



ANC TODAY

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

An ANC government for all the people



During the debate on the budget vote of the Presidency in the National Assembly last week, some speakers raised the issue of the relationship between party and state, and the relationship between party and government.

This is an important matter to discuss further in an effort to ensure that we have a common understanding of the principles that should guide these relationships.

Too often people conflate the government and the state. It is necessary to understand the difference.

The government is elected into office with a political mandate. On 22 April this year, an overