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**Mbeki's Africanism: The Intellectual and Political thought of
Thabo Mbeki**

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WLLRYA004

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Arts in African Studies

Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town

2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	(i)
Abstract	(ii)
Declaration	(iii)
Acknowledgements	(iv)
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: LOCATING THE CHIEF: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THABO MBEKI	4
Introduction	4
Understanding Mbeki as an Intellectual	5
Locating Mbeki's Political Thought	16
Mbeki's Africanism	22
Conclusion	26
CHAPTER 3: THABO MBEKI AND THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE	29
Introduction	29
Political Leadership and Student Activism	31
Representing the Movement: The ANC and the Liberation Struggle	37
Power of the Party	43
Monopoly Capital and the African Revolution	44
Race and Class	50
Conclusion	52
CHAPTER 4: MBEKI AND THE POLITICS OF A NEW SOUTH AFRICA	54
Introduction	54
Towards a New Politics in South Africa	56
Reconciliation and Transformation: A Dialectical Relationship	60
The Politics of Cultural Identity: The African Renaissance	64
The Economy and Development	68
Conclusion	71
CHAPTER 5: THE NEW AFRICAN AGENDA: MBEKI'S PRESIDENCY	73
Introduction	73
The Intellectual as Political Leader	74
The Challenge of Transformation	76
The New African Agenda	84
Conclusion	93
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	94
Bibliography	99

ABSTRACT

Mbeki's Africanism: The Intellectual and Political Thought of Thabo Mbeki

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This dissertation examines and analyses the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki. The study examines Mbeki's thought throughout his political career from his political activism during the anti-apartheid movement to his rise as major leader in the ANC and the government. The thesis argues that analysing the intellectual and political thought of a practicing politician requires moving beyond conventional ideas relating to the work of political intellectuals. The thesis establishes the importance of Mbeki's political activism and political career to the content of his political thought.

The study locates Mbeki's intellectual and political thought within the body of intellectual work that forms part of history of modern African political thought. The research also establishes that Mbeki's thought cannot be located solely in one political tradition and that the movement in his political ideas corresponds to the different phases of South African political history. The thesis argues that during the struggle against apartheid Mbeki's political thought has a distinctly revolutionary Marxist character but as result of the transition to freedom there is a movement towards issues of race and culture as well as the appropriation of certain features of Marxist-Leninism in Mbeki's idea of political leadership and political practice. The thesis concludes by arguing that Mbeki's political thought is a critical contribution to the history of modern African political thought.

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree.

It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

University of Cape Town

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A few acknowledgements are in order. I would like to thank the staff at the Centre for African Studies for all their help and support. My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisors, Dr. Harry Garuba and Prof. Anthony Bogues for their professional and valuable supervision throughout this research process. Also I would like to acknowledge the Marcus Garvey Movement (MGM) at the University of the West Indies for providing the space for my personal and intellectual growth. Finally I would like to acknowledge the support of Lindiwe Bardill and Jacqueline Williams, for all their support.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 1

Introduction

This study explores the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki and is presented here as six chapters. This first chapter introduces the reader to the main contents of this study and the ideas informing the research. With the installation of Thabo Mbeki as President of South Africa in June 1999, he has been the main proponent of a new wave of Africanist thought on the African continent emerging with the notion of an African Renaissance and the new progressive African agenda. Mbeki's intellectual and political ideas have become a key part of the contemporary South African public debates concerning the issue of transformation and his political thoughts on the need for a political renewal of the African continent have helped create a new era of pan-Africanism.

There is a variety of literature that seeks to contextualize and analyze the state of South African politics in the post 1999 era with Mbeki as president. There has been a stream of biographical work done on the life of Thabo Mbeki with the most notable being Mark Gevisser's study The Dream Deferred: Thabo Mbeki published in 2007. In addition there have been some works engaged in examining and analysing Thabo Mbeki's role as President of South Africa. Such works include Ronald Suresh Roberts' book Fit to Govern: the Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki (2007) and William Mervin Gumede's work Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC (2005). These works have tended to focus on Mbeki's time as President of South Africa with an emphasis on issues such as his political leadership, image in the media, HIV/AIDs, the economy and party politics. Sean Jacobs and Richard Callands book Thabo Mbeki's World: the Politics and Ideology of the South African President (2002) begins a stream of work that seeks to focus on analysing the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki. In examining Mbeki's intellectual and political thought a

number of scholars have focused on the African Renaissance and his thoughts on the new Progressive African Agenda (Vale et al 2002:124; Landsberg 2007:195).

In addition to this there is a body of work that focuses on studying the history of African intellectual and political thought. Anthony Bogue's work Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals focuses on analysing and contextualizing the intellectual practices of Black and African intellectuals, in particular as a response and departure from the western intellectual and political tradition (2003:7). In addition Robert William July's (2004) study The Origins of Modern African Thought highlights the history of African thought and its relationship with Western colonialism and modernity. Also Pieter van Hensbroek's (2003) work on the history of African political thought is important in relation to analysing the political ideas and actions of real historically situated actors. Gail Gerhart's (1978) study of the evolution of Black Power ideology in South Africa and Toyin Falola's (2001) work on Nationalism and African Intellectuals have helped in studying the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki.

This study will focus on tracing the roots of Mbeki's political thought from its foundation in the politics of the anti-apartheid struggle, firmly located in the politics of the ANC-led liberation movement straight through to his thoughts on the African Renaissance and the new Progressive African Agenda. Thabo Mbeki is a complex political figure and his political ideas span a lifetime of political activity, from his days as a student activist in the Eastern Cape to his rise as a leader of the ANC. As a result of this there are different phases and dimensions to his political thought. There are a number of dimensions to Mbeki's intellectual and political thought, such as the black and anti-colonial tradition, pan-Africanism, Liberal humanism and the politics of the anti-apartheid struggle. In examining Mbeki's intellectual

and political thought this study seeks to answer a central question: how does one characterize the political thought of Thabo Mbeki and what is the content and context of his thought?

The principle sources of the study are Thabo Mbeki's writings, particularly his writing in newspapers, pamphlets and public speeches. However, a methodological challenge arose; because of Mbeki's extensive involvement in the liberation struggle, many of his writings were written under a variety of different names. Biographies of his political career were used to identify the various pseudonyms that Mbeki used during the liberation struggle. Also due to the extensiveness of the writings a challenge arose of whether to examine Mbeki's thought chronologically or thematically. The study has been cast within a chronological approach.

The proceeding chapters will go on in this sequence. Chapter 2 will provide the reader with the theoretical framework of the thesis. This chapter will deal with the problem of analysing the intellectual and political thought of a practicing politician. It will also seek to locate Mbeki in the various intellectual and political traditions that form part of the history of modern African thought. Chapter 3 focuses on how the struggle against apartheid shaped the thought of Mbeki. The chapter examines the ways in which being a cadre of the ANC-led liberation movement informed the nature of Mbeki's intellectual activism and the content of his political ideas. Chapter 4 then focuses on Mbeki's political thought in the immediate post-Apartheid period during his tenure as deputy president of South Africa. This chapter will focus on how Mbeki's thought marks the shift from being a professional revolutionary to a leader of the new governing elite. Chapter 5 engages in Mbeki's thought during his tenure as President of South Africa. It will seek to focus on how Mbeki articulates the challenges facing South Africa and the way in which he articulates a vision for South Africa and the African continent. Chapter 6 is the conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2

Locating the Chief: The Political Thought of Thabo Mbeki

Introduction

Thabo Mbeki has become one of the most prominent political figures in South Africa's post-1994 political history, gaining international and local acclaim as the first Deputy President in the new South Africa and then becoming President of the Republic of South Africa in 1999. Prior to his inauguration as the State President of South Africa Mbeki dedicated his life to the struggle against apartheid as a political activist working as a member of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Mbeki has emerged as a major intellectual figure in the ANC and in the formation of the 'New South Africa' and his political thought has helped to mould the nature of South African politics in the 21st Century as well as to articulate a vision for the future of the African continent. Mbeki's declaration of an African Renaissance, his contribution to the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Mbeki's musings on the nature of South African society in the post-apartheid era all speak to a rich body of intellectual and political thought that has spanned a lifetime of political activism. As an international statesman and as a leader of the ANC Mbeki has been repositioning and reconceptualising the anti-colonial political tradition within the context of the 21st Century, dealing with the pressures of building a new society and negotiating a space for the African continent and the developing world within an international economic system dominated by neo-liberal globalisation. Indeed it is as a result of Mbeki's multifaceted biography that an examination of his intellectual and political thought presents a particular challenge of location. In essence how does one begin to think about Thabo Mbeki as an intellectual and political thinker?

This chapter will be seeking to answer certain questions that seem to arise when one begins to think of Thabo Mbeki as an intellectual and a political thinker. The first question relates to the nature and function of Mbeki as an intellectual, in which the primary occupation is to seek to determine what kind of intellectual Thabo Mbeki is. The next question seeks to determine the political traditions that Mbeki is working within that define his mode of analysis and the content of his political thought. The answers to these questions require a careful intersection of conventional ideas about the character of intellectual output, as well as the nature of political practice and an understanding of black intellectual practices and the anti-colonial political tradition. Indeed an analysis of Mbeki's intellectual and political thought has to be informed by his experiences as an anti-apartheid political activist and in the realities of being a practicing politician in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition in analysing Mbeki's intellectual and political thought one is dealing with a multiplicity of traditions that range from the social history of the black South African educated intelligentsia, the political history and practice of the ANC and SACP in the struggle against apartheid as well as the anti-colonial political tradition. In essence locating and interrogating Mbeki's stream of Africanism requires bringing together these various strands.

Understanding Mbeki as an Intellectual

In the early phase of Mbeki's presidency Sahra Ryklief sought to pose a question "Does the Emperor Really Have No Clothes?" in an attempt to piece together the strands of Mbeki's ideology (2002:105). Indeed Ryklief's initial response to this question demonstrates the challenge of locating Mbeki's political thought and is an interesting departure point in beginning to think through the issues related to analysing Mbeki as an intellectual and political thinker. Ryklief locates Mbeki's ideology within the ideological development of the ANC during the 1980s as it moved from revolutionary fervour to opening spaces for a

negotiated settlement (2002:108). Ryklief equates the movement from the ideal of a revolutionary overthrow to a focus on preparing an avenue for a negotiated solution as the rise of pragmatism in the ANC, with its chief exponent being Thabo Mbeki (2002:108).

Ryklief states in this regard:

Thus, from as early as the mid-1980s onwards, at a time when the internal anti-apartheid movement was still intent on insurrection and the overthrow of the apartheid state, Mbeki revealed, as spokesman of the ANC in exile, an ideological shift away from the revolutionary aspirations expressed in his 1978 speech, as well as an alienation from the general insurrectionary sentiment of the black majority inside South Africa (2002:108).

The shifting focus in the approach to the liberation struggle in the ANC reflected a movement away from ideology to a more pragmatic approach, an approach that would define the politics of Mbeki according to Ryklief (2002:109). In other words the movement away from socialist inspired aspirations to a more toned down acceptance of liberal democratic values was an attempt at displaying accommodation to the interests of local and international capital. Ryklief argues that Mbeki's role as the chief intellectual custodian of the ANC's political shift in the 1980s was a precursor to the ANC's eventual acceptance of neo-liberal economic policies once it became a government with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy (2002:112). Ryklief locates Mbeki's espousal of the African Renaissance, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and NEPAD as part of a conservative ideological orientation that contains his "African Nationalist impulses within a neo-liberal paradigm" (2002:118).

While one can definitely find spaces for critique of Ryklief's assessment of Mbeki, it is important to recognise that there are certain assumptions that are inherent in her analysis as it

relates to questions of political practice and political thought. In essence the deduction of Mbeki's political thought as pragmatic rather than ideological is not particularly clear. In addition there is an inherent assumption that praxis and thought be treated as separate categories. Within Ryklief's analysis there is a particular understanding of intellectual and political thought that views intellectual thought and praxis as linearly connected within smooth discursive boxes. In other words seeking to answer the question of the content of Mbeki's ideology requires a discussion of the practices of intellectuals in politics that provides room for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between praxis and thought. The attempt to investigate or tease out the political thought of a practicing politician requires a discussion about the nature of intellectual production and in particular the nature of intellectuals in politics.

In working through questions relating to the nature and function of intellectuals the most appropriate starting point is Gramsci's (1971) musings on the subject presented in his work Prison Notebooks as he begins to think through a set of ideas relating to the nature of social and cultural hegemony. Gramsci in his text defines an intellectual:

What are the 'maximum' limits of acceptance of the term 'intellectual'? Can one find a unitary criterion to characterise equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations (1971:8).

Gramsci locates intellectuals within the network of social relations that define the structure of society. As a result the traditional intellectuals comprising the doctors, teachers, lawyers, journalists and artists all perform a particular function for society, part of the network of social relations that maintain a particular configuration of power (Gramsci 1971:4). It is within this framework that Gramsci develops the concept of the organic intellectual, those thinkers that are actively engaged in seeking to mould minds and transform the nature of society. The organic intellectual therefore performs a different function within society which can be that of the agitator for social and political transformation or the industrial magnate seeking to expand markets.

Gramsci's organic intellectual is important because it helps to explain the important functional role of intellectuals in the development of societies and in particular their importance in social change. While Gramsci provides a conceptual framework for understanding the function of intellectuals in society, it does not necessarily take us any closer towards understanding the unique attributes that define the nature of intellectual output, in particular the intellectual involved in politics.

The social and economic advancement of capitalism in the developed world in the latter stages of the 20th century and the contemporary 21st century have all seen the development of groups of specialized professionals actively engaged in the market that within Gramsci's framework would form part of the organic intellectual. Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual is particularly important in understanding the function of intellectuals in society as potential agents of social change, but in the case of seeking to analyse the intellectual and political thought of a political figure such as Thabo Mbeki such an analysis is only half of the story. While Mbeki does function as an organic intellectual, there is need for a broader

discussion of the discursive practices of the political intellectual and in particular the nature of black intellectual practices.

Jurgen Habermas in a little known essay on “Heinrich Heine and the Intellectual in Germany” outlines four notions of the intellectual in public life in Germany (1989:78). The first notion of the intellectual relates to those writers that simply do not engage in political matters, the second views defends this notion of the intellectual as a separation between the spheres of society, in essence maintaining a separation between the sphere of the mind and the sphere of power (Habermas 1989:78). The third notion of the intellectual relates to those independent minded politically engaged intellectuals and the fourth group relates to those intellectuals who have put their work into political parties and have become fully fledged professional politicians or revolutionaries (Habermas 1989:78). It is the fourth notion of the intellectual that is of vital importance when it is taken into serious consideration that Thabo Mbeki has dedicated his life to being a major party functionary of the ANC, utilising his intellectual abilities as a means of building the party in its attempts to defeat apartheid. Habermas explains the characteristics of such intellectuals and their disavowal of an individualist pursuit of social mobility as a sacrifice to the greater good. Habermas states in regard to the intellectual turned professional revolutionary:

These “head-workers” are extremely critical of the vacillation and opportunism, unreliability, and ideological claims to power of the “petit-bourgeois intelligentsia”. Of course no ritual of self-purification, no matter how masochistic, shakes the party intellectuals in their conviction, founded on the philosophy of history, that the intellectual who has overcome his individualism and achieved a proletarian orientation has an avant-garde function of world-historical significance to fulfil (1989:79).

While Habermas is particularly focused on the intellectual in Europe and even more precisely on the experiences of the German intellectual, the analysis does speak to the significant difference between the conventional independent social and cultural critic and the likes of a professional revolutionary. The contrast between these two kinds of intellectuals is important especially in relation to locating the intellectual within the confines of modernity. The rejection of individualism and the goal of social mobility is a significant counterpoint to modern capitalism and the bourgeois intellectual; they are fully engaged in anti-systemic social and political movements. In essence the intellectual engaged fully in a political party as a professional politician or revolutionary is not simply satisfied with the task of criticism, these kinds of intellectuals are seeking to utilise their talents towards political action in the cause of revolution.

In 1993 Edward Said was invited by the BBC to give the Reith lectures and decided to focus on the role of the intellectual in the contemporary era, the lectures are important due to the fact that they begin to grapple with what it means to be an intellectual more than the function of an intellectual at the dawn of the 21st Century. Said argues there needs to be a discussion of the discursive practices of the intellectual in society (1993:10). Edward Said calls for a focus on the representations of the intellectual, this is a particular idea of the intellectual as someone who is actively engaged in attempting to place before the public or respective constituency a standpoint or set of ideas based on that individuals own sense of freedom and justice. Said, in making his point, states the following:

My argument is that intellectuals are individuals with a vocation for the art of representing, whether that is talking, writing, teaching, appearing on television. And that vocation is important to the extent that it is publicly recognizable and involves commitment and risk, boldness and vulnerability; when I read Jean-Paul Sartre or

Bertrand Russell it is their specific, individual voice and presence that makes an impression on me over and above their arguments because they are speaking out for their beliefs. They cannot be mistaken for an anonymous functionary or careful bureaucrat (1994:13).

Edward Said in attempting to move beyond the sociological function of the intellectual is making a case for an understanding of the intellectual as an agent of social and political criticism. In essence the intellectual is consciously aware of his or her role in directing the minds of the public or particular constituency. Said's exposition of the representation of the intellectual is very much a movement away from classical ideas of the intellectual as an objective cultural critic who sits in judgement of society. According to Edward Said's analysis intellectuals ought to be engaged in society seeking to define the discourse of their particular sphere whether it is the media or as members of political or social movements.

As a result of Said's definition of the intellectual in contemporary society, he goes on to ask a series of questions in relation to the issues and experiences of different kinds of intellectuals. One of the questions that Said asks is what is the nature of the work of those intellectuals displaced and marginalised within the confines of their place of birth? Said answers this question by arguing that exile and marginality are more than an 'actual condition'; they are a 'metaphorical condition'. In order to understand the discursive practices of such individuals requires an understanding of the social and political history from which they are derived. In other words those forced into exile or made marginal within their own societies, are dealing with an entirely different psychic dynamic that defines the state of their intellectual work. Said makes a particular statement in this regard and it is worth quoting:

Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier

and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation....the intellectual as exile tends to be happy with the idea of unhappiness, so that dissatisfaction bordering on dyspepsia, a kind of curmudgeonly disagreeableness, can become not only a style of thought, but also a new, if temporary, habitation (1994:53).

In essence the actual condition of being in exile or being marginal within one's own society means a different metaphysical condition, a style of thought that is not at ease with functioning smoothly within conventions. It is a thought process that seems to be constantly searching, constantly in anguish and never settled. While there is a particular intellectual and political orientation that is based on the nature of the social and political displacement, there is a constant movement of ideas, a feeling of not being content with one's own ideas. In thinking of Mbeki as an intellectual Said's analysis becomes an important part of beginning to understand the style of Mbeki's thought. In Mbeki one is dealing with a figure that is marginalised within his own place of birth as a black man under apartheid and then forced into exile as a result of his involvement in the ANC.

It is clear that in seeking to analyse the intellectual and political thought of a figure like Thabo Mbeki, one is moving beyond the domain of the social or cultural critic, one is dealing with a complex array of factors. In addition the task of working through the intellectual and political thought of a practicing politician requires theories of political action that are not concretely connected to any theoretical insight. The deeds and actions of political figures are not necessarily connected in all instances to their respective ideological viewpoints, configurations of power, the peculiarities of the social context and assessments of capabilities all play an important part in determining political action. In essence one is taking into consideration the issue of political judgement. Isaiah Berlin (1996) in discussing the nature of

political judgement broadens our understanding of political action and makes a central point as it relates to locating the thought of a political intellectual and it is worth quoting at length stating:

In the realm of political action, laws are far and few indeed: skills are everything. What makes statesmen, like drivers of cars, successful is that they do not think in general terms-that is, they do not primarily ask themselves in what respect a given situation is like or unlike other situations in the long course of human history. Their merit is that they grasp the unique combination of characteristics that constitute this particular situation-this and no other. What they are said to be able to do is to understand the character of a particular movement, of a particular individual, of a unique state of affairs, of a unique atmosphere, of a particular combination of economic, political, personal factors; and we do not readily suppose that this can be literally taught (1996:45).

Berlin is tackling questions relating to the nature of political practice; in particular political judgements about the best possible course of action do not necessarily correspond to theoretical insight or political ideals. In Berlin's analysis political actions take place within a context that is locked within unexpected circumstances or configurations of power, praxis and thought cannot neatly fit within theoretical or ideological models. In essence political actions cannot be scientifically explained or be taught as part of some grand theory, there are certain aspects of politics that are instinctual, such as an understanding of a social and political scene that is unique to that individual.

In an earlier essay entitled "Politics as a Vocation" Max Weber (1978) speaks to this issue of the professional politician and the nature of individuals involved in politics. Weber identifies three qualities that are of vital importance to a professional politician, these are passion,

responsibility and judgement (1978: 212). According to Weber one of the key characteristics of a professional politician is judgement, a way of thinking about issues with a sense of calm and composure (1978: 212). Weber explains this characteristic of the politician stating:

And that requires the decisive psychological quality of the politician-judgement-the ability to contemplate things as they are with inner calm and composure before them to affect one's actions, or in other words, an attitude of detachment towards things and people. Lack of detachment, purely as such, is one of the mortal sins for every politician, and one of those qualities which would condemn our rising generation of intellectuals to political impotence if they were to cultivate it (1978: 213).

Within Weber's analysis of the practicing politician is a particular critique of the revolutionary Marxist that seeks to explain social and political events with scientific precision. The more prescient point that seems to come to the fore in the intersecting and complimentary discussions of political judgement by both Weber and Berlin is that the professional politician practices a particular mode of thought, a way of thinking about situations divorced from an ideological orientation. The importance of this discussion is that it provides room for understanding disconnections between political actions and political ideology. A major part of Weber's analysis of politics is that the central preoccupation of politics is the urge for power and thus this pursuit can lead to a wide cross section of political practices.

Indeed Weber's analysis probes a bit further than Berlin's analysis of political judgment with a recognition that the central goal of political life is the pursuit of political power. It is important to understand that while a major part of political practice is the display of political judgement it is important to recognise the importance of political context. Barbara Farnham (1990) in thinking about the nature of political decision-making moves a bit further than

Berlin in analysing political practice. Farnham argues that in understanding political decision-making it is important to take into account political context and in particular the constitution of power within particular contexts can define political actions (1990:99). Political practice is a complicated process that involves both an individual's own political judgement and the structural constraints that limit the potential avenues.

As a consequence it is important to note that the relationship between political practice and political thought is not necessarily straightforward. While an individual's political thought should define the nature of political practice, because one is dealing with configurations of power within the political field there will be the potential for inconsistency. As a result part of political practice is negotiating a space for one's political thought within a political context. The relationship between political thought and political practice is a complicated issue and part of the answer lies in not treating the two notions as discrete and conflicting, recognising that two are interwoven when one is seeking to analyse the intellectual and political thought of a practicing politician.

It is clear that in seeking to locate Mbeki as an intellectual one is dealing with a multiplicity of factors in thinking through the nature of his intellectual output. Indeed Mbeki is a public intellectual that seeks to represent a particular point of view and position but as a practicing politician this kind of intellectual representation is within the context of an attempt to demonstrate or pursue political power. Mbeki's intellectual representation is not interested in simply being the conscience of the public sphere, to the extent that it is an attempt at appealing to a popular conscience it is linked to achieving a political goal. As an intellectual that has spent his entire life as a professional politician in exile and as a member of the governing elite, one is dealing with a multidimensional figure in terms of understanding the nature of his intellectual and political thought. The metaphysical features of an intellectual in

exile, the “restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others” does speak to a particular kind of intellectual persona that is a part of Mbeki’s intellectual style (Said 1994:53). While Mbeki is a practicing politician, he has displayed a tendency to publically challenge conventions and ruffle feathers not content with simply performing the duties of a politician and seeking to be politically correct.

Locating Mbeki’s Political Thought

The history of modern African thought is particularly complex, the impact of Islamic slavery and Western colonialism have contributed to defining the discursive nature of Africa’s modern thinkers (July, 2004:17). In exploring modern African political thought July argues that while Islamic conquest contributed to the African knowledge system it is the history of western colonialism that brings forth a new dimension of African political thought (2004:15). July highlights that Western colonialism not only helped to foment expressions of nationalistic thinking but also “a more thoroughgoing examination of man and society” (2004:17). In particular the impact of Western scientific technology helped to bring an added dimension to modern African political thought, which was focused on seeking to utilize the benefits of modernity for the improvement of African society. Indeed a major feature of modern African thought has been the impact of Western colonialism and as a consequence the onset of modernity.

In examining modern African political thought a key attribute according to July is the modernization of traditional African societies as a result of Western scientific technology (2004:17). Dean Tipps notes that modernization reflects a series of transitions in the fabric of society, such as a transition from subsistence economies to technology sensitive economies as well as from religious to secular ideologies (1973:204). The modernization of society is often a multifaceted process leading to changes in human thought and social activity (Tipps

1973:201). In the context of the political development of under-developed societies the task of modernization has often been the preserve of modernizing elites, these are often middle class elites schooled in non-traditional educational institutions (Tipps 1973:205). In the case of the African experience of western colonialism this was done through western education institutions such as the missionary education system and western universities.

Pieter Van Hensbroek (2003) in analysing modern African political thought argues that while Western colonialism had a major impact in the early work of African thinkers, this did not mean that there was simply the importation of western ideas on to an African intellectual setting. Hensbroek argues that while western colonialism did lead to the importation of western ideas in African political thought; there was often "creative indigenous resistance", particularly in relation to the development of modern African political thought (2003). Hensbroek utilizing Wittgenstein argues that when notions travel and are used in different contexts, then one must expect them to change their meaning. Hensbroek argues that "politically relevant ideas cannot be taken out of their context without changing their meaning (2003). Such ideas need a reference to concerns, strategies, and options for action of real, historically situated actors. Such reference provides, so to say, the air they breathe. Thus, political notions are charged with meaning by the context of action in which they function" (2003). In working through the political thought of Thabo Mbeki, Hensbroek helps in analyzing the ideas of African political leaders educated within the western canon. Hensbroek highlights that part of modern African political thought is that it is an appropriation and re-coining of terms as a response to political struggles and discourses.

While there are certain specific features that help in defining Mbeki's intellectual output, the content of his intellectual and political thought can be located in a number of political traditions. Mbeki is part of a black South African intellectual and political tradition that is

located within the social and economic interstices of British colonialism finding its roots in the missionary education system. Indeed Mbeki is part of the last generation of black South Africans that were educated in the missionary education system of the Cape Province before the complete articulation of apartheid policies would see the development of the Bantu education system (Gevisser 2007:90). In addition Mbeki was able to complete his education in England obtaining undergraduate and post-graduate degrees at the University of Sussex (Gevisser 2007:20). Mbeki forms part of the educated black South African middle class that would dedicate itself to the liberation struggle and serve under the organisational leadership of the ANC and SACP.

Thomas Ranuga in examining the ideological shifts locates the Cape liberal tradition as an important component in the formation of the ANC and speaks to the influence of this tradition stating:

The Cape liberal tradition was strengthened by the role played by white missionaries and Christian educators. From the pulpits and through mission schools they taught that all human beings were created in the image of god and were born equal. The church and the mission schools played an important role in terms of underlining the universal nature of concepts like peace, justice, equality, and the common brotherhood of all men. Additionally, they also taught patience, perseverance, tolerance, sacrifices, the virtue of poverty, obedience to authority and, for those who suffer in justice and oppression in this wicked world, the rewards of eternal bliss beyond the grave (1982:9).

Ranuga's examination of the Cape Liberal tradition is important because it is a critical element in the black South African intellectual tradition. Within the Cape liberal tradition is a focus on certain universal claims of western humanism such as justice, peace, equality and

the respect for democracy, which when expressed within a system of colonialism become a counterpoint to the realities of race and racism. It is as a result of the tradition of missionary education in the Cape Province that witnesses the development of a generation of black South Africans that become educated within the epistemic and discursive realm of western modernity. Gevisser labels this generation of educated black South Africans, the “New Africans” referring to the way in which this generation was able to redefine the notion of an African, moving confidently between modernity and tradition (2007:32). It is as a result of this experience that the “New African” develops a new consciousness and understanding of himself or herself as a marginal subject in the civic space of colonial governmentality.

In the South African context of white racism and domination of the civil space, the “New African” is a part of two worlds, an experience explained by Dubois’ concept of double consciousness, the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (Dubois 2004:2). While educated black South Africans were able to occupy two worlds, the effect of white racism and colonialism meant that such an occupation was simply epistemic rather than a legal actuality. The entry into the western tradition through the institutional structures of missionary education by black South Africans meant a certain level of social mobility but still continued to experience the effects of institutional racism. As a result there is a critical appraisal of issues such as race, culture, identity and nation as part of the South African Black intellectual tradition. A major part of the black South African intellectual tradition emanating from the Eastern Cape is the strong element of liberal humanism. The formation and belief in modern political parties as a means of achieving political goals is a major feature of South African political leaders schooled in the Eastern Cape missionary education system. As a result of this many of the early political leaders of the ANC were schooled in the Eastern Cape (Gevisser 2007:33).

Anthony Bogues in analysing the black and anti-colonial intellectual tradition argues that it is very much a product of modernity and seeks to interrogate a broad range of questions relating to race and capitalism (2003: 1). Bogues in analysing black intellectual practices in relation to the radical political tradition states:

The Western tradition was initially constructed on natural classificatory schemes of racial order which located those of African descent as nonhuman. One consequence is that a stream of the black radical intellectual tradition deals with thought through the mastering of both the language and the culture of the dominant power-white supremacy or colonialism. Such a process establishes epistemic boundaries. Thus many black radical intellectuals consistently wrestle with language, consciousness, the nature of the ordinary, and the meaning of Africa to their life and work (2003:5).

The mastery of the western intellectual canon has been a major feature of black intellectual practices and is an important foundation in the development of the anti-colonial tradition. As a result of white racism and the inability to achieve social equality a major element within this black South African intellectual tradition is culture and nationalism. Indeed it is out of this tradition that springs forth the founding of the ANC in 1912 by a group of educated black South Africans led by Pixley ka Isaka Seme (Gumede 2007:2). The South African tradition of nationalism led by the ANC was a historical antecedent to other forms of African nationalism across the continent led by political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta and Julius Nyerere. These leaders presented visions of the nation based on the ideals of pan-Africanism.

The struggle for representation and decolonisation has meant an entire body of intellectual and political thought, which has fused nationalistic ideas and political action. A major part of South Africa's tradition of anti-colonial nationalism is that while it is grounded in the specific

realities of South Africa it draws upon a wide array of experiences from the struggle around the continent and in the Diaspora. The development of an Africanist philosophy within the ANC, with the formation of the ANC Youth League by intellectuals such as Anton Lembede drew up upon the ideas of Marcus Garvey and W.E.B Dubois (Gerhart 1978:54).

Bogues in analysing the work of black radical thinkers makes a particular point that is important in understanding the nature of the anti-colonial political tradition stating:

...any observation of black radical intellectual production would illustrate that the central figures of this tradition were explicitly political, seeking to organize, having the courage to stand by or break with organizations and programs while developing an intellectual praxis that made politics not a god but a practice for human good. Theirs was not just a practice of social criticism but oftentimes of organized efforts to intervene in social and political life (2003:7).

A particular feature of the anti-colonial political tradition is the defeat of racism and imperialism and the imagining of a more just society. As a result of this nationalist aspirations and notions of justice become intertwined with an activist orientation. In particular when one begins to think of the Freedom Charter and the notion of the National Democratic Revolution put forward by the ANC or The Arusha Declaration by Julius Nyerere these represent political thoughts that are grounded in an activist orientation. The tradition of African nationalism in South Africa was particularly focused on defeating the apartheid regime particularly as an ideological current within the ANC, with the advocacy of Africanism by Anton Lembede.

Mbeki's Africanism

In addition to being part of the anti-colonial intellectual and political tradition within that tradition Mbeki is specifically located within the political history of the ANC and its struggle against apartheid. There are two things that come to the fore as it relates to locating Mbeki in the political tradition of the ANC, this is the tradition of African nationalism especially the Anton Lembede's Africanism and the ANC's movement to the left as it sought to turn itself into a revolutionary organisation. When the ANC Youth League was launched in 1944 it came along with a new philosophy labelled Africanism by Lembede, which sought focus on rejuvenating a sense of cultural and national pride (Gerhart 1978:54). Gerhart in her study of African nationalism explains the thought process that informed the philosophy of Africanism stating:

Africans had become a derelict nation, uncertain of their cultural identity, their rights, or their place in relation to the rest of mankind. There could be no cure for these evils except African freedom, and no means to the achievement of freedom other than a ruthless struggle grounded in the inspiration of a well devised ideology, a credo addressed to the deepest strivings and needs of the African spirit. Lembede believed that in Africanism he had evolved a philosophy which would offer Africans just such a psychological antidote. The most basic ingredient in the prescription was a new and aggressively positive self-image compounded of pride in the past, confident expectations for the future, and an emotional, burning love for the Africans god given blackness (1978:58).

Lembede's Africanism was an important variant of African nationalism in the late 1940s and early 1950s in the ANC. One of the essential issues in Mbeki's intellectual and political thought regarding South Africa in the post-apartheid period is the need to re-instil a sense of

pride in the black majority with a focus on the importance of cultural identity and nationhood. While Lembede's thought was part of thinking through the challenges of attaining freedom, Mbeki is concerned about seeking to build South Africa in the 21st Century.

