kept on thinking about my family - whom I left in 1963 - especially my late brother, Mbuyiselo, and my sister, Vuyiswa, whom we called "Nokri" - whose sacrifices in sending me to school laid a basis for the ultimate writing of this book.

To all I say, "Thank you. Ningadinwa na ngomso - I will expect you to do the same tomorrow."

Francis Meli
London

A Note on Class and Colour in South Africa

The Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, was largely responsible for making the Netherlands one of Europe's leading mercantile nations in the post-Renaissance period. During the 1600s, the Dutch merchants drove the Portuguese first out of the Indonesian archipelago in a number of fierce sea battles, gaining control over these waters by 1641. By dint of their naval power and the unbridled corruption of local officials, they soon gained a foothold in Malaya and later Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) "at the expense of the Portuguese". They suppressed the indigenous spice traders of the East and seized control of

all Indonesian external trade.

Indonesian opposition to the Dutch centred on the Sultanate of Bantam, the largest on the island of Java. Under the leadership of an Islamic scholar and mystic, Sheik Yusuf, who was employed as a grand vizier and tutor in the royal court of Bantam, the patriots of Bantam began a war of resistance to Dutch colonialism in 1650. They succeeded in driving the Dutch merchants out of their ports and were gradually re-establishing control over their oil trade routes when the Dutch merchants began a concerted campaign to isolate Bantam from her neighbours. By picking off the sultanates one by one, the Dutch built up a formidable alliance of puppet states. By 1680, they felt strong enough to try and impose dependence on Bantam. Rather than accept the Dutch terms Sheik Yusuf, with a number of Bantam patriots, took to the hills and waged a guerrilla struggle against the Dutch puppet placed on the throne of Bantam. Three years of bitter fighting ensued until the Dutch managed to trick Sheik Yusuf into coming down from the hills to discuss peace terms. He was arrested on 14 December, 1683 and taken to Batavia, the Dutch stronghold in Indonesia, whence he was transported first to Ceylon, then to the Cape Province in South Africa as a prisoner of the Dutch. His followers were rounded up and shipped to the Cape Province as slaves. Their descendants formed the core of what later became known as the Cape Malay community.

The defeat of the Indonesian resistance fighters placed the Netherlands in undisputed control over trade between Europe and the Far East. The Cape acquired its strategic importance for the Dutch East India Company in this context. Van Riebeeck's task was both to establish a refreshment station and to secure the entrance to the Indian Ocean against foreign competitors. As in other colonies, the Dutch East India Company practised the mercantile system in its relations with the colonists at the Cape. The settlers were forbidden to engage in any form of local manufacturing, on the economic principle that such manufacturers would compete with the Netherlands' emergent factories. In 1657 the Netherlands released some of its servants in the Cape to become "free burghers", market gardeners, to supply its ships with fresh meat and vegetables. To work the settlers' farms, slaves were imported in 1658. The first slaves came from Madagascar (now Malagasy), Mozambique, Angola and Ceylon. Later, Indonesian prisoners of war were sold into slavery at the Cape. Slave labourers performed most of the menial and hard work in the Cape Colony until slavery was abolished by the British in 1834. They were the domestic workers in the settler homes, the agricultural workers who tilled the soil, the stevedores who handled the cargoes in the harbour; some

were seamstresses, artisans and skilled craftsmen. By the end of the seventeenth century, South African colonial society in the western Cape looked something like this:

- The top layer was a small class of rich white landowners, who ran the farms that produced for the export market. Amongst them could be found all the leading officials of the Dutch East India Company who used their positions to seize the best farmlands and enrich themselves.
- On the tier below them were the urban "free burghers", usually absentee landowners, who preferred to live in towns where they ran inns, guest houses and taverns to service passing sailors.
- Beneath them were the "boeren", or farmers, struggling with a few slaves to make ends meet on the inhospitable sandy soil.
- Below them were the so-called "knechts", made up of retired sailors, soldiers and artisans. They worked for wages as overseers and slave drivers on the farms of the rich landowners.
- The whole structure was held up by the labour of slaves, who did most of the productive work in the colony and constituted the lowest rung of the Cape colonial society. Side by side with the slaves were the growing number of labour tenants, the indigenous Khoi-Khoi, nominally free, but held in bondage by hunger and terror. As a general rule, all the blacks in the colony were either slaves or labour tenants, and practically all the whites were freemen.

These are the roots of class and colour in South Africa, something which left an indelible imprint on the future of the country under white rule.

