

Some might question why the leader of a National Liberation Movement has been asked to inaugurate the academic year at a University thousands of miles away from his own country.

What is it that I can say to this University - to the students and the teachers that is of relevance for the work that you will be pursuing in the coming academic year?

I could have chosen to speak to you today on what some would call a purely academic subject - addressed you in philosophical abstractions or on historical themes from the distant past..

I have chosen not to do so; for this University under guidance of its enlightened college of Van Bestuur has proved by its actions that it is not an ivory tower, discovering itself from the realities of society around it and the world beyond.

It has been concerned, as it must be, with the pursuit of knowledge and to expand the horizons of the mind; but this is not, and it should not be, an end in itself. For Universities must concern themselves also with the way knowledge is used; whether it is to assist in the creation of societies in which humankind will be encouraged to develop to its finest capacity or whether knowledge/education will be used to oppress, exploit and retard the development of society. Universities have an interest and a special responsibility in the area.

The University of Amsterdam is one of those few institutions of learning which has sought and found an identity with individual South Africans whose great national and international stature has been denied exposure by lesser men, placing exclusive reliance on differences of skin colour. For, Dr Govan Mbeki might have become an outstanding South African Prime Minister, or an economist of world renown. Instead, by the conscious act of

a racist minority, his is on Robbin Island, awaiting there the end of his life. The Dr Govan Mbeki Scholarship fund serves to place his thoughts, his aspirations and the cause he espouses among the intellectual community of the University of Amsterdam, so closely bound to the land for whose freedom he has suffered and suffers.

The life story of Govan Mbeki applies equally to millions of others. Generations of generations of people in South Africa have had their lives distorted, their experience turned into an enduring tribulation, and their life-span restricted, not by the accident of circumstance or some adverse twist in the normal run of history, but by a carefully conceived and conscious decision of a racial group which has used doctrines, concepts and practices which had their origin in Europe - not in America,

Asia or Australia, and least of all in Africa.

I have selected as my theme: "The role of Europe in the Quest for Peace in Southern Africa". I believe that the peoples of Europe, and particularly the people of the Netherlands - the European nation that first colonised South Africa and laid the basis for the present growing conflict in our country - have a historic responsibility to the resolution of the problems which affect us as members of the human race.

So be true to history we must underline the fact that the history of relations between the peoples of Africa and present-day Western Europe have been anything but pleasant. Indeed the five centuries or so of contact between the peoples of our two regions is a period marked by the colonisation of our people, the destruction of the ancient African kingdoms and civilizations, the plunder of Africa's natural and human resources, the destructive

"tri-angular" slave trade and wars of colonial conquest. Whatever "explanations" historians and other social scientists may advise - and these explanations usually range from "preventative Annexation", to humanitarian intervention", to the idealised "civilizing mission" - the present wealth and power of Europe was built on these historic relations with Africa. The most odious heritage of this epoch, however, is the birth of racism in regard to Africans and men of colour. Racism remains deeply imbedded in the social psychology of West-European nations.

A brief fifty years ago, a process began in Europe, which abused knowledge and education to devastating purpose. Medical research was not directed to providing a healthier and longer life for millions of Europeans; it was perverted to develop the instruments of torture and extermination of more than 6 million people. The "Social Scientists" of Nazi Germany advanced theories of race and social development in justification of slave labour and murder; the schools, Universities and media propagated the ideology that rationalised brutality; physicists and chemists developed the technology, industrialists and financiers provided the means, which certain governments, and other collaborators in Europe and the USA deliberately closed their eyes and refused to acknowledge the reality before them.

The third Reich that was to "last a 1000 years" was destroyed only after a devastating world war that engulfed all continents and led to the death of over 50 million people of all races and colours.

Though the foundations of the Nazi state were destroyed, because of cold war considerations, especially of the USA, as recent evidence in connection with the Barbie case has shown, the

denazification process has neither been pursued with vigour nor has it been completed. One often wonders whether this is not a factor in the case of certain West European

Nations to support international efforts to impose mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria regime - led only by the fanatic followers of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party. At a later stage we shall try to show just how faithfully they - the rulers in Pretoria - have restructured the South African State on the model of the Third Reich.

In the African National Congress we characterize the relationship between the oppressed black majority and the oppressed white minority as fundamentally colonial. This thesis has not found general acceptance, particularly because of the absence, in the South African situation of, firstly, the classical geographical pattern in which the colonial or metropolitan power is spatially separated from the colony; Secondly, the absence of the clear-cut political personality of the colonial power (whether empire, Kingdom, or republic) and the colony (whether this classified as a colony protectorate, mandate or trusteeship or, lately, as a non-self governing territory). These are the peculiar characteristics of the South African geopolitical system which has led to the erroneous conclusion that the present South African State, the Republic of South Africa, represents indiscriminately all the 30 million or so people living there and confers upon them a common political personality. Let us try to clarify an extremely complex situation by posing the following crucial question: Has the original colonial relationship between the settlers and the indigenous African people been altered in any fundamental way by the numerous politico-constitutional changes that have taken place in South Africa since 1652? A consistent historical and socio-economic analysis shows that this is not the case. When then were the African majority people of South Africa decolonized? If we speak

of South Africa as a "democracy" - as most defenders of the Pretoria regime do - should we not ask: Democracy for whom?

The present-day South African society is the product of the interaction of two broad cultural streams, namely the indigenous African people and the the colonial European group. However, unlike a number of modern societies, and because of the racist colonialist policies pursued by the dominant immigrant European group vis-a-vis the African people from the very outset, these two cultural streams never fused into a single South African nation, but developed into what we today refer to as the African majority and the white racist minority..

A colonial situation can be said to exist where a group of aliens, socially distinct from a given population, establishes and maintains (in conditions of market expansion) political, economic and cultural domination over that population through the use or threat of force. If these features of colonial situation are found to exist in South Africa, one should then proceed to establish the special characteristics, namely, a colonial power occupying the same territory as the subjugated colonial people and whether these special features derogate in essence from classical colonialism.

A similar situation arose in the then colony of Southern Rhodesia, now independent Republic of Zimbabwe. The special characteristics I have referred to above existed, in all its essential parts, in Rhodesia from 1965 to 1980, after the then Prime Minister Ian Smith, representing the interests of the white settlers, made this Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and substituted, in effect, the colonial power, namely the United Kingdom, by their own state, the Republic of Rhodesia.

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