Indeed Africanism as a concept developed and espoused by Anton Lembede focused on utilising the values and traditions of African societies and cultures as a means of building resistance towards western colonialism. It is not necessarily an essentialist reading of African society and culture but an intellectual and political focus towards seeking answers to Africa's challenges grounded in the continent's cultural and political experience. Africanism as a concept and idea has inspired a school of thought relating to development of an African Knowledge project. There has developed a body of intellectual work that has sought to tackle the challenges of African society by seeking to seriously examine and interrogate African societies and cultures. Scholars such as Cheik Anta Diop, Joseph Kizerbo, Ifi Amadiume and Archie Mafeje have formed a major part of this ongoing knowledge project. The key to their work has been to define the epistemic features of African scholarship, to make an epistemological break from the universalising tendencies of the western episteme. Archie Mafeje one of South Africa's eminent scholars in the Africanist intellectual tradition sought to define the epistemic features of African scholarship as it related to anthropology, to make an epistemological break from colonial anthropology to a truly African anthropology (1998:1). Africanism seeks to utilise the cultural traditions of African people and societies as a means for political resistance, political renewal and the development of African scholarship.

In the case of Thabo Mbeki, his Africanism is focused on the development of a political project coming out of the quest to make an intellectual break from the western episteme in the intellectual arena. While Mbeki's Africanism is focused on developing a political project for Africa's renewal it is also influenced by the modernising tendencies of the broad project of

African nationalism instilled in his thinking as a cadre of the ANC. As a consequence of this Mbeki's Africanism does not focus on making a clean break from the western episteme, it is very much influenced by Marxism, the politics of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle as well as the history of modernity in South Africa. Mbeki's Africanism seeks to bring together the intellectual and political traditions of Africanism with his political experience gained throughout his political career as a cadre of the ANC led liberation movement. Indeed it is as a result of this that makes Mbeki's Africanism distinctive and different. Mbeki's Africanism is very much a departure from well known Africanists in the South African political tradition such as Robert Sobukwe, AP Mda and Anton Lembede. In this respect Mbeki's distinctiveness is that he has reinserted Africanist thinking as an important part of ANC thinking in the contemporary period and re-appropriated Africanism within the 21st Century South African political context.

One of the dominant themes of the African nationalist intellectual perspective is the de-racialization of representation, the quest for a truly meaningful political modernity. The building of a modern nation state that is economically empowered with a strong sense of African social-cultural identity is an important part of African nationalism. Indeed it is this aspect of African nationalism that has come to prominence in Mbeki's political thought. There is a quest within Mbeki's political thought to build the modern African nation state, a nation state that is non-racial but fashioned by the cultural identity of the black majority. Consequently Mbeki's Africanism is re-configured within the politics of reconciliation and transformation of post-apartheid South African society.

The struggle against apartheid is a central element in the political thought of Thabo Mbeki. The politics of the ANC-led liberation movement and the nature of the concrete struggle against apartheid shaped the content and character of Mbeki's intellectual and political

thought. Consequently as a result of being a part of the ANC and its focus on maintaining political alliances in the struggle against apartheid Mbeki was also a member of the SACP. As a member of the ANC and the SACP during the liberation struggle Mbeki was subject to intense political education geared towards building and maintaining an underground political movement for the purposes of instigating a popular revolution. This meant that cadres of the ANC and SACP had to be taught the rigors of revolutionary theory which meant an intense engagement with classical Marxism. The notions of the class struggle, Lenin's theory of the party and imperialism were all part of the political education program of both the ANC and the SACP. A major part of Mbeki's Africanism is the embedded influence of these ideas in his political thought.

Raymond Suttner in examining the character and formation of intellectuals in the ANC locates Marxism as an important part of the political education seminars; it was an important tool in understanding revolutionary tactics and the nature of capitalism (2003:126). A major feature of Mbeki's political thought is its location in Marxism and in particular the ANC-led liberation movement's utilization of Marxist-Leninism. In discussing the importance of Marxism in the formation of intellectuals in the early years of the ANC before being forced into exile Suttner states:

One significant aspect of the political education is that much of its content was informed by Marxism. Generally, the widespread diffusion of Marxist thinking within the ANC today tends to be attributed to the exile experience, when some cadres were sent to party schools and much of the political education was Marxist. But these Congress Alliance courses indicate that the modes of analysis were already within that paradigm long before the period of exile. Even before the establishment of the

Congress Alliance and SACTU in particular, this was happening within the trade unions in Natal where many Communists were placed (2003:136).

Indeed it was a common feature of the ANC and its allies such as the SACP to not only teach their recruits certain key themes within Marxism but to send their brightest for further training in the Soviet Union. Leading ANC/SACP political figures such as Moses Kotane, JB Marks and Betty du Toit just to name a few were trained in the Soviet Union (Suttner 2003:14). It is at these institutions that they were taught the dictates of Lenin's theory of the party and in particular the notion of the vanguard.

Mbeki is a part of the class of ANC/SACP figures that were sent to Moscow for training as professional politicians as part of the preparation for leading the charge against apartheid. In 1969 Mbeki was in Moscow as a student of the Lenin Institute, it was at this Institute that Mbeki furthered his knowledge on the intricacies of Marxist theory (Gevisser 2007:269). It was during this period that Mbeki did courses on Philosophy, Political Economics and the History, Theory and Tactics of National liberation, Communist and Workers Movements just to name a few that were taken by the South African delegation (Gevisser 2007:273). Thus embedded within Mbeki's political thought is an adherence to Lenin's theory of the party especially as it relates to notions of political leadership and also Lenin's thoughts on imperialism and capitalism.

Conclusion

At the outset in seeking to examine the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki, I sought to respond to the question posed by Sahra Ryklief in her essay "Does the Emperor Really Have No Clothes" in which she sought to ascertain the content of Mbeki's ideology. Ryklief's analysis was used as a starting point to begin to probe into Mbeki's political

thought. The basic premise of this response is that to understand the content of Mbeki's thought requires a different methodology than the one utilised by Ryklief. The task of probing and understanding the content of Mbeki's thought required dealing with a number of factors centred on his status as a career politician. In Mbeki someone who is playing numerous roles as a career politician he is an independent thinker, a member of a political party and a leader of the state.

As a consequence examining Mbeki's intellectual and political thought requires thinking through the interplay between political thought and political practice. The conventional notion of the intellectual as an independent social and cultural critic or Said's conception of the intellectual as a representation of an idea has to be fused with ideas those intellectuals that function as professional politicians. It is not simply a question of analysing a political intellectual whose focus is on researching and commenting on political questions, but the examination of an intellectual whose role is that of political leader engaged in the pursuit of political power. Thus as Berlin and Weber reveal there are other factors that come into being when taken into consideration the thought process of political figures, the idea of political judgement is particularly important in terms of beginning to think about the political thought of major political figures especially as it relates to the issue of political practice.

The interplay between political practice and political thought helps in understanding that the political thought of major political figures is very much locked within the political context of the time. Indeed it assists in understanding some of the shifts in political thought that occur as a result of the political career of Thabo Mbeki.

Thabo Mbeki's political thought can be located in a number of political traditions in the history of modern African thought, which forms part of Mbeki's intellectual complexity. Indeed Mbeki's intellectual and political thought represents different phases of his political activism and professional political career. The movement in Mbeki's political thought is a result of the changing political contexts in South Africa. Mbeki's time as a young student activist in Eastern Cape implanted him in the black South African intellectual tradition that emanates from the missionary education system from the Cape Province. There is also the tradition of African Nationalism within the ANC that forms a part of Mbeki's thought, as well as the anti-colonial political tradition. Mbeki's thought can be located within the ANC-led liberation movements' Marxist-Leninist tradition trained in Moscow to be a loyal cadre of the movement. Indeed Mbeki's intellectual and political thought represents an intersection of different political traditions and as a result of this Mbeki's political thought cannot be characterized within one particular intellectual tradition.

Chapter 3

Thabo Mbeki and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle

Introduction

Thabo Mbeki was actively engaged in political activism in the struggle against apartheid as a student leader, and as an active member of the ANC and SACP. Indeed Mbeki has dedicated his life to politics and thus a major dimension in his intellectual and political thought is that it is concerned with the struggle against apartheid. This chapter will be focused on examining the body of intellectual work that was written by Mbeki during the period of the anti-apartheid struggle. It will be seeking to answer the question of how the struggle against apartheid shaped the content of his political thought and intellectual activism. Analyzing Mbeki's intellectual and political thought during the years of the liberation struggle reveals the complex relationship between political history and the formation of political thought. The political history of the anti-apartheid struggle is very much a part of the formation of Mbeki's political thought. In other words it is a part of a stream of thought that is very much engaged in thinking through the ways and means of defeating the apartheid state.

There are two dominant tendencies that form part of Mbeki's intellectual and political thought during the struggle against apartheid. The first is the political commitment to the organizational and political policies of the ANC/SACP-led national liberation struggle and the active involvement as a cadre of the movement in realising these political objectives. The second is a serious intellectual engagement in political theory and policy as it relates to thinking through the strategy and tactics of the liberation struggle and analysing the apartheid state. The two tendencies are not mutually exclusive and are central to the dynamic between political practice and political thought in examining Mbeki's political thought. Within the

context of anti-apartheid struggle, it means understanding how the concrete struggle against apartheid shaped the early political thought of Mbeki.

Ben Turok in thinking about the liberation struggle notes that the period was an extremely complicated period, cadres had to deal with events on the ground as well as understanding and grappling with political theory and policy (Turok 2003:11). As part of the commitment to the struggle, one dedicated himself/herself to the party and the cause, often times sacrificing personal ambition and preferences for the collective (Turok 2003:11). As Suttner notes, thinking about the politics of struggle requires moving beyond the conventional notions of political life in conventional democratic politics (2008:85). As a consequence of the high levels of apartheid state repression meted out against political organisations such as the ANC and SACP many cadres of the movement were born into the struggle, being connected to the political organisation through cultural and familial networks (Suttner 2008:61). This was particularly the case by the mid 1960s as a result of the banning of the ANC and SACP (McKinley 1997:34). The difficulties faced by liberation organizations meant that those committed to the fight against apartheid gained intellectual and political maturity within the confines of the political party. As Suttner notes, one of the main ideas of the ANC as a revolutionary organisation was that individuals were “supposed to realise themselves as individuals within the context of the collective” (2008:133). Thinking about the liberation struggle as a significant factor in Mbeki’s political thought means understanding the central unity between thought and practice and how thought can become incorporated into a lifelong singleness of purpose (Berlin 2000:76). For Mbeki this singleness of political purpose is the defeat of the apartheid South Africa.

An important feature of the struggle against apartheid is that pragmatism is an important element of ideology. Alfonso Damico in analysing John Dewey’s ideas on pragmatism, notes

that there isn't a neat distinction between "analysis and advocacy" in the practice of politics (1974:194). Damico notes that practice is a "critical part of the meaning of an idea, it is in this context that pragmatism is often an attempt to unify theory and practice" (1974:195).

Mbeki is a product of the struggle politics of the ANC connected to the organisation as a result of cultural and familial connections. This is a key component of the ANC's political organising after 1964 according to Suttner (2008:61). As the son of a key ANC leader Govan Mbeki, Thabo Mbeki had access to many of the underground networks and political connections of the party (Gevisser 2008:191). The kind of personal commitment and sacrifice required for the collective struggle against apartheid within the organisational leadership of the ANC as noted by Ben Turok is very much a part of Mbeki's political character (Gevisser 2008:192). The character and nature of the ANC as a liberation organisation working underground as well as the politics of the struggle sets the scene for many of the issues and debates Mbeki engages in during the years of the liberation struggle.

Political Leadership and Student Activism

As a consequence of Mbeki's location in the cultural and familial networks of the ANC part of Mbeki's intellectual preoccupations is to identify a place for young students in the liberation struggle. The focus on the role of the youth in the liberation struggle reflects one of the elements of Mbeki's political thought during the period of the liberation struggle, which is the fusing of theoretical concerns about politics with the organisational imperatives of the liberation struggle. For Mbeki one of the critical issues in the struggle for liberation is political leadership and the role of student activism.

One of Mbeki's earliest articles is a piece written in 1962 in the newspaper *New Age* entitled "African Students Have a Mission: Why New Association was Formed" (1962:5). The article

is important because it is very much engaged in seeking to situate the student activist and young people in general as a critical element in the struggle against apartheid. It is important to note that this article is being written at a moment in South African political history when the SACP, ANC and ANC Youth League have all been pushed underground and have begun the process of engaging in the armed struggle with the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Schubin 1999:24). Thus while the article serves an intellectual function in seeking to work through the importance of young people in the liberation movement it is very much polemical in that it seeks to be a clarion call encouraging young people into the liberation struggle. The article begins a series of discussions by Mbeki on the importance of young people in the liberation struggle and they surround the themes of education, leadership and activism.

In the article Mbeki seeks to explain the formation of the African Students Association and seeks to situate the formation of the association within the context of the urgency of the need for agents of transformative change in South Africa. Mbeki writes:

Among students of late one has met the question: "What are we doing for our people?" Mass illiteracy, for example; couldn't the students help wipe out this scourge, they ask? Students have started to feel-almost spontaneously-that they have a mission which they have not fulfilled. African students are looking for ways in which they can contribute to the advance of the people in all aspects of life-cultural, educational and political. This is a marked departure from the orthodox line that was followed by African students up to now-a line of "education for certificates". This is no longer enough. (1962:5)

The statement speaks to the critical disjuncture between the conventional student of the past and the new African student. In essence the new African student is conscious of his/her place in the process of history as an agent of change in the struggle against apartheid. This new

African student that Mbeki speaks of is not concerned with seeking social advancement through conformity but is dedicated to the collective advancement of African people through activism. Inherent within this exposition of the need for activism and the new African student is an understanding of education that moves beyond utilitarianism and individual gain and linked to the collective struggles of African people. Thus the rebuke by Mbeki of “education for certificates as outdated and irrelevant to the present situation facing the majority of African people” (1962:5). The New African student in many respects reflects the quest and urgency for political sovereignty and the full benefits of political modernity.

As the article progresses Mbeki singles in on the importance of the new African student as central to the provision of critical leadership in the struggle against apartheid. Mbeki writes in this regard stating:

The African student sees that he is to form the intellectual elite of a people that suffer as a nation from subjection by a minority government. History has shown that in every people’s revolutionary movement, where nation oppresses nation, it is the people who suffer most that fight hardest, and it is these that bring all progress in society. The African student is lettered among his people: there is a natural hope among his people that he will take a leading position in their struggles (1962:5).

The statement speaks to the importance placed by Mbeki on leadership and its critical role in leading the nationalist aspirations of the African people in the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid regime. Inherent within this discussion of the African student and leadership is the premium placed on the importance of an ‘intellectual elite’, the importance of the educated few in the liberation of the masses. In essence the article represents the early musings of a young Mbeki just about to complete his secondary education grappling with the problems facing African people in South Africa under apartheid (Gevisser 2007:145). As one

of Mbeki's earliest intellectual musings, the article represents a strident African nationalism and is an early indication of an eventual acceptance of Marxist-Leninist principles of the revolutionary vanguard that would come as a result of induction into the politics of the ANC and SACP.

The salient pieces of Mbeki's early espousal of the importance of students in the struggle against apartheid as a secondary school student come to the fore as Mbeki becomes a part of the ANC Youth and Students section while pursuing tertiary studies at the University of Sussex (Gevisser 2007:192). The strident nationalism of his first piece introducing the goals of the African Students Association gives way to a broadened analysis of the importance of youth in the liberation struggle and the system of apartheid as part of an international system, in particular as a project linked to the dictates of western capital. It is a thought process that is much more grounded in the politics of the ANC. Indeed Mbeki's piece entitled "Struggle: The African Youth and Students" written in 1967 echoes many of the sentiments in Mbeki's earliest piece on the same subject as a member of the African Students Association, it is a critical departure not simply because of the depth of insight but because it is part of a more explicit discussion geared at the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid government. The critical departure is the heightened sense of revolutionary consciousness grounded in the politics of the ANC.

In the article Mbeki articulates the central importance of revolutionary consciousness to the task of young South Africans dedicated to the struggle against apartheid. It is a revolutionary consciousness that is not simply theoretical but intertwined as part of the practical workings of an organisation engaged in a political and armed struggle. In regard to the mission of young people in the ANC Mbeki states:

Revolutionary consciousness has to be tested and developed in actual struggle. This is the third condition. The section will therefore attempt to ensure that its membership participates fully in the international struggle against apartheid; takes part in the day-to-day work, be the first to criticise their own shortcomings and seek to correct these, and inject into the campaign the urgency of the need to end apartheid which everyday commits more brutal crimes against our people and is systematically changing South Africa into a fully fledged fascist state (1967:8).

Revolutionary consciousness in Mbeki's estimation can only be actualized through revolutionary praxis, and becoming a fully fledged cadre of the ANC is the principal means through which young South Africans interested in fighting apartheid can achieve their full potential. Within this polemic on the importance of youth in the movement is an espousal of revolutionary consciousness as actualized through revolutionary praxis, it is an aversion towards intellectuals that simply use the pen as a sword against oppression. In other words seeking to use the pen as a form of moral criticism does not reshape power relations; the pen has to be coupled with a strong focus on the importance of activism.