The slaves of the Cape Dutch colony could be classed in two basic categories: those owned by the Dutch East India Company and those owned by private individuals. Company slaves were invariably the most exploited. They worked as stevedores, millers and agricultural workers on the Dutch East India Company's property, and were often hired out to private individuals for a fee. Privately owned slaves could be found working as cooks, nannies, carpenters, agricultural workers, fishermen and sometimes even as entertainers in the homes of rich whites. To keep the slaves under their control the slave owners encouraged distinctions based on racial origin. Asian slaves were favoured as domestics and artisans, while arduous work was the province of the African slaves.

The Cape, however, did not prove a very profitable venture for the Dutch East India Company - compared with the Far East, the pickings were slender indeed. Unlike the American and Caribbean colonies, the Cape never became the home of the lucrative plantation

economies. With the slow but steady growth of their community, white settlers began to evolve interests apart from those of the Dutch East India Company. They clamoured against the restrictions imposed on their trading activities and engaged in incessant smuggling to bypass these regulations. The conflict reached its climax on the eve of the first British occupation of 1795, when two inland settlements, Swellendam and Graaff Reinet, seceded from the Netherlands. The rebellion was quickly crushed by the British in the following year.

British occupation of the Cape reflected the change in fortunes of the European maritime states. Britain had overtaken the Netherlands as the leading trading nation and was already well on her way to becoming "the workshop of the world". Factory-based production with power-driven machines had replaced the small workshops of the earlier era. The Netherlands was beginning to decline and the Dutch East India Company itself went bankrupt four years later. British occupation broke the "stifling stranglehold" of Dutch mercantilism on the Cape, opening up the territory for further "economic development".

The first British occupation found the western Cape a "cosmopolitan society", drawing its population from various parts of Africa, Asia and Europe. Slavery was the dominant mode of production in and around Table Bay. The Cape Colony produced wheat, mutton, wine and vegetables for export, but depended on Europe for all its manufactured goods including "necessities of frontier life" such as gunpowder, iron and steel products, textiles and luxury goods. Its main asset was the technological achievement of Europe, whose outpost on the southern tip of Africa it was.

Cape colonial society was also riven with internal conflicts arising from its inequitable nature. The dominant strand of internal conflict was that between the slaves and the slave owners. Contrary to the myth of an idyllic paternalism propagated by the apologists of the system, slavery at the Cape was characterized by the grossest forms of brutality and intense class conflicts. As a form of undisguised exploitation, slavery could only be maintained by force. Tortures such as flogging, branding, mutilation and the thumbscrew were common forms of enforcement. In extreme cases, death by breaking on the wheel, flogging, hanging or immolation were not unknown.

The slaves, in turn, fought back with everything at their disposal. One of the forms of resistance was escape or fleeing: the slaves, collectively or individually tried to break out of the system by escaping and/or returning to their homelands. Escape plots were common amongst the newly landed slaves and were characteristic of the early days of slavery at the Cape. Most of the recorded cases refer to the 1770s. The Khoi-Khoi living "beyond the boundaries" of the colony

received escapees, as did the westward Xhosa. Hundreds of escaped slaves swelled the ranks of the Griqua and Koranna in the north-western Cape, bringing to their host communities the skills they had mastered during servitude. The slaves also resorted to individual attacks by way of reprisal for brutality. Acts of sabotage and arson were not infrequent means of hitting back at the perpetrators of their misery.

Radical forms of resistance only began to emerge towards the last days of slavery at the Cape. This was the time when anti-slavery agitation in Britain and other slave-holding countries became more vocal. News of the successful slave revolt in Haiti in 1804 also reached the stevedores at the harbour.

When the slave trade was abolished in the British empire in 1834, everyone knew that the abolition of slavery itself was imminent. Slave revolts took place but they were doomed to failure. Slavery was finally abolished in 1834 by an Act of the British Parliament. The terms under which it took place favoured the slave owners, all of whom received compensation for the loss of their property. The slaves, who had fed, clothed and sustained these drones were condemned to two years of "apprenticeship" after abolition, so that slave owners could adjust to the change.

Britain had "returned the Cape to the Dutch" in 1803, then retaken it three years later. Before the second British occupation, the "cosmopolitan society" that had grown up in the Cape had been "pressed into a common mould" by the religious and political intolerance of the Dutch East India Company. Non-Dutch settlers had been forced to abandon their own languages and culture and a large measure of social uniformity had been imposed on the white community by the church and state. The slaves and the Khoi-Khoi had their distinctive cultures crushed and were adopting the local creolized Dutch (later known as Afrikaans) as their language. Culturally, the Cape Colony was a backwater, with no newspaper, a small but little-used library and a few church schools run by the Dutch Reformed Church. These schools did little more than prepare children for confirmation. The pastimes of the settlers were card-playing, hunting and dancing. Until this time the Dutch produced no poetry, no music, no drama. The only art form that thrived was architecture.