Hidden within this initial discussion by Mbeki of revolutionary consciousness is the notion of agency and in particular the importance of agency in enforcing political and social change in society. Indeed intricately woven into Mbeki's analysis of revolutionary consciousness is an engagement with Marxist-Leninist ideas relating to the function of the political party and political revolution. Thus within Mbeki's discussion of ANC Youth in the struggle for liberation is the importance of an educated, dedicated and disciplined force of young people committed to the goals of the ANC. In essence this seems to be one of the primary reasons for the extended discussion in the article on the program of political education to be pursued by the ANC Youth and Students Section by Mbeki. In this regard Mbeki states:

Secondly, we have to ensure that our own forces actually have that high level of consciousness. To this end the section is organizing study classes. These classes will cover such subjects as the African Revolution, African Socialism, lessons of military coups in Africa, neo-colonialism, the role of the United States imperialism, NATO and the peace movement in Europe, and the history and lessons of our own struggle in South Africa. The section seeks not solely to organize study groups but will seek to make these as interesting as possible by such means as arranging joint discussions with other youth and student groups in the countries in which we are working (1967: 8).

Indeed what is important about Mbeki's discussion of the political education program to be pursued by the ANC Youth and Students Section is not only an interwoven notion of the political vanguard but it sheds light on the content of Mbeki's political understanding of revolutionary consciousness. Thus the strident nationalism that defined Mbeki's first published article is replaced by a revolutionary orientation underpinned by an understanding of capitalism and western imperialism, neo-colonialism and socialism. In essence there is the location of the struggle against apartheid as part of an international struggle against capitalism and imperialism as well as an understanding of colonialism on the African continent and thus requires an analytical framework that moves beyond a localized nationalism. In other words it is an intellectual response that argues that simply mobilising the masses does not lead to a new political dispensation.

It is important to note a consistent element in Mbeki's thoughts on the question of leadership and student activism in the struggle for liberation. Within Mbeki's analysis there is an intellectual preoccupation with education as part of the process of engaging in revolutionary struggle and leading the struggle. In addition there is the idea of political education as central

to the struggle and the importance of the political party as an instrument of the masses. There is the view that the educated middle class should take the leading role in the struggle, utilizing the masses as a critical weapon in the struggle.

While it has been noted that embedded within Mbeki's thought is the idea of the Marxist-Leninist notion of the vanguard, this is only part of the process of understanding the political dynamic of the liberation struggle. Fanon's analysis is particularly helpful in understanding the nature of the liberation struggle and contextualizing Mbeki's intellectual preoccupation with an educated elite in the struggle. Fanon argues that within the context of the struggle for liberation there is a critical difference and gap between leaders of the nationalist party and the mass of the people (1967:85). The native intellectuals educated within the conventions of the mother country gains his or her understanding of politics, while for the masses political education is as a result of lived experience (Fanon 1967:85). In Fanon's estimation the intellectual elite of colonized countries places a singular focus on organisation, there is a fixed notion of the political party as central to the liberation struggle (1967:85). Indeed for Mbeki the political party is central to the success of the liberation struggle. Thus for Mbeki being a loyal cadre of the movement is central to his thoughts on the question of defeating the apartheid state.

Representing the Movement: The ANC and the Liberation Struggle

It is Mbeki's intellectual belief in the idea of the political party as a tool in the liberation struggle and in particular the personal commitment to the ANC-led liberation struggle that results in a large part of his intellectual orientation is focused on being an intellectual representative of the party and its policies and programs. This is a consistent feature of Mbeki's political thought but this is particularly demonstrated in Mbeki's response to a letter posted to *Sechaba* relating to the ANC's use of violence and his speech to the United Nations

during the time of the Rivonia Trial. In this context Mbeki is not expanding on the ideas of the ANC but focused on promoting the political objectives of the party.

The letter to the editor is a short statement rather than a developed argument on the importance of a non-violent approach to combating apartheid but Mbeki's response is a much more elaborate treatise on the nature of the apartheid state and the futility of a non-violent approach. In essence the letter to the editor provides an opportunity for Mbeki to defend the tactics of the ANC in relation to its commitment to the armed struggle. There are two things that come to the fore in thinking through Mbeki's argument concerning the tactics of violent struggle. The first is the realm of the discursive, while Mbeki presents a disagreement with the respondent it is not a condemnatory response, which has all the makings of political tact. The second is a derivative of the first, which is that the piece is systematic of the development of a political intellectual in the organisational framework of the ANC. It has all the elements of a cadre loyally defending the decisions of the movement.

The opening response is symptomatic of the increasing political tact of Mbeki, carefully choosing his words in beginning the layout of a counter posed position. Mbeki writes:

What we want to do is take up the matter of violence/nonviolence that you raise. We do this because we are convinced that there is more that unites us than divides us. In arguing our case, we hope that in the end you will be more aware of the condition of our people, and being aware of that, understand why our organisation, if it was to remain faithful to its position as leader of the majority of the people, had to resort to arms. We cannot agree that the non-violent policy which our people and organisation stuck to for 50 years was not stuck to sufficiently long enough. True, the mere accumulation of years-fifty-does not necessarily mean anything qualitative. It may be that in those years, there was relative absence of struggle. A man in those

circumstances could not therefore claim that what he has failed to do has not succeeded (1968:11).

What is increasingly clear about these introductory remarks on the importance of the armed struggle is that it is not simply a clear articulation of a principle. There is the seeming display of a sense of political judgement, a focus on seeking to not only focus on the intellectual and political arguments but also to address the tone. The tone of the piece is not seeking to demonise the opposing viewpoint. It represents a discursive attempt at trying to defray the idea of the ANC's decision to engage in armed struggle as a descent into political thuggery and an inhumane terrorist organisation. In essence the remarks seem geared at constructing the image of the armed struggle as part of a legitimate political response to an inhumane and brutal state.

The legitimacy of the armed struggle is affirmed throughout the article, which is seeking to destroy any idea of the ANC as the political other. It is important to note that the question that Mbeki is answering is not the nature of armed struggle as a tactic in the liberation struggle but the legitimacy of violence as a political tool. Within the context of the liberation struggle the decision to engage in the armed struggle by ANC was particularly controversial especially as the movement sought to gain international support from the western powers against the apartheid state (McKinley 1997:57). The focus on legitimizing violence as an appropriate political act is a counterpoint to the general sentiment among the western powers that stressed non-violent political approach to the struggle for democracy (McKinley 1997: 57).

It is this question of political legitimacy that defines the response with an extended discussion on the brutality of the apartheid regime. Mbeki continuing his argument writes:

Can one say that this government can be met with non-violence? It rules by force, not in a philosophic sense, but in a very real one, with the police, police dogs, guns. All that came exactly because the people dared to move-in all the demonstrations, all those strikes, all those sit-ins, all that non-violence made the government pass all those laws. The government got terrified and polished up the state machinery to increase the efficiency of its repression. They went to Algeria to learn how to torture- at least they went when the French were there. They picked up some information from the Portuguese about how to torture-all in reaction to the non-violence (1968:11).

Indeed the attempt at legitimizing the actions of the ANC's armed struggle is by pointing the attention at the brutal and repressive actions of the apartheid state. Thus the extract highlights the repressive nature of apartheid's response to what would be considered normal political activity. this is a constant theme in Mbeki's article focusing extensively on the repressive nature of apartheid. Mbeki's central line is that the apartheid state does not engage in legitimate politics, not only by the mere fact that it denies the franchise of the majority of the population but by the methods that it utilised in crushing non-violent political practices. In Mbeki's assessment this is reason enough for the justification of the ANC's armed struggle not only as a tactic of the liberation but as a legitimate political act.

The defence of the armed struggle provided by Mbeki in the article is symptomatic of the growing immersion into the political traditions of the ANC as an active cadre of the liberation movement rather than as a passive supporter. The article is not only important in terms of understanding Mbeki as a political intellectual but as an intellectual that has begun the process of dedicating his life to the ANC and the liberation movement. In essence it is an intellectual representation of the ANC in which the uniqueness of Mbeki's intellectual and political thought is located in the discursive realm. The tone, nuance and minor subtleties

speak to, not necessarily a hidden meaning but an attempt at dealing with broader issues and arguments that go beyond the script. The freedom of criticism that is a classical requirement of an intellectual is not the same when one is part of a political organisation; one has to ensure that they are toeing the party line. In essence one has to display the elements of a disciplined cadre of the liberation struggle.

The relationship between Mbeki's intellectual and political thought and the practical political objectives of the ANC was displayed in his statement to a special delegation of the United Nations Special Committee against apartheid in London 1964. Indeed the statement to the United Nations panel speaks to an attempt at not only promoting the struggle against apartheid internationally but to position the ANC as defending the principles of "the civilized human community" (Mbeki 1964). The statement that Mbeki gives to the UN delegation is undoubtedly polemical and emotional centred on the arrest and trial of his father Govan Mbeki and other major political figures in the Rivonia Trial. In the address Mbeki counteracts the apartheid regimes accusations that the accused are criminals by extensively highlighting the hypocrisy and brutality of the apartheid regime (Mbeki 1964). As well as highlighting those accused in the Rivonia Trial as loyal advocates of political freedom and a non-racial society (Mbeki 1964). In this regard Mbeki states in reference to his father Govan Mbeki:

It has been necessary that this introduction be made so as to explain the calibre of one of the men whom the South African Government seeks to hang today. I believe that the years of his political activity have derived their inspiration from his love for his people. During these years, as his older associates would testify, he has earned the respect of his people and his colleagues. Not a single one of the many South African courts has found him guilty of a petty or indictable crime. Yet today he stands accused, and his accusers, who only yesterday found glory in Nazi Germany, stand in full

twilight of their cynical and inhuman power. For decades he, together with the rest of the African people, has appealed to the white Governments of South Africa, not for the exaltation of the African people to a position of dominance over the white, but for equality among the peoples. The only reward he has earned, that we have all earned, is the brutal might of South African law which has sought to bend human reason and feeling to the barbarity of madmen. By the profane and demented reasoning of the Government, Dr. Percy Yutar, well-known for the murderers and thieves that he has sent to prison or to the gallows, is now prosecuting in the Rivonia Trial (Mbeki 1964).

The statement highlights the central crime that Govan Mbeki has been put on trial for is the continued pursuit of freedom for the majority of South Africans. Indeed the central argument put forward by Mbeki is that the Rivonia Trial is more than simply the individuals that are accused; it is a trial against political freedom and democracy. Also the discursive nature of Mbeki's writing also comes to the fore in examining this speech to the UN as he utilises the imagery of Nazi Germany to highlight the racialised nature of the brutality occurring in South Africa. The political objective of the ANC in response to the racialised nature of South Africa under apartheid is the creation of a non-racial democracy according to Mbeki.

It is important to remember that Mbeki is not simply an intellectual activist wedded to the ANC, part of the continuing dynamic of Mbeki's thought during the apartheid struggle is that it is an intellectual representation of the ANC. Mbeki's intellectual representation of the ANC is very much linked to his ideas regarding political leadership and the African student in the struggle. In particular the idea of building intellectual elites to act as loyal cadres of the liberation struggle is central when one begins to think about Mbeki's political career in the ANC. A central part of Mbeki's political biography is his eventual role as the public representative of the ANC as the head of the Department of Information and Publicity

(Gevisser 2007:291). Thus part of understanding Mbeki as a cadre of the ANC is recognising him as an intellectual cadre of the liberation movement.

Power of the Party

In essence Mbeki's intellectual representation of the party is very much linked to a political belief in the party as central to the defeat of apartheid all forms of colonialism. The focus on the party as central to political organising is very much part of his focus on political education as a means of establishing revolutionary consciousness. Thus a centralized party system with a strong ideological grounding with mass support is the key to creation of a new society is a current within Mbeki's political thought.

The importance of the political party in the delivering social and economic transformation is evident in Mbeki's thought at this time is evident in his comments on the March 30th Programme of Action, of the Arab Socialist Union led by President Nasser of Egypt following the failed war against Israel in 1968. The March 30th Programme of Action sought to revitalize the socialist party by increasing democratic participation by making all units of the organisation up for election (Jabulani 1968:57). In addition the agenda would include increased economic ties with the Soviet Union. Once again commenting under the pseudonym of J.J. Jabulani, Mbeki states:

By these measures the U.A.R is establishing its position as a leading force in the advance of the African continent towards true national independence and socialism. It cannot be doubted that both local and reactionary forces and the imperialists operating within the context of the global strategy of U.S Imperialism will constantly attempt to fight rearguard actions to try to destroy the popular gains of the people. It is however equally certain that so long as political power in the U.A.R rests in the hands of the

popular masses and the U.A.R allies itself with the socialist countries led by the U.S.S.R, local and international reaction will receive a resolute rebuff (1968:59).

Apart from certain conventional socialist polemical points concerning the importance of the struggle against imperialism and the need for supporting the Soviet Union, there is inherent within the argument that political strength is founded on the political party. Indeed strong political parties representing a cross section of the society guided by the principles of socialism, democracy and anti-imperialism are the means through which true national independence is realised. The question of national independence is not simply the capturing of the state but also has to include the increased strengthening of the political party through continued mobilisation of the public and internal democratisation. The endorsement of a strong political party as part of the struggle against imperialism is very much rooted in Marxist-Leninist notion of the party and what Fanon describes as the native intellectuals fascination with political organisation (Fanon 1967:85). It is also very much a part of Mbeki's incorporation of the politics of the SACP into his political thoughts.

Monopoly Capital and the African Revolution

A major part of Mbeki's political thought is located in his engagement with socialism, in particular as a member of the South African Communist Party (Gevisser 2007:148). Indeed Mbeki's writings in the African Communist provided the avenue for a deeper intellectual exploration of the African continent's experience with colonialism and the pitfalls of decolonisation on the African continent. Within the context of the politics of the SACP, one of the issues within Mbeki's intellectual and political thought is the question of monopoly capitalism and its relationship to true political independence. A central part of the SACP analysis of apartheid South Africa, was that the economic basis of apartheid was monopoly capitalism and the system of apartheid represented "colonialism of a special type" (McKinley

1997:33). In addition to this there was the call for a “national democratic revolution” (McKinley 1997:33), a multi-class liberation movement with the SACP as the vanguard. In the policy document formulated in the early 1960s, “The Road to South African Freedom” the SACP argued that the African Revolution did not simply reside in the achievement of formal political independence but that true equality could only be achieved by the eradication of capitalism (SACP 1962:15).

In an article written in 1967 in the African Communist entitled “Money Screams in Katanga” Mbeki writing under the pseudonym of J.J Jabulani explores the politics of decolonisation utilising the Congo as a case study in the challenges facing the African continent. There are two issues that are analysed in this piece namely the nature of political independence and the constancy of capital on the continent. Indeed following the political line of the SACP line of analysis the constancy of Belgian capital in the Congo and the dilemmas of political independence are inextricably linked. In the article Jabulani states:

In keeping with other peoples in Africa, the patriotic forces in Kinshasa have over the last seven years since the Congo was declared independent on June 30th, 1960, been concerned with the struggle to secure genuine independence for their country. Belgian imperialism never intended the Congo’s political independence to be more than nominal. Indeed, it could not be otherwise while huge Belgian and other financial, mining and industrial companies exercised the same influence after as before independence. The independence would be only formal; any claim that the state was popular and democratic would be purely demagogic and the people of Kinshasa would be condemned to continued poverty, illiteracy and all the other ills imposed by imperialism on the people of Africa as a whole (1967:41).

The pitfalls of the process of decolonisation on the African continent that took place during the period of the 1950s and 1960s were that it only achieved mastery over the political domain. According to Mbeki in this article the problem with the independence of the Congo, is that it is nominal and thus the progressive political forces led by Patrice Lumumba have now been defeated and replaced by the neo-colonialist leadership of General Mobutu. The chief culprit in the demise of the Congo is the constancy of Belgian capital and the monopolistic control over all the major industries. In particular one of the major points that Mbeki is making in this piece is this statement is the anti-democratic nature of capitalism and specifically the dangers of monopoly capitalism to the development of a popular democratic movement. Thus part of Mbeki's focus is to highlight the point that Belgian capital is not interested in a post-independence Congo that is defined by popular democracy.

Indeed the article reflects an attempt on the part of Mbeki to think through the problems that the National Democratic Revolution will encounter when it comes face to face with the power of monopoly capitalism. The choice of the Congo as a case study for intellectual investigation is particularly clear as it relates not only to a general pan-African political sentiment but is resonant with the state of capital in South Africa and the power of the mining industry. Indeed part of the investigation into the nature of the mining industry in the Congo is to reveal the expansive nature of South African capital. Soc. Gen Empire located in the Congo:

The Soc. Gen Empire also has control over the railway system, controlled and directed by the Compagnie de Chemin de fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga (B.C.K). This, despite the fact that the system was built with public funds and was meant to be maintained 'in the public interest'. The B.C.K., thus absorbed into the Soc. Gen, employed 13,579 Congolese workers in 1959. (It was this company that ceded

concessions to the *Miniere du Beceka*, a subsidiary of the *Soc. Gen.*, and the largest world producer of industrial diamonds. The company has a minority interest in the *Oppenheimer group*, is connected with *Forminiere* and the *British Company, Industrial Distributors Ltd*, in which *De Beers* consolidated of the *Oppenheimer group* has a 31.5 percent holding) (Jabulani 1967:51).

The point of the information is clear and that is to reveal the colossus nature of South African capital in the Southern African region. Inherent within the statement and the overall argument is that the problem facing the development of popular democracy in the Congo is also impeding the defeat of apartheid in South Africa. The problem in South Africa is not simply a question of capitalism in general but specifically the corrupting power of monopoly capitalism. In Mbeki's analysis monopoly capitalism is part of the colonial experience on the African continent but most specifically has a particular hold in the politics of Southern Africa. In alluding to the level of state resources made available for the development of a railway line presumably under the guise of the public interest but put under the sole ownership of *Soc. Gen.*, a broader point is being made in relation to the nature of monopoly capitalism to define the agenda of the state. Monopoly capitalism has unique characteristics on the African continent because it is able to demonstrate "unity achieved between state and property in prosecuting their imperialist objectives in the Congo" (Jabulani 1967:53).

As a result of identifying monopoly capitalism as a serious problem affecting post independence political stability and democracy in the Congo, Mbeki identifies the solution as the full exertion of the state over the industrial monopolies. It is within this context that Mbeki identifies General Mobutu's nationalisation of major sections of the mining industry in the Congo as not the actions of a revolutionary democrat but based on an attempt to curb the power of monopoly capitalism and centralise political power in the Congo (Jabulani 1967:

53). However part of the problem of fighting monopoly capitalism is not simply re-appropriating assets, thus Mobutu's actions do not solve the problem, the political solution resides in revolutionary socialism.

Until these class interests unite to fight a principled and consistent struggle, led by their own vanguard party, the reign of the trusts will continue; so also will the subjugation of the masses of the people of the Congo and of Africa to the dictates of foreign monopoly capitalism (Jabulani 1967:61).

The closing lines of the article speak to one of the central tenets of Marxist-Leninism, in particular Lenin's theory of the party and the idea of the vanguard. It seems within the context of Mbeki's discussion of monopoly capitalism that one of the tasks of the vanguard party is that of building a cadre of leaders that are ideologically grounded for the goal of transforming post-independence African societies. Inherent within Mbeki's argument is that the decolonisation of representation is only one step in ensuring that independence in Africa is more than simply nominal and requires leaders that are able to navigate and unravel the economic legacies of colonialism as a result of a thorough grounding in socialism.

Mbeki's intellectual focus on the struggle against imperialism and capitalism meant that serious questions needed to be posed in relation to the political predicament of post-independence African states. Indeed a central part of Mbeki's interrogation of the meaning of political independence on the African continent is centred on thinking through the future of the African revolution. Mbeki commenting on the 10th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) once again in the African Communist, only this time writing under the pseudonym of Molefe Mini seeks to identify the defining trend in African politics post-independence (Gevisser 2007:845). Mbeki identified two particular trends dominating post-independence African politics writing:

Independent Africa was therefore re-born in conditions in which she had the possibilities to choose between two different paths of development-the one, a capitalist, imperialist-oriented path, the other, a non-capitalist, socialist-oriented path of development. The realisation of these possibilities into one choice or the other naturally therefore depended on the relative strengths of the two tendencies within the national liberation movement-the one, anti-colonial and bourgeois-democratic and the other, anti-imperialist and revolutionary-democratic (Mini 1973:21).

For Mbeki the Manichaeic nature of the anti-colonial struggle meant that the problem of sustaining the struggle against imperialism in the post-independence period would fall victim to class interests. Indeed it is within this context that Mbeki argues that the unity of the anti-colonial struggle dissipates into class conflicts between differing paths of development namely a capitalist oriented path and a socialist oriented path of development. The direction taken by most independent African countries in terms of the development path rested on the competing strengths of the bourgeois-democratic and revolutionary-democratic within the national liberation movement. Indeed a major part of Mbeki's thought is that the post-independence African politics is dominated by the politics of development.

Indeed the focus on the differentiation of national liberation movements along competing lines of thought concerning development paths is located within an attempt to ensure the longevity of the African revolution. A central part of Mbeki's focus on the post-independence period rest on the idea that the struggle for decolonisation is the first stage in the struggle against European imperialism and colonial capitalism. The focus on prolonging the African revolution beyond the attainment of independence in Mbeki's thoughts is very much part of his view that independence does not necessarily mean the creation of a new society. Political

freedom while important was not enough to redefine the material structure of colonial societies.

Race and Class

Indeed a major part of the politics of the apartheid struggle is not only seeking to defeat the apartheid state but seeking to think through the issue of race and class in understanding apartheid South Africa. An important part of Mbeki's thought during the anti-apartheid struggle is this attempt at thinking through the political dynamics of race and class in South Africa. As Bogue notes race and class within the traditional paradigm of 'left' political theory are seen as discrete and conflicting notions (1997:95). For Mbeki race and class are essential to an understanding of South African society, but the primary tool of analysis is class.

Mbeki speaking to a conference in Ottawa Canada in 1978 as an official representative of the ANC sought to discuss the dilemmas to be faced in a New South Africa. The presentation reveals Mbeki's analysis of the importance of class and race in analysing apartheid South Africa.

The first category of social science that we want to use is that of class. To understand South Africa we must appreciate the fact and fix it firmly in our minds that here we are dealing with a class society. In South Africa, the capitalists, the bourgeoisie are the dominant class. Therefore the state, other forms of social organisation and official ideas are conditioned by this one fact of the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. It would therefore be true to say that in its essential features South Africa conforms to other societies where this class is dominant. Yet a cursory glance around the world would seem to suggest that such a statement is hardly of any use in helping us to understand

the seemingly unique reality of apartheid South Africa. More and perhaps better explanation is called for. We return therefore to the category, a class society, as well as a step back into history (Mbeki 1978:7).

For Mbeki the underlining component of South African society is class, thus the racialised nature of apartheid functions as part of the class interests of the bourgeoisie. While race and racism are integral factors in thinking about apartheid South Africa, the central analytical framework to understand the functionality of race in South Africa is through a class analysis according to Mbeki. The primacy of a class analysis is however in tension with other aspects of South Africa's political history of apartheid, it is the legacy of white settler colonialism that warrants Mbeki to move beyond class and take into consideration issues of race and history. The history of British colonialism and Boer settler nationalism come to the fore as essential elements in understanding the nature of apartheid South Africa in Mbeki's analysis.

While for Mbeki class is presented as a primary notion in the analysis of apartheid South Africa, this did not render the politics of African nationalism irrelevant. While the two notions were important Mbeki did not see the need to incorporate the class struggle as an essential platform of the ANC. This is particularly the case in relation to Mbeki's response to Haitian intellectual Robert Fatton's argument that the ANC should declare itself a socialist organisation. Mbeki states:

However the ANC is not a socialist party. It has never pretended to be one, has never said it was, and is not trying to be. It will not become one by decree or for the purpose of pleasing its "left" critics (1984:609).

In Mbeki's estimation the national democratic goals of the ANC that was defined by a broad based coalition of all classes and races opposed to the apartheid state was an appropriate

political strategy. Within the context of organisational politics the ANC and SACP were allies in the liberation struggle but Mbeki did not see the need to reorient the political platform of the ANC towards socialism. For Mbeki there was no need to fuse the politics of the ANC and the SACP into one organisational framework (Gevisser 2007:463). Mbeki was satisfied with the two political organizations working as close allies in the struggle to defeat the system of apartheid. As Gevisser (2007:463) notes Mbeki advised ANC President at the time Oliver Tambo against declaring the ANC a socialist organisation based on discussions being held with Joe Slovo. Within this context the issue of race and class in Mbeki's political thought are not mutually exclusive in the context of an analysis of South African society, but saw no need to integrate the political agenda of African nationalism and class struggle into an organizational setting.

Conclusion

Mbeki's political thought during the anti-apartheid years is a consequence of the struggle against apartheid. It is very much characterised by an intellectual yearning to contribute to the liberation struggle in a meaningful way as a cadre of the movement. It is this singleness of political purpose and commitment to the liberation struggle that is the defining characteristic of his thought in the anti-apartheid struggle.

At the heart of Mbeki's political thought during the liberation struggle is the need to create a new society. Political freedom is just one important step in the process of transforming the colonial characteristics of South African society. Indeed it is the political experience and ideas gained during the liberation struggle that sets the foundation for many of the ideas and programs that Mbeki sets forth in his attempt to build a New South Africa after the transition to democracy in 1994. It is also important to note that as a consequence of being a cadre of the ANC-led liberation movement Mbeki's political thought has a revolutionary Marxist

orientation. While Mbeki's thought during the anti-apartheid struggle displays this revolutionary Marxist orientation, it is important to recognise that there is also the element of African Nationalism that is a feature of his political ideas as a student activist coming out of the Eastern Cape.

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Chapter 4

Mbeki and the Politics of a New South Africa

Introduction

The release of Nelson Mandela and the launch of formal negotiations in 1990 led to a new phase in South African politics with the focus on political transition and the formation of a non-racial democracy (McKinley 1997:103). The process of decolonisation in countries such as Angola and Mozambique in the 1970s, Zimbabwe in 1980 and Namibia in 1990 have all witnessed the rise to power of anti-colonial liberation movements (Johnson 2003:200). These episodes have demonstrated that revolutionary strategies and theory are not appropriate for the purposes of managing the state machinery and promoting democracy (Johnson 2003: 201). As a consequence liberation movement often have to make the political shift from revolutionaries to liberal democratic political parties.

This chapter will be examining the intellectual shift that occurs in Mbeki's political thought as a result of the transition to democracy and achieving political power in the New South Africa. It will argue that the politics of South Africa's transition to democracy necessitated critical thinking on the part of Mbeki in relation to ensuring the political stability of the new democracy and appropriating the politics of the liberation struggle within the context of liberal democracy. It will do this by analysing Mbeki's speeches from 1994 to 1998, the period of the first non-racial government led by Nelson Mandela.

The first non-racial elections held in 1994, saw the election of the ANC and the formation of a government of national unity led by President Nelson Mandela (Marais 1998:88). Although popular protest and mobilisation on the part of the ANC and its allies was effective in destabilising the apartheid regime, this did not result in the seizure of state power (Seekings 1998:1). The National Party government negotiated the democratisation process, which went

underway after the unbanning of the ANC, SACP and PAC and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 (McKinley 1997:103). The negotiation process among the major political players and the National Party was not a smooth process and incidents of political violence during the period only heightened the tension between the negotiating parties (Taylor 1998:16). Although these incidents helped to make South Africa's transition to democracy unique, the transition is very much consistent what is described as an elite transition (Bond 2000:54).

Within the traditional theory of democratisation, transitions from authoritarian regimes to democracy are seen as the result of pacts and compromises between reformers in the ruling regime and moderates in the opposition (Webster & Adler 1995:76). Political concessions are often times a key outcome of the negotiation process. The result is that democracy that comes out of this process is often times conservative both economically and socially (Webster & Adler 1995:76). This is particularly the case in relation to South Africa's transition to democracy.

The political settlement that resulted in the end of apartheid required that the ANC compromise on some of its longstanding policies, especially in relation to issues affecting the economy (Marais 1998:89). The political settlement required that the ANC reverse its position on the issue of economic nationalisation, maintain the independence of the Reserve Bank as well as keeping intact the existing bureaucratic structure (Padayachee & Michie 1997: 10). Padayachee and Habib (2000:246) argue that the political compromises that form the foundation of the democratic transition on the part of the ANC were based on particular interpretations of economic and political power locally and internationally. Prominence was placed in the power of international capital and the local investor community as potential

catalysts of instability for the new political dispensation. It is in this context the ANC had to begin thinking about political transformation within the framework of liberal democracy.

In addition to the challenge of maintaining economic stability there was the broader challenge of nation building. The task of bringing together a nation divided by the structural features of apartheid resulted in a political commitment to the goal of national reconciliation. In this respect the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was enshrined in the interim constitution (Wilson 2001:8). The politics of national reconciliation became a key theme of South Africa's democratic transition, seen as an important part of the process of building a new South Africa by the political directorate (Mangu 2003:106). This is the broad political context that defines the nature of Mbeki's political thought in the immediate post-apartheid period.

Towards A New Politics in South Africa

The movement from being a liberation movement focused on the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid government to a government in waiting meant a major shift in the focus and politics of the ANC. One of the fundamental issues that arose in Mbeki's thought during the early 1990s as a member of the state apparatus is the need to transform the practice of politics in South Africa. The politics of popular mobilisation, protest, political violence and armed struggle that had characterized the liberation struggle had to make way for conventional democratic politics. As Johnson argues a key feature of post-colonial politics is that revolutionary liberation parties often find themselves advocating transformation through liberal democracy (2003:201). As McKinley argues as a result of the negotiated settlement the ANC has become one of the primary advocates of liberal democracy on the continent (2000:2). Mbeki's thoughts on the need for politics to be practiced within a liberal democratic

framework forms part of a tradition of anti-colonial liberation movements seeking to refashion themselves.

Mbeki at the University of Natal in 1996 spoke of the need to change the practice of politics in South Africa stating:

I believe that we need to transformation around the question of the practice of politics. Over time, the situation arose in this province that the use of force became established as an instrument in the conduct of politics under any and all circumstances; perpetuating the assumption that one of the goals of the practice of politics was for one political formation to achieve permanent domination over the other and over people (1996:45).

It is important to recognise that the system of apartheid was a “racialised authoritarian order” and central to this political order was the maintenance of political domination by force and terror (Taylor 1998:15). As a consequence of apartheid building a non-racial democratic South Africa required building a culture of democracy and discouraging the use of political violence. In Mbeki’s estimation the only means of ensuring political stability in post-Apartheid South Africa was through the consolidation of democracy.

Mbeki reflecting on the transition process in one of his early speeches as Deputy President of South Africa draws on the experience of the apartheid struggle as it relates to making the shift from being a liberation movement to being a government in waiting. In this regard Mbeki notes:

The point should however be made that, fundamentally, the decision by the belligerents to negotiate arose from the fact that after a protracted conflict, these belligerents arrived at a situation of what could be described as an armed equilibrium.

Neither side had defeated the other. The corollary of this, of course, is that both sides continued to dispose of sufficient strength to inflict casualties on each other, to use the language of military conflict. Equally important, each side understood clearly that because the other had these possibilities, continuation of the conflict meant that whoever sought to assume a militant posture, summarised in the slogan 'The Struggle Continues', would have to accept that they too would be severely bled and weakened, to the point where any victory they secured might very well result in them as victors having to preside over a wasteland (1995:54).

In Mbeki's analysis the prospect of a negotiated solution to the problem of apartheid meant a tension between the organisational commitment of the ANC to the freedom of all South Africans and its commitment to the idea of the armed struggle. One of the main points that Mbeki is arguing is that the armed struggle had managed to achieve an 'armed equilibrium' in which the apartheid state was no longer viable, but it also meant that new solutions had to be imagined other than armed conflict in order to usher in a new political dispensation in South Africa. For Mbeki the change in thinking that paved the way for a negotiated solution to apartheid is needed in order to build the future of South Africa.

Mbeki reflecting on the nature of the compromise reached in establishment of democracy in South Africa states:

One of these was that it was critically important that each of the stakeholders in our society should have the sovereign possibility and the space to identify, elaborate and propagate its interests-to place these within the complex of issues for which a regime of mutually beneficial coexistence has to be evolved.

The second of these conclusions, which derives from the first, was that all these stakeholders must accept that compromise is an inherent part of the process at arriving at what we have described as a regime of mutually beneficial co-existence of the different interests that would be put on the agenda by the different players. To arrive at such a regime, it was however also necessary that the players agree on what colloquially could be described as 'the rules of the game'. Here we refer to the elaboration of a consensus on a set of values which then constituted the framework within which we sought to accommodate the identified and conflicting interests (1995:55).

In Mbeki's analysis the most important part of the process of moving South Africa towards a democratic future was to ensure that all the major stakeholders felt accommodated in the new political dispensation. The idea that South Africa's transition to democracy was the result of elite compromise by the major political players seems to be confirmed here by Mbeki. It is important to note that Mbeki was a key player in South Africa's transition to democracy and his analysis of the transition is very much part of legitimising the new political conjuncture. The advocacy of liberal democracy is a marked shift from the more revolutionary goals of the liberation struggle.

In addition to the advocacy of democracy on the part of Mbeki, there is strong agreement with the need for South Africa's democracy to be defined by the broad ideals of non-racialism and non-sexism. Indeed a major part of moving towards a new kind of politics in South Africa is a commitment to the ideals of an all inclusive nation. Mbeki notes:

These are the challenges that we should confront together, in confirmation of the correctness of the decision we took in the negotiation process that, for the first five years of the transition, we must govern the country together. For we all did, in our

various ways and at different paces, decide that we should turn our backs on racism and racial domination.

We assume it to be true that whatever might separate us as different parties, our loyalty to our country's Constitution binds us to the common vision of the creation of a non-racial and non-sexist democracy (1994:88).