British domination catalysed a number of socio-cultural changes. The absolution of the mercantile system and the introduction of the high wool-bearing Merino sheep helped change the economic fortunes of the Cape. The growth of wool farming and the wool trade provided the stimulus for the development of a finance market, so that by 1831 a number of small local banks had been set up. In 1861 they were unified

under the rubric of the Standard Bank of South Africa, with 29 district branches directly linked to the finance capital of the world, London. In the port cities, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, small pockets of local industry were beginning to emerge.

From amongst the 1820 British settlers, a handful of talented men like Thomas Pringle started the first newspaper, laying the basis for a tradition of South African journalism. It is from this community that the first seeds of liberalism germinated.

Above all, however, the British colonial state in South Africa was used as the battering ram of the process of primitive capital accumulation. It systematically seized African land and turned the erstwhile peasants into a readily exploitable landless proleteriat for the benefit of the settler farmers. Legislation, like the Caledon Code of 1809, press-ganged the nominally free Khoi-Khoi into the service of the settler farmers and Ordinance 49 of 1828 extended the same provisions to the Africans. Taxation, restrictions of free movement and traders collaborated, often unconsciously, to undermine the economic base of African society.

Along the frontiers between black and white, a multifaceted process of "interaction" unfolded, involving commerce, labour and a large measure of cultural interplay. Despite its own limitations, the settler colony was part of a vigorous empire in the ascendant. Its onslaught against African society was total and many-pronged. Each prong reinforced the others.

The African societies, in contrast - the Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, Sotho, Pedi, Shangaan, Venda, Ndebele, San and Khoi suffered under a number of grave disadvantages. They were technologically unsophisticated and this held up the pace of internal change at a time when Europe was plunging headlong into the machine age. African kingdoms were virtually self-contained units, offering few opportunities for wider cooperation and co-ordinated defence. This enabled the colonialists to deal with each unit on a piecemeal basis. The technical superiority of the settler community was its advantage. They could produce faster and more abundantly. Africans were forced to turn to European traders to meet their needs, in the process marginalizing their own crafts and skills by disuse, which resulted in the dislocation of the traditional equilibrium between agriculture and crafts.

The missionary and the trader were the principle agents of these transformations. However, the Africans' need to adapt to the European presence was no less important a factor. As the process continued, previously homogeneous communities became divided, undermining the cohesion of African society. The interplay of these factors rendered African societies more vulnerable to the disintegrative forces

of colonialism. Military force, applied as an ultimate sanction, pauperized them by the seizure of the basic form of productive property - the land.

British colonialism gradually prepared the social and economic conditions for the windfall of 1866 - the discovery of diamonds near Kimberley. The opening of the mines, first at Kimberley in 1867, then the gold mines on the Witwatersrand in 1885, marked the watershed of South African economic development. It firmly implanted the capitalist mode of production in our country, for the first time involving large numbers of the indigenous people in the modern economy. The massive importation of capital, capital goods and skilled immigrants, dramatically changed the demographic configuration of the country and catapulted South Africa into the centre of inter-imperialist rivalry. Taxation, the means traditionally used by the colonial state to prize the African peasant from the land, was streamlined.

It was the economic and cultural interaction between black and white, which took place along the frontiers, that led to the steady integration of the Africans into the settler-controlled modern economy. Conquest speeded up the process by imposing taxes that induced African peasants to become involved in the cash economy. In and around the mission stations another form of integration was unfolding. With encouragement from Sir George Grey, the missionaries had expanded their operations by building schools where African converts learnt and mastered European agricultural techniques, skills and literacy. From among these converts emerged a stratum of landowning African farmers, living outside the traditional societies. This Westernized elite, "the school people", was distinct and distinguishable from the "unschooled" Africans. Producing for their own consumption and selling their surplus on the market, these farmers were both highly productive and efficient. In Natal, groups of African converts sometimes clubbed together to buy or lease land which they farmed cooperatively. Even in the Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State they turned the squatter system practised by the Boers to their advantage. It is from amongst this group that the first sprinkling of African professionals and intellectuals came.

But it was the mining revolution which drew Africans into the modern economy. Before 1870, what was to become the city of Kimberley was practically bare veld. By the following year, its population, housed in tents, shanties and other rudimentary shelters, had risen to 50 000. Africans came from the area now forming South Africa as well as from beyond. In 1873, the Cape and Natal governments were able to raise capital to begin railway construction, connecting Wellington (the railhead of the Cape at the time), Durban, East London and Port

Elizabeth with the diamond fields. Smaller concentrations of Africans also began appearing at the port cities and on railway construction sites. Captured African resisters, convicts and workmen built the breakwater at Cape Town harbour, cut the passes that connected Wellington to the Karoo and helped build the line between East London and Queenstown. Kimberley, however, had the largest concentration of Africans so integrated. The urban areas became the fastest growing centres of African proleterianization and were to become the most decisive as industrialization developed.

At the end of the century, South Africa went through the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), a war which has been dubbed an "anti-imperalist struggle" but was so "only in an extremely technical and qualified sense" because for the Africans in the Transvaal:

> The characterisation of Kruger's campaign as a progressive anti-colonial war must have sounded very odd indeed, for they were living in a semi-feudal state whose rigidly enforced constitution, after acknowledging its authority from the Almighty (who is also, by the way, the acknowledged inspirer of the current South African Act) proclaimed that there shall be no equality between black and white in church and state.[1]

The Anglo-Boer War ended in the imposition of British domination over the whole of South Africa. In many respects, the war was a political act waged to bring the political institutions into line with the economic realities of domination by British mining and finance capital. The terms agreed at Vereeniging in 1902 opened the way to a rapprochement between Boer and Briton on the basis of common interest in the super-exploitation of black labour. This reconciliation was given palpable expression in the R3 million pledge towards the rehabilitation of the former Boer Republics.

On of the unintended side-effects of the Anglo-Boer War had been the closure of the mines and the consequent dispersal of the African mine workers. The mining companies clamoured for more workers but were unable to attract them because of the low wages paid. As a result indentured Chinese labourers were recruited from Hong Kong in 1903, to fill the gap left by insufficient African labour recruits. More "efficient" means had been devised to "free" African peasants from the soil. It was in part to meet this crisis that the new tax was instituted in 1905.

Before the colonialists came to our country, our people were already evolving a civilization which was defying tribal exclusiveness. The common territory occupied was determining common loyalty. This process is more noticeable among the Zulu and Sotho people. There was inter-

marriage, trade and contact. This is not to suggest that there were no conflicts, succession disputes or that "blood relations" had completely disappeared. But there was a process in motion.

The invasion of our country by the colonialists set the clock back. The real problem that confronted our people was that two different and antagonistic social systems confronted each other: there was the emergent capitalist system (colonialism) on the one hand, and the pre-capitalist African societies on the other. But it should be said that the Africans who resisted colonialism were not fighting for the preservation of the already crumbling tribal system. They were fighting for the defence of hard-earned achievements of our people. Indeed, Africans were forward-looking because they fought for a noble cause: namely, that technical superiority should not be misused for the exploitation of people and their destruction, but should be used for human progress.

Colonialism committed many crimes in South Africa. The colonialists' search for land, cattle, raw materials, markets and labour power (which they now monopolize) led them to commit (and they are still committing) almost irreparable damage and unpardonable crimes against our people. The genocidal wars that they waged destroyed productive forces, including innumerable human lives, smashed flourishing social systems, ruined material and spiritual cultures and crushed the self-confidence of the African people in South Africa and their philosophy of life. They obliterated the nascent will and embryonic national consciousness of the people; they introduced new ways of thinking, alien norms of behaviour and foreign cultural values. The aim was simple: to inculcate among the African people a feeling of inferiority towards and rejection of their own heritage and potential. In their devastating wars the colonialists demolished everything and left nothing but ruins.

In the process of mental enslavement, the missionaries played a significant part. They introduced formal education, a missionary undertaking whose aim was the evangelization of our people. The African had to read the Bible, even memorize it, but not interpret it. Education in these institutions was bookish in the extreme. Again the aim was simple: the ideological and political centre was to be the church rather than African institutions. At the turn of the century, there was "dual power" in the rural areas of South Africa - the power of the chiefs and that of the church. There were also other forces, such as the trader, the colonial government and white community, which militated against African resistance.

The progressive African chiefs who then opposed colonialism were the respected and recognized spokesmen and leaders of their people. They were freedom fighters and did not permit themselves to be ab-