Indeed part of the shift in Mbeki's thought that is a result of moving from being a party activist to a leader of the governing elite in the early years of democracy in South Africa is that there is a focus on building the pillars of a modern-nation state. The challenge of building a new South Africa based on the rule of law and basic rights and freedoms means that there needs to be a commitment to a common vision, that of a non-racial and non-sexist South African nation.

In Mbeki's analysis the politics of a new South Africa has to be founded on ensuring the strength of the institutional structure of democracy and the constitution. Indeed while the institution of democracy provides for political pluralism, the need for a common vision for the country based on the values of non-racialism and non-sexism is strongly asserted by Mbeki as a means of uniting a society fresh from the divisions of apartheid.

Reconciliation and Transformation: A Dialectical Relationship

The need to create a united vision for the new South Africa was a central part of the political platform of the ANC as it entered the 1994 elections under the slogan "A Better Life for All" (Marais 1998:94). The need to create a unified and cohesive society was a critical component of the transition to a non-racial democracy as a means of ensuring political stability (Marais 1998:93). Reconciliation was seen as an important component of bridging a society divided on racial lines under the system of apartheid and was a central part of the political agenda of

Nelson Mandela during his tenure as State President of South Africa. While the importance of reconciliation as a part of the process of building post-apartheid South Africa was never denied by Thabo Mbeki, this was coupled with the need to fundamentally transform South African society.

In Mbeki's assessment post-apartheid South African society had to deal with the issue of reconciliation and transformation as two sides of the same coin. Mbeki in a speech entitled "Breaking with the Past" states the following:

Both strategically and tactically, perhaps one of the biggest challenges we face in the struggle to build a better South Africa is the challenge of understanding and managing the dialectical relationship between reconciliation and transformation. I believe that, in this regard, the first thing to understand is that these concepts belong together. They are interdependent and impact upon each other. None is capable of realisation unless it is accompanied by the other (1996:42).

This perspective was to become a central part of Mbeki's conception of the challenge facing post-apartheid South Africa during his tenure as Deputy President of South Africa. The immediate post-apartheid years revealed the enormous challenge of bridging the racial divide; while political freedom had been achieved, the wider society was still locked in the workings of apartheid society. Indeed the urgent need for transformation by Mbeki is in many ways tempered by the political importance of reconciliation to the stability of the new democracy, thus Mbeki's determination that reconciliation and transformation are dialectical. In essence part of the political objective of the immediate post apartheid years was to manage the fears of the white minority and the demands for change on the part of the black majority (Marais 1998:245). It is the context of managing the political transition that the desire for

socio-economic transformation of South African society is twinned with the political imperative of reconciliation.

The focus on transformation as part of the process of reconciliation is based on Mbeki's analysis of post-apartheid South African society as comprising "Two Nations". Mbeki addressing parliament on the issue of nation building and reconciliation argues that South Africa as a country comprises two nations organised along the lines of race as a consequence of apartheid (1998:71). Mbeki in analysing the challenges of nation-building to post-apartheid society notes:

We therefore make bold to say that South Africa is a country of two nations. One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographical dispersal. It has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure...The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the worst affected being women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general and the disabled. This nation lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure (1998:72).

For Mbeki the imperative of transformation was a critical component of maintaining the political stability of a free South Africa. While reconciliation was an important step in unifying warring factions, the most pressing need was to deal with the material deprivation of the black majority. The urgent need to deal with the material deprivation of the black majority was seen as critical to avoiding major social unrest in the country. Mbeki's use of Langston Hughes poem focusing on the agony of a dream deferred to describe the need for transformation represents his political judgement of the mood of the people as it relates to the expectations of a free South Africa. For Mbeki the joy that came with freedom from apartheid

was coupled with expectations and hope from the black majority of socio-economic improvement. The failure to deliver on the promise of freedom to the people meant a serious threat of explosion on the streets in Mbeki's political estimation.

In Mbeki's estimation central to the transformation of South African society is deracialisation. The most important component in the maintenance of peace and stability in building the new South Africa is to tap into the energies of the black majority for Mbeki. At a forum in Vienna to mark the first year of non-racial democracy in South Africa Mbeki reflects on the need for deracialisation as a critical component of the transformation of South African society stating:

Transformation requires that all the major constituencies in our country should join hands in conditions of peace and stability to bring about the changes, especially the deracialisation of our society, which are the necessary prerequisites for true and permanent peace and stability. That investment in transformation itself creates the conditions for the true and permanent reconciliation we will attain when, by ceasing to define ourselves in politics and economics in terms of race, colour and ethnicity, we finally make a break with a past of three centuries of colonialism and apartheid when race and colour were a fundamental, all-encompassing condition of existence (1995:64).

For Mbeki transformation is centrally defined as the deracialisation of society, in particular in his analysis of the immediate post-apartheid years. Indeed Mbeki's analysis of the challenge facing transformation in the immediate post-apartheid years is very much located in the politics of African Nationalism. While there is a critical intersection between race and class in thinking through the legacy of apartheid South Africa, the most important issue for Mbeki in understanding the challenge of building the new South Africa is not the efficacy of class

but race. It is a critical departure for Mbeki from his thoughts in the 1970s that tended to focus centrally on class but never denied the significance of race.

Indeed the relationship between race and class was a very important part of Mbeki's thoughts during the anti-apartheid struggle. The need to twin the concepts of race and class in analysing apartheid South Africa by Mbeki was very much a part of his ideological impulse towards African Nationalism and Socialism. The movement towards race represents a critical departure from Mbeki's earlier affiliation with the left.

The movement from class to race as critical to the goal of building the new South Africa is very much a part of Mbeki's thoughts on the question of the cultural identity of post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed a major part of Mbeki's thought during the immediate post-apartheid years as Deputy President of South Africa is thinking through the question of nation building. In essence there is a lot of focus by Mbeki on defining the nationalist agenda of the new South African through the cultural politics of anti-colonial nationalism.

The Politics of Cultural Identity: The African Renaissance

The need to ensure that the new South Africa was racially inclusive meant that any form of African nationalism had to be located within the spirit of reconciliation. The language of nationalist triumphalism had to make way for the positing of a South African identity that was not strictly racial but pivoted on the interests of the black majority (Mangu 2003:106). Indeed beyond the politics of reconciliation and transformation that had become to define the agenda of the immediate post-apartheid years was a political need to engage the public in a broad idea of the way forward as a means of solidifying support and solidarity with the new political dispensation. Mbeki's "I am an African" speech delivered at the formal adoption of

the constitution forms part of his own attempt at thinking through the need to proclaim an African identity without strict definitions of racial exclusivity.

Mbeki's in his "I am an African speech" defines the contours of an African identity for South Africa at the dawn of the 21st Century stating:

The Constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins. It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern (1996:32).

Indeed Mbeki shifts the notion of an African identity as defined by race towards a more inclusive notion of African identity that is based on a psychic and political commitment towards the wellbeing of the continent. While Mbeki's definition of an African identity is not burdened by the need to define strict racial exclusivity, it is grounded in the general goals of the anti-colonial political tradition. Thus there is a focus on the importance of memorialising Africa's history of struggle against colonialism and apartheid and the commitment towards the renewal of the continent.

It is important to remember that older variants of African nationalism within the Black South African intellectual tradition such as Lembede's Africanism stressed the importance of the cultural affirmation of the African population within the context of the struggle against apartheid. Anton Lembede's call for a reinvigoration of the "African Spirit" displayed clearly defined racial lines, focusing on the black majority (Gerhart 1978:65). In particular Mbeki's call for political and cultural renewal on the continent is in keeping with the ideas of ANC

leader Pixley Seme's speech delivered to Columbia University in 1906 entitled 'The Regeneration of Africa' (Dunton 2003:555). It is this spirit of political renewal and the need for political transformation that led to Seme's involvement in the founding of the ANC (Dunton 2003:555). Mbeki continues this tradition by opening up the definition of an African within the politics of reconciliation and transformation that defines the agenda of the immediate post-apartheid period.

Mbeki's African Renaissance follows the legacy of pan-Africanism by political leaders such as the likes of Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Sekou Toure and Julius Nyerere. These leaders presented political visions of the nation that was connected to the ideals of pan-Africanism (Falola 2001:101). As Falola notes the achievement of political power by anti-colonial movements across the continent led to the creation of political visions of the nation and the continent by the leadership, which sought to utilise the ideals of anti-colonial nationalism for the purposes of nation-building (2001:106). As Falola argues the reason for this stemmed from the fact that African nationalism had to move from the task of anti-colonialism to nation building (2001:110). In this respect Mbeki's African Renaissance is very much linked to this attempt at nation building in South Africa and the African continent.

In Mbeki's thought there is an appropriation of the content of African nationalism for the purpose of governing a black majority and a significant white minority, within the context of a history of oppression based on ideas about race. In particular Mbeki's espousal of the African Renaissance is centrally focused on the political and social renewal of the continent, and it is an important part of his political thought in the post-apartheid years. For Mbeki the African Renaissance is focused on inspiring all citizens of the continent to take part in building a better society.

In discussing the need for an African Renaissance Mbeki notes:

The call for Africa's renewal, for an African renaissance, is a call to rebellion. We must rebel against the tyrants and the dictators, those who seek to corrupt our societies and steal the wealth that belongs to the people. We must rebel against the ordinary criminals who murder, rape and rob, and conduct war against poverty, ignorance and the backwardness of the children of Africa.

Surely, there must be politicians and business people, youth and women activists, trade unionists, religious leaders, artists and professionals from Cape to Cairo, from Madagascar to Cape Verde, who are sufficiently enraged by Africa's condition in the world to join the mass crusade for Africa's renewal (1998:300).

For Mbeki the African Renaissance is a call to all politically aware and responsible citizens of the continent to engage in the renewal of the continent. It is pan-African in orientation and seeks to use the symbolic end of apartheid South Africa, representing the last bastion of colonialism on the continent as a springboard for a broader political renewal. In Mbeki's estimation the end of apartheid represented not only the freedom for all South African but it posed a more specific question in relation to the politics of the anti-colonial struggle.

In essence the call for an African Renaissance forms part of a process on the part of Mbeki of thinking through the need to restructure the political agenda of the anti-colonial struggle for the 21st Century. For Mbeki the answer is improving the experience of political modernity on the African continent. Indeed the African Renaissance seeks to promote democratic transformation, educational and artistic achievement as part of a political program to defeat underdevelopment on the continent.

The Economy and Development

Mbeki's call for an African Renaissance is an indication that on his part one of the chief challenges facing the continent in the new millennium is the issue of development. Indeed one of the major political issues to surface in the immediate post-apartheid era has been the issue of the economy. Indeed part of the challenge for the new ANC government was to reconcile their ideas born out of the liberation struggle with the practical challenges of administering a modern state. Hein Marais aptly describes the ANC's initial political approach to the issue of the economy stating:

The ANC was no different from other national liberation movements in anticipating a boundless vista of possibilities once it seized power...Most of them envisaged transformation as a two stage project: state power followed by far reaching social and economic transformation, with the state serving as the prime lever for the latter. Embedded in the two stage-theory, however, was a great deal of naivety-for it assumed that political victory unlocked a rich realm of national sovereignty and autonomy from where inevitable consolidations and advances would be launched (Marais 1998:160).

The economy has been one of the most important issues for the ANC in their attempt to build the new South Africa, in particular because the economy holds the key to delivering on the ANC's promise of societal transformation. The onset of neo-liberal globalisation meant that any form of state involvement in the economy would be met by an immediate backlash by international and local capital. Mbeki's thoughts on the economy are in many ways an intellectual representation of the ANC, initially touting the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as the ANC's broad based approach to the issue of the economy and

development in the immediate post-apartheid before the layout of a much more specific neo-liberal economic agenda.

The RDP became the precursor to the eventual full scale layout of a much more orthodox free market economic policy in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) (Marais 1998:161). Mbeki's thoughts on the economy reflect two important issues in analysing his political thought; the first is that he is functions as an intellectual representative of the ANC and also he is practicing politician it represents a political judgement of the power of local and international capital. As Habib and Padayachee note the transition in ANC policies on the economic front reflected a respect for the international economic order and in particular the principles of the Washington consensus (2000:246).

Mbeki in speaking about the political agenda of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) notes:

The RDP identifies growth with development as the South African growth path. That is, economic path. That is, economic growth cannot be separated from the need to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. Development resources should be allocated in ways that optimise economic growth aspects. For instance, programmes to provide new infrastructure should also foster local production, employment, innovation and regional trade and should aim to reduce spatial inefficiencies. Economic expansion is a result of and a means to share wealth more evenly amongst our people. High growth will permit us to achieve much greater equity in incomes and raise living standards for all (1995:85).

The RDP set out as part of its socio-economic agenda to focus on building the economy while at the same time dealing with the needs of the poor and underprivileged. The RDP was a

broad strategy that sought to focus on all sectors of society, for Mbeki there were six critical areas of the program. These areas were creating employment, investing in the poor, investment in social and economic infrastructure, crime prevention, improving service delivery and providing welfare safety nets (Mbeki 1995:85).

The wide cross section of issues to be dealt with under the RDP represents a key philosophical point about the ANC's and indeed Mbeki's position on the political economy of the new South Africa, which is the attempt to build a developmental state within the configuration of neo-liberal capitalism. The eventual implementation of the GEAR policy in 1996 signified the dominance of the neo-liberal international financial system on developing economies.

Indeed a major part of Mbeki's political thought on the question of the economy is seeking to find a balance between development and the free market especially within the context of the international economic system. Mbeki speaking on the issue of the global economic system on the challenge of development notes:

...the very fact of the process of globalisation, in all its forms, means that our success as developing countries in terms of the upliftment of our peoples cannot be achieved in conditions of autarky or self-contained development within our national boundaries or regions. It cannot be achieved through opting out of the world economy and therefore extricating ourselves from the process of globalisation...It is clear that we, as the developing world, cannot make that intervention by autonomously affecting capital or trade flows or unilaterally altering any of the variables which make up the totality of the world economy (1998:275).

The need to ensure social and economic development is a central part of Mbeki's thoughts on the economy and forms part of his critique of the international economic system and the dominant neo-liberal paradigm. A major part of Mbeki's political thought is thinking through the challenge of building an economy within the context of the neo-liberal international economic system and alleviating the needs of the poor and underprivileged.

Indeed for Mbeki finding a place for a developmental state within the context of the dominant neo-liberal paradigm is very much laced with complexity. As a major political actor in the government as Deputy President of the state, finding a space for a development agenda within the dominant neo-liberal paradigm resides in a political judgement of the available political options. The answer to this challenge on the part of Mbeki comes in his presidency as he begins to call on a reform of the international economic system and for an improvement in South-South cooperation. Mbeki's thoughts in the immediate post-apartheid years as Deputy President provides the critical foundation upon which he begins to develop a perspective on the issue of development for the continent in the new millennium.

Conclusion

For Mbeki the transition from apartheid to a free South Africa required a major shift in his political thought. The shift from being a professional revolutionary engaged in the concrete struggle against apartheid to a major leader in the new South Africa meant a stern focus on some of the issues that would make in his estimation the new political dispensation in South Africa a 'workable dream'. It is this attempt at thinking through the politics of the new South Africa that Mbeki breaks new ground in the African nationalist tradition. The declaration of an African Renaissance is a particular engagement with pan-Africanism, which seeks to focus on building the African continent within the context of the 21st century. The two main areas of emphasis are modernising and democratising the continent and appropriating the cultural

and historical legacies of the continent. It is this attempt to re-energise pan-Africanism within the framework of the African Renaissance that becomes an important part of Mbeki's presidency.

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Chapter 5

The New African Agenda: Mbeki's Presidency

Introduction

This chapter will be examining Mbeki's political thought during his tenure as President of South Africa. In particular it will be seeking to answer the question of how Mbeki articulates a political vision for South Africa and the African continent within the anti-colonial intellectual and political tradition. It will argue that central to Mbeki's political thought during this period is a significant engagement with pan-Africanism, with a focus on seeking to actualise and define a new progressive African Agenda within the context of the new millennium (Landsberg 2007:195). Central to this new African Agenda is the need to create the new modern African state equipped for the pressures of the 21st Century political economy realising the goals of the African Renaissance. There are two aspects to Mbeki's new African agenda, the first is the transformation of South African society and the second is the political and economic renewal of the African continent.

The second elections in South Africa's democracy took place in June 1999, with Thabo Mbeki as leader of the ANC (Lodge 2002:247). The results showed the ANC receiving a clear majority in the poll, which resulted in Thabo Mbeki assuming the post of State President of the Republic of South Africa (Gumede 2005:159). The second elections in South Africa's democracy signified an important trait in South Africa's post-apartheid political history, entrenching the ANC as the main political power and liberal democracy as an essential feature of South African politics (Seekings 2007:5). The rise to power of Thabo Mbeki also signified an era of post-Mandela politics in South Africa, a movement from the politics of the transition towards the task of nation building (Mangu 2003:108). While Mandela displayed all the tendencies of a charismatic leader, Mbeki's political qualities lay in

his intellect and ability to manage the state machinery particularly displayed during his tenure as Deputy President of South Africa (Lodge 2002:247).

The Intellectual as Political Leader

While it is often argued that Mbeki demonstrates all the political qualities of a technocratic leader, there is a clear political drive and vision notably demonstrated during his tenure as deputy President of South Africa (Gumede 2007:153). Mbeki's approach to political leadership is vanguardist; in particular it values education and intellectual inquiry as key attributes of leadership (Seekings 2007:5). For Mbeki as a student leader and eventually as a trained cadre of the liberation movement trained in the revolutionary Marxist tradition, there is a value placed on intellectual inquiry and engagement as a key attribute of political leadership. As a consequence political ideas and vision are posed as more important than political charisma as attributes of political leadership. Indeed Mbeki's declaration of an African Renaissance and his pronouncements on South African society during his tenure as Deputy President of South Africa demonstrated intellectual rigour and his intellectual location within the politics of the anti-colonial struggle.

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education ran an editorial entitled "The Intellectual Who Will Succeed Nelson Mandela" in 1998. In analysing Thabo Mbeki as a political leader for the new South Africa the journal states:

The man who will succeed Mandela is a consummate intellectual. He delights in quoting Pliny and Yeats. But clearly he lacks the charisma of Mandela and the skills to negotiate the tough road of South African politics (1998:21).

In examining Mbeki's political thought it is clear that there is the constant attempt to create a balance between the party and his own individual thoughts on issues. The task of being an

intellectual representative of the ANC has been a constant feature of Mbeki's political thought. Assuming the Presidency of the ANC and the country created a new dynamic in Mbeki's intellectual and political life, that of balancing his intellectual orientation with the role of being leader of the nation. Mbeki's political leadership has been the source of criticism from a variety of sources (Gumede, 2005:15; Pottinger 2008:5). One of the issues that has been raised concerning Mbeki's political leadership is that there is the over emphasis on being intellectual (Roberts 2007:23). Mbeki's intellectual qualities have helped him as the leader of a growing and complex society but it has also been the source of major criticism. This is particularly the case in relation to his intellectualisation over the issue of HIV/AIDs.

The HIV/AIDs epidemic is one of the major public health issues in South African society. According to an HIV survey conducted in 2005, over 5 million South Africans were living with the disease (Ndinga-Muvumba & Mottiar 2007:177). Mbeki as a member of the government was a key player in the development of the South African government's response to the HIV/AIDs crisis (Lodge 2002:256). The main source of criticism of Mbeki's handling of the HIV/AIDs crisis has been his over intellectualisation of a major public health issue.

Mbeki's response to the epidemic has been defined by his engagement in esoteric debates concerning the link between HIV and AIDs or the toxicity level of Anti-Retrovirals (Lodge 2002:256; Gevisser 2007:727). These kinds of public intellectual engagements are appropriate for members of the scientific and medical community, but as the leader of a nation with a major public health issue such public intellectual engagements will pose political problems. While writers such as Mark Gevisser have tried to contextualize Mbeki's response to the issue or in the case of Ronald Suresh-Roberts defend Mbeki's approach to the issue, it is evident that Mbeki's approach to political leadership is defined by his identity as an intellectual. While Mbeki's intellectual approach has been a source of public outcry in

relation to the issue of HIV/AIDs, his intellectual energies have been focused on seeking to develop the new South Africa and articulate a new political agenda for the African continent.

The Challenge of Transformation

Mangcu argues that the politics of reconciliation that defined the immediate post-apartheid period and Nelson Mandela's presidency had to give way to the task of transforming the social and economic bases of South African society (2003:108). The need for political transformation of South African society was a central concern of the new ANC leadership led by Mbeki, a key attribute of transformation was the de-racialisation of South African society (Mangcu 2003:109). While the Mandela era was critical in the formation of the new South Africa, the key socio-economic indicators suggested that South African society was still one of the most unequal societies in the world especially in relation to income disparities (Mare 2003:41). As Gerhard Mare notes the process of ensuring the stability of post-apartheid South African society through the language of reconciliation had to meet the challenge of legitimizing the state, by implementing social and economic policies that affected the ordinary lives of the majority (2003:41). Consequently as a result of the political economy of the transition, the political imperative for transformation as a means of legitimizing the state had to take place within a neo-liberal terrain (Mare 2003:37).

Adam Habib and Vishnu Padayachee note that South Africa's democratic transition occurred within the context of neo-liberal globalisation (2000:251). The international economic order defined by the principles of the Washington Consensus led to a shift in the political approach to issues relating to the economy on the part of the ANC (Habib & Padayachee 2000:251). The dominance of the Bretton Woods financial institutions and the increasingly interconnected global financial system posed a political challenge for the ANC seeking to formulate policies aimed at social and economic transformation of South African society

(Marais 1998:127). As a consequence any form of socio-economic reform on the part of the ANC had to take place within the context of the market economy (Marais 1998:127).

The political debates surrounding the challenge of transformation within post-apartheid South Africa was very much derived from an analysis of apartheid society. For those analysts that defined apartheid as defined by class then the primary issue for transformation is the issue of reforming capitalism (Mare 2003:32). There were also other streams of thought that sought to theorise the relationship between race and class in a variety of different ways in understanding the nature of apartheid society. Gerhard Mare highlights the dynamic that defined the debate about transformation in South Africa:

These debates are central to the task of understanding the dynamics of the transition and the restructuring of the state it entailed. They marked the points of active contestation over the shaping of the new state. For, if the dominant perception during the struggle against apartheid was that the state was essentially racially exclusive and only secondarily, economically exploitative, then the restructuring aimed to make the new state reflect the racialised demographics of South African society. It therefore would enable a new aspirant and racialised bourgeoisie to emerge as the prime beneficiaries of new state policy, in odd echo of the previously powerful that benefited from the struggle for volkskapitalisme 60 years earlier (2003:33).

For Mbeki the issue of race and class are central to an understanding of South African society during apartheid, this was particularly made clear in his estimation that South African society comprised “Two Nations” during his tenure as Deputy President of South Africa (Mbeki 1998:68). As a consequence there are two essential features of Mbeki’s analysis of the requirements for transformation in South Africa. The first is the need to eradicate racism and

the racialisation of South African society. The second is to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment, which afflicts the black majority.

Mbeki speaking at a forum against racism makes the following point:

Once again, no professional qualification is required to understand that the divide between the North and the South, between the developed and developing worlds, also coincides with the divide between white and black, broadly defined. These are obvious facts that, in truth, should require no debate. In today's world, in which both the left and the right in politics loudly proclaim their commitment to social justice, there should also be no debate about the urgent need for each and all countries consciously to focus on the elimination of the racial disparities that are so evident everywhere.

The critical importance of this matter should be particularly clear to those who not only recognise the objective reality of the process of globalisation, but also celebrate this process as a force for human emancipation from poverty and underdevelopment. Put starkly, where this process of globalisation has had negative consequences, its worst victims within countries and universally have been those who are not white. For these countless black people, this has not only meant that the development gap has grown ever wider (2001:133).

The concept of race and class are seen as part of the same political dynamic in Mbeki's estimation. The question of poverty in the world is not simply the result of the inability of the market to provide for the needs of all in society. The racialisation of poverty is due to the prevalence of racism and its key political projects colonialism and imperialism. Thus as a result part of the challenge of dealing with underdevelopment is the need to defeat all forms

of racism. This is a key feature of Mbeki's analysis of the dilemma facing the issue of transformation in South Africa society. For Mbeki the issue of race and poverty are inextricably linked in the context of South African society.

The need to create a new South Africa had to deal with the consequence of an apartheid system that ingrained racial identities as paramount and arranged society accordingly on the basis of race (MacDonald 2006:92). In Mbeki's analysis race matters in South Africa and it is a vital component of the process of transformation in society. Mbeki speaking on the issue of race in relation to the challenge of building the new South Africa notes:

I refer, in particular, to the charge that far too often we use the so-called 'race card'; that what we say and do leads to feelings of marginalisation and disempowerment among the Afrikaners; that discussion of racism leads to mutual accusations, more racism and new tensions; and that the real issue that divides our country is poverty, which can only be addressed through higher rates of economic growth.

The burden of these statements is that we should not discuss racism because to discuss racism is both racist and foments racism. Indeed one of the speakers said that calls for reconciliation have been replaced by debate on racism... We must then go on to say that the racial socio-economic legacy we inherited from our apartheid past is no longer a distinguishing feature of our society. We would then proceed to say that, in reality, South Africa is a society of equals, regardless of race, colour, gender or geographic location (2001:116).

Indeed part of Mbeki's analysis of the race question is that diffusing and depoliticizing race is not a solution to the problem of reconciliation and nation building in South Africa. The notion that the problem of race and racism will cease to exist by collectively ignoring the

issue is not feasible for the prospects of building a new society in Mbeki's estimation. For Mbeki the struggle against apartheid was a struggle against institutionalized racism and thus the chief challenge of the new South Africa is de-racialisation.

Mbeki's analysis of race and racism in the new South Africa seems to form part of a broad critique of the idea of the Rainbow Nation, the symbolic metaphor of a South African society free of the prejudices of race (Mangu 2003:105). In Mbeki's thought there is the notion that there is a dialectical relationship between reconciliation and transformation. As a consequence of this idea of the dialectical relationship between reconciliation and transformation, there is no hesitancy towards dealing with issues of race and racism in a bold and direct manner. For Mbeki the politicization of race, the placing of race and racism as a central issue in the national discourse, is a necessary part of the process of transforming South Africa into a non-racial society.

The issue of race and racism is not simply a human rights issue in Mbeki's intellectual and political thought, the racialization of South African society due to apartheid led to his declaration during the 1990s that South Africa comprised 'Two Nations', one white and wealthy and the other black and suffering from poverty (1998:68). For Mbeki the political goal of fulfilling the ANC's mandate to create a "Better life for all" is to eliminate poverty and underdevelopment (Marais 1998:125). In order to deal with the issue of racial inequality in South Africa, in Mbeki's estimation one has to tackle the issue of poverty and underdevelopment.

Seekings & Natrass note that racial inequality has been a continuing feature of post-apartheid South Africa since 1994 (2001:45). Seekings & Natrass highlight that in 1994 the average income of the black population was one tenth of the white population (2001:46). Seekings & Natrass argue that while racial inequality is severe in South African society,

Mbeki's simple reduction of inequality to race: black equals poor and white equals rich is not an accurate picture (2001:46). South African post-apartheid society cannot be simply reduced to rich and poor, the final decades of apartheid saw the upward mobility for black workers leading to the occurrence of rising levels of intra-racial inequality among the black community (Seekings & Natrass 2001:46). They conclude that in post-apartheid South African society inequality is driven by two income gaps, "between an increasingly multiracial upper class and everyone else; and between a middle class of mostly urban, industrial, or white collar workers and a marginalized class of black unemployed and rural poor" (Seekings & Natrass 2001: 47).

The analysis of the dynamics of racial inequality in post-apartheid South African society by Seekings & Natrass (2001) helps to highlight the fact that the relationship between race and poverty in Mbeki's political thought is not particularly straightforward. By focusing on the issue of poverty, in Mbeki's thoughts on transformation, the key challenge is not simply to tackle the issue of a racial inequality in South African society in generalised terms but to target the black poor and unemployed. Indeed the issue of race and racial inequality is a complex issue in post-Apartheid South Africa Mbeki writing on the issue of Black Economic Empowerment addresses the issue of poverty in South Africa in an issue of the ANC Today:

We have to achieve high and sustained rates of economic growth. We have to conduct a sustained and successful offensive against the widespread and endemic poverty in our country. We must make visible progress in reducing the socio-economic disparities that continue to scar and characterise our society...the struggle for black economic empowerment, contrary to its being the exclusive and self serving concern of a black elite, is a struggle for the achievement of the integrated objectives of economic growth, poverty eradication, and the building of an egalitarian society.

It must therefore address such matters as overcoming the scourge of unemployment and poverty; ending the race and gender imbalances among the working people at the work place; achieving all round development; effecting urban renewal; implementing a successful and appropriate human development strategy; modernising our economy; and, entrenching the democratic order (Mbeki 2001).

The goal of achieving transformation within the framework of the market economy and liberal democracy necessitates that economic growth is critical to the task of eliminating poverty and inequality. In this context the need to eradicate black poverty is twinned with the need to expand the entrepreneurial base by promoting a set of black capitalists. The need to combine the task of de-racialising capital with the need to eliminate poverty forms part of the complexity of achieving transformation within the context of neo-liberal capitalism. Indeed this is an important dynamic of Mbeki's attempt to think through the challenge of transformation in South Africa.

Marais (2001) argues that part of the political project of the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa is the creation of a patriotic black business class as a counterpoint to the threat of white capital flight and as a buffer from the demands of poor and working class black South Africans. William Gumede (2005) in continuing this line of argument adds that the threat of white capital flight was seen as a real danger among ANC leaders, the need to create a black business class was seen as an important part of maintaining economic and political stability. A major part of Mbeki's political agenda has been to balance the needs of the ordinary working class, poor and unemployed black South African that form the base of support for the ANC with the desire to build and expand the black middle class.

Mbeki speaking at the ANC policy conference in 2002 in preparation for the 51st National Congress re-affirmed the importance of the black majority and the need to tackle poverty as central to the task of transforming South Africa.

Mbeki in his remarks noted:

The all-round liberation of the historically oppressed masses of our country, including the black working class and the rural poor, has also meant that we must work to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment in our society and end the racial and gender imbalances in the distribution of wealth, income and opportunity that we continue to experience. We cannot and will never proceed from a position that says that the masses of our people can be genuinely free when they are politically emancipated and economically impoverished. A central feature of our continuing struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution is, and has to be, to end the conditions that describe millions of our people as the wretched of the earth, daily burdened and crushed by the most intolerable and dehumanising poverty. At the beginning of this year, we called on our people to unite in a common struggle to push back the frontiers of poverty. We cannot abuse the confidence that our people have in the ANC, which leads them freely to choose our movement to take the reins of state power, by using these state positions for self-enrichment and the promotion of an elite that climbs on the backs of the toiling masses to reach heavenly heights of prosperity. This Conference must assess whether we have the necessary policies to meet this strategic objective (Mbeki 2002a).

For Mbeki the problem of transformation has to be guided by the central aim of eliminating unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment among the black working class and the rural poor. In keeping with his ideas concerning political leadership and the political party along

the Marxist-Leninist notion of the vanguard, the emerging black elite is identified as a crucial element in the transformation of South Africa. In this regard the degeneration of the emerging black governing elite into the excesses of wealth and political corruption presents a serious problem for the need to create true liberation in South Africa. Indeed Mbeki focuses on the need to ensure the political discipline of the black elite as opposed to the possibility of mass participatory democracy in the quest to create a more meaningful liberation.

The New African Agenda

For Mbeki the challenge of transformation in South African society is very much defined by the need to de-racialise South Africa, erase the features of apartheid in the hopes of creating a non racial society. The challenge of transforming South Africa into a vibrant and new society is intricately linked with Mbeki's idea of an African Renaissance. For Mbeki the end of apartheid in South Africa signalled the end of centuries of colonialism and imperialism on the African continent and presented a new opportunity for political renewal on the continent. The end of the anti-colonial struggle required the articulation of a new progressive African agenda that situates the needs of the continent within the context of the political and economic realities of the 21st Century (Landsberg 2007:196). In this new African agenda there is the quest to achieve development, peace, economic growth and democracy on the continent (Landsberg 2007:195). Central to this new African agenda was the construction of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Mbeki speaking at a forum discussing NEPAD locates the call for political renewal of the African continent as part of a long standing goal of pan-Africanism evoking the memory of Edward Blyden. Mbeki states:

Yet it was under these circumstances that for instance, Edward Blyden, one of our foremost Pan-Africanists, promoted the idea of Africans taking possession of their lives, owning their future...This dream of 1881, three years before Africa was carved up at the Berlin Conference, was not one that could be realised in the century that ensued, that saw the entrenchment of colonialism, racism and neo-colonialism, with African economies becoming dependent on the metropolitan countries and the destruction of the productive capacity of African peoples to work in their own interests and for their own gain. The impoverishment of the African people resulted in battles for survival and for scarce resources among different groups. The conflicts we have experienced led to Africa being defined as a place of wars, disease, dictatorships and hunger with political leaders being unable to unite the people in practical and sustained ways behind common goals and objectives.

Afro-pessimism pervaded to the extent that there are those who would say that we have forfeited our right as Africans to dream, to hope, to speak and to plan for a better life. There are those even now who will argue that the hopes for an African renaissance are ill-founded and that Africa cannot guarantee her own future. Yet, clearly, the latter half of the twentieth century has seen a new attitude among Africans who now choose to see themselves as activists for change, who are reclaiming their place as equals among other humans, who walk a common continent and world proud of who they are and confident of their abilities for self-development (Mbeki 2002b).

In Mbeki's estimation the quest for the political renewal of the African continent as espoused by pan-African figures such as Edward Blyden faced the major challenge of colonialism and imperialism. The prospect of political renewal required that one engage in the struggle against European colonialism and imperialism. Consequently the end of all forms of

colonialism on the continent has provided the best opportunity to re-orient the energies of African people towards the collective renewal of the continent.

There are two aspects to Mbeki's political thought concerning the need and opportunity for political renewal on the African continent. The first is the re-orientation of the concept of the 'New African' used in the 1930's to describe upwardly mobile educated and urban black South Africans seeking new forms of cultural expression as well as political modernity (Gevisser 2007:32). For Mbeki the major problem at the end of the 21st Century for the African continent is the need to overcome Afro-pessimism; the pessimistic view that the African continent will continue to suffer from poverty and underdevelopment. The new African of the 21st Century is focused on moving beyond the psychology of pessimism towards playing his or her part in the cultural and political rejuvenation of the continent.

The second aspect of Mbeki's call for a new African agenda is the argument that the new century presents a favourable climate for the political and economic renewal of the continent. Inherent in Mbeki's analysis is a particular reading of the opportunities presented by the new international political order coupled with the achievement of formal political independence across the African continent. The end of the cold war saw the rise of the United States as the main power and the dominance of the neo-liberal paradigm, but it also presented opportunities to create new relationships between the 'north' and 'south' and 'south-south' relations within the globalised world economy (Ajulu 2001:27) . Landsberg argues that the new international order defined by the dominance of the United States has led to more political uncertainty and this is what has informed Mbeki's call for political and economic overhaul of the international system (2004:188). Indeed a major part of his tenure as President of South Africa has been place the continent on the international stage and lobby for a new rules based international order (Landsberg 2004:188). According to Ajulu the

critical feature of Mbeki's ideas concerning political renewal and economic regeneration is that the current conditions on the continent and in the international state system provide the opportunity for a renewal on the continent (2001:27).

For Mbeki one of the challenges for African states in the 21st Century is to deal with globalisation and the neo-liberal political paradigm advocated by the international financial system. Central to Mbeki's call for the political renewal of the continent is NEPAD. As President of South Africa Mbeki was the main intellectual and political proponent of NEPAD and it is an attempt at negotiating a space for the development of the continent within the context of neo-liberal capitalism (Bond 2004:3).

Mbeki in a speech delivered at the Nigerian Institute of International Relations spoke on the issue of NEPAD and its role in the political renewal of the continent.

This comes back to the point we made earlier about the need for us to ensure that the masses of our people are mobilised to participate in the process of change. The development we seek to achieve should not treat the people as mere beneficiaries of such progress as we will make, but as actors to bring about that progress. Indeed, this progress may not be possible without their participation.

The third leg of this partnership obviously relates to the rest of the world outside our continent. We are in the fortunate situation that now and perhaps for the first time, the rest of the world has accepted that we have a right and duty to determine our own path of development. Therefore the international community as a whole has accepted the NEPAD programme, including its priorities. The NEPAD structure has also been accepted by that international community as a legitimate interlocutor, truly representative of the developmental aspirations of the peoples of our continent...

That international community has also accepted that we must redefine the relations especially between ourselves and the developed world. As we had to, we have said that the relationship of donor and recipient must become a thing of the past. It must be replaced by the partnership of which we have spoken, which must both respect our right to determine our future and impose a common obligation on our partners to implement what they would have agreed, and be mutually accountable to one another (Mbeki 2003).

NEPAD forms part of Mbeki's intellectual response to neo-liberal globalisation in that it is an attempt at trying to reclaim the development agenda from the Bretton Woods system. In Mbeki's estimation NEPAD provides an opportunity for African countries to articulate a development agenda that is founded on the specific challenges facing the continent. In this respect NEPAD is a program tailored to suit the needs of the continent but is also acceptable to the international community. A central part of the program is the need to establish a new relationship between the international donor community and the continent.

Bond in a critique of NEPAD argues that the program does not present a viable attempt to alter the North-South relationship defined by dominance and subservience (2004:3). According to Bond NEPAD is very much linked to the dictates of international capital and the Bretton Woods system (2004:5). Indeed NEPAD is not a radical program of action, it is very much influenced by the realpolitik of the international state system in this respect it is reformist rather than radical. NEPAD's key attribute is that it has led to the articulation of a common vision of development on the continent embraced by most political leaders. This is the result of a re-energized pan-Africanism. For Mbeki the critical partnership in NEPAD is not between the African continent and the West but amongst African countries themselves.

NEPAD forms part of the political program of a rejuvenated continentalism expressed by the emergence of the African Union (AU). The AU, predecessor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), is a major part of Mbeki's political approach to the continent and is a crucial part of his political thought concerning pan-Africanism in the new millennium. Indeed as President of South Africa, Mbeki has lobbied hard to be a central part of the decision making process of the organisation (Alden & Le Pere 2004:290). For Mbeki the AU presents an opportunity for a new era of African solidarity and a chance to spread the goals of the African Renaissance across the continent. Mbeki at the launch of the AU states:

This morning, the first summit of the African Union took place in this city. Gathered in this stadium today as we launch the African Union, are the representatives of millions of Africans who can truly say that through their sustained action, they ensured that the advancing wave of African liberation finally reaches the southernmost tip of Africa, 110 years after the European powers and the United States agreed in Berlin to share Africa among themselves. Imperialism and colonialism had sought to own and control Africa permanently, from Cape to Cairo. African pride and courage ensured that Africans own and control Africa, permanently from Cape to Cairo.

39 years after the formation of the Organisation of African Unity was formed in Addis Ababa, in the ancient African state of Ethiopia, Africa has convened to decide what it should do about itself...By forming the Union, the peoples of our continent have made the unequivocal statement that Africa must unite! We as Africans have a common and shared destiny. Together, we must redefine this destiny for a better life for all the people of this continent. The first task is to achieve unity, solidarity, cohesion, cooperation among peoples of Africa and African states. We must build all the

institutions necessary to deepen political, economic and social integration of the African continent. We must deepen the culture of collective action in Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world (Mbeki 2002c).

In Mbeki's estimation the political goal of the AU in the new century is to continue the tradition of resistance to all forms of colonialism and imperialism on the continent. For Mbeki the new imperialism of the 21st Century with the United States as the main international hegemonic power and the dominance of neo-liberalism require a re-energized pan-Africanism and solidarity with the developing world (Raftopoulos & Phimster 2004: 387). The political solidarity that was a result of the anti-colonial struggle needs to be sustained in order for the continent to achieve social and economic development. For Mbeki the AU presents an opportunity to redefine and develop new political programs for the continent.

There are two main features to Mbeki's thoughts on the need for the AU; these are development and anti-imperialism. The task of developing the social and economic infrastructure of the continent requires increased unity and cooperation among African nation state. In addition to this the uncertainty of an international state system dominated by the United States and the ideology of neo-liberalism necessitates that there is the creation of strong institutions to maintain peace and security on the continent in Mbeki's estimation. These form an essential part of Mbeki's thoughts on the AU.

Mbeki commenting of the need for a Pan-African Parliament as one of the organs of the AU highlights the importance of collective solidarity for the purpose of development.

The African masses look to the Pan-African Parliament to help to change all that. They want you, their elected representatives, to give them the possibility to control

their institutions. They want you, their elected representatives, to help them to change their material conditions so that they escape from the jaws of poverty and their countries and continent from the clutches of underdevelopment.

They want their sons and daughters to grow up in decent conditions, and in their adulthood to engage in productive activities that will improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their peoples. They want you to help them to ensure that their governments discharge their responsibilities to them, telling them no lies, respecting their obligation to be accountable to the people, desisting from poisoning the kola nuts they bring to the people as gifts (Mbeki 2004).

For Mbeki one of the main challenges for Africa in the 21st Century is to achieve social and economic development. The challenge of development requires a concerted approach among all citizens on the continent. An important feature of the Mbeki's political thought concerning the AU is the intellectual importance placed on the idea of African nationalism. The question of nationalism is a central idea that occupies Mbeki as part of formulating the new African agenda. In this respect the African Union is seen as the institutionalisation of pan-African nationalism in the 21st Century.

As part of the new politics of the African Union there has been a focus on seeking to institutionalise the African Diaspora in the evolving architecture of the organisation (Kornegay 2008). The AU in a departure from the OAU has officially recognised the African Diaspora as "an important element in its attempt to reinvigorate the continent" (Kornegay 2008:334). Indeed the African Diaspora forms an important part of Mbeki's thoughts in relation to fulfilling the goals of the African Renaissance. Mbeki speaking at the Bicentenary of the Haitian Revolution states:

Accordingly, together with the leadership and people of Haiti, we are determined to work together to address the problems facing this inspirational home of African freedom and achieve stability and prosperity in this important site of African heroism and wherever Africans are to be found.

We trust and are confident that in both the leadership and people of Haiti we will find equally determined partners, so that together we can here, help to recreate a model country, informed by the wise words of the 1805 constitution of Haiti that we have "an opportunity of breaking our fetters, and of constituting ourselves as a people, free, civilized and independent".

In this way, we will contribute to the renaissance of Africans everywhere in the world and ensure that we are no longer an object of ridicule and pity, nor a tool of exploitation to be discarded at the fancy of the powerful, but that we become what we really and truly are: proud and confident human beings who occupy their pride of place as equals among the peoples of the world (Mbeki 2004).

For Mbeki the re-invigoration of pan-Africanism has to seek to incorporate the African Diaspora in its political concerns, acknowledging the potential role of the Diaspora in the development of the continent. In Mbeki's estimation narrow continentalism has to give way to the realities of the African presence across the world. Haiti is an important representation of the historical experience of Africans in the New World. For Mbeki the Haitian Revolution represented the "inspirational home" of African Freedom. The possibility for African people to engage in the political renewal of the continent is best expressed in the example of the Haitian revolution in Mbeki's estimation. In working through Mbeki's political thought Haiti

is a symbol of the political power of the collective will of African people, a historical example of the power of African nationalism.

In keeping with the attempt to incorporate the Diaspora, South Africa and the AU have engaged in state-to-state talks with the Caribbean community (Kornegay 2008:341). The March 2005 conference of the South African-African Union-Caribbean Diaspora conference hosted in Jamaica, as well as South Africa's political engagement with Brazil forms part of Mbeki's attempt to begin a new era of political cooperation between the Diaspora and the Continent (Kornegay 2008:337).

Conclusion

Mbeki's political thought during his tenure as President of South Africa is focused on seeking to place South Africa and the African continent on the international stage. A major part of this political agenda has been the transformation of South African society and the promotion of the African Renaissance across the continent. Mbeki's new African agenda has been preoccupied with seeking to make the 21st Century Africa's Century.

Indeed what is important about Mbeki's political thought during his tenure as President is the way in which his revolutionary Marxist orientation becomes transformed into a kind of accommodation with the forces of neo-liberalism. As a consequence of this Mbeki's thought has become preoccupied with issues of culture and nationalism, while at the same time his concept of politics is firmly rooted in Marxist-Leninist principles.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In his final broadcast as President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki sought to declare to the nation his decision to follow the directive from the ANC's National Executive Committee to step down as State President of South Africa. In this speech Mbeki not only tried to calm the public about the political situation facing the country but also used it as an opportunity to reflect on his political career. In the speech Mbeki states:

I would like sincerely to thank the nation and the ANC for having given me the opportunity to serve in public office during the last 14 years as the Deputy President and President of South Africa. This service has at all times been based on the vision, the principles and values that have guided the ANC as it prosecuted a difficult and dangerous struggle in the decades before the attainment of our freedom in 1994. Among other things, the vision, principles and values of the ANC teach the cadres of this movement life-long lessons that inform us that wherever we are and whatever we do we should ensure that our actions contribute to the attainment of a free and just society, the upliftment of all our people, and the development of a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it. This is the vision of a South Africa that is democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous; a country in which all the people enjoy a better life...

Again, as you know, we have often pointed to the fact that our liberation movement has always been pan-African in its outlook and therefore that we have an obligation to contribute to the renaissance of the African continent. All of us are aware of the huge and daunting challenges that face our continent. In the short years since our freedom,

as South Africans we have done what we could to make our humble contribution to the regeneration of our continent (Mbeki 2008).

Thabo Mbeki's final public words as head of state are very much connected to the overall aim of this research. The aim of this research has been to examine and analyse the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki. The main question that has driven this research has been how does one characterize the intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki and what are the dimensions of his thought?

In pursuing this research there were a number of issues that had to be addressed in examining and analysing Mbeki's intellectual and political thought. The first set of questions that had to be answered was focused on the issue of analysing the political thought of a practicing politician and locating Mbeki's ideas in an intellectual and political tradition. In addition to this the research sought to examine the extent to which the anti-apartheid struggle informed Mbeki's political ideas and the nature of his intellectual activism. The last set of questions that this research sought to answer revolved around the question of a) how the progression of Mbeki's political ideas reflect the shift from that of a professional revolutionary to being a member of the new governing elite; and b) the extent to which Mbeki's political thought as President of South Africa reflect a critical contribution to the anti-colonial and pan-Africanist intellectual tradition in the 21st Century.

One of the major questions that had to be answered was how to analyse the intellectual and political thought of a practicing politician. Edward Said's idea of the intellectual as the public representative of an idea helped in understanding the work of intellectuals seeking to agitate for change in society (1994). In particular Said's notion of the intellectual as a representative figure helped in understanding intellectual practice in the contemporary period. The

intellectual as a representative figure has noticeable limitations in terms of understanding the work of intellectuals engaged in active politics. In seeking to deal with these limitations the work of Jurgen Habermas, Max Weber and Isaiah Berlin were important in understanding the nature of political life. In sum the intellectual and political thought of individuals engaged in politics is constrained and defined by the specific political context and the commitment to the agenda of the political party.

There are two main features to understanding Mbeki as an intellectual. A major feature of Mbeki's intellectual preoccupation is that it is focused on being an intellectual representative of the party, especially in relation to the struggle against apartheid. In addition to this Mbeki's political ideas are linked to executing the political agenda of the party. As a consequence Mbeki's intellectual and political ideas are connected to the politics of the time. Indeed it is Mbeki's connection to the different phases and elements of South Africa's political history that poses the challenge of characterizing his political ideas. Mbeki's political ideas form part of the anti-colonial tradition, but this is not the only element in his thought. There is also the revolutionary Marxist tradition, African nationalist element, liberal humanism, anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism. These elements of Mbeki's thought represent a movement of ideas that comes with being a political actor in various phases of South Africa's political history.

The research found that the content of Mbeki's intellectual and political thought is informed by the struggle against apartheid. Mbeki's role as a cadre of the ANC-led liberation movement has resulted in a significant part of his intellectual focus and political ideas being focused on defeating the apartheid state. As a consequence of being a cadre of the ANC-led liberation movement the ANC's politics of African nationalism and the Marxist-Leninist politics of the SACP have been incorporated into Mbeki's thought. It is as a result of being in

the struggle against apartheid that a large section of his early political thought has a distinctly revolutionary Marxist orientation.

Mbeki's intellectual and political thought is also defined by the transition from apartheid to a non-racial liberal democracy. As a result of the transition Mbeki's intellectual focus is on seeking to legitimise the new political conjuncture, particularly as a member of the new governing elite. As a result of the transition there is a movement from Mbeki's revolutionary Marxist orientation toward issues of race, culture and nationalism. While there is the movement away from revolutionary Marxism there is the incorporation of Marxist-Leninist principles in Mbeki's leadership style and practice of politics. It is in this context that Mbeki declares an African Renaissance as a contribution to the pan-Africanist political tradition. In addition to this the research found that the defining feature of Mbeki's political thought as President of South Africa has been to achieve the political objectives of the African Renaissance. A central feature of this intellectual focus has been the transformation of South African society and developing a political agenda for the continent based on the ideals of pan-Africanism.

The intellectual and political thought of Thabo Mbeki has been defined by his dedication to the liberation of South Africa from apartheid and ensuring South Africa's democratic future. A central part of this political agenda has been to erase the features of colonialism and imperialism in South Africa and the continent as well as to tackle the issue of underdevelopment. This research has shown that Mbeki's intellectual and political thought is pan-African in its orientation and defined by his role as a cadre of the ANC-led liberation movement. Mbeki's attempt to build the new South Africa and engage in the political renewal of the continent has led to a significant contribution to the political thought of the pan-African intellectual tradition. In addition to this Mbeki's declaration of an African

Renaissance and the new progressive African agenda have helped in re-articulating the politics of the black and anti-colonial tradition in the context of the 21st Century.

Mbeki's intellectual and political thought cannot easily be characterized into any single political tradition. Mbeki's political thought displays an engagement with different elements of modern African political thought. The central character of Mbeki's thought is that it has been defined by the political purpose of achieving South African freedom and continental renewal. Thabo Mbeki's political thought forms part of the intellectual dynamic of modern African political thought. Mbeki's political thought is very much the "selective appropriation and re-coining of terms and ideas" within the context of political struggle and political practice (Hensbroek 2003). Mbeki's thought is a critical contribution to the history of modern African thought.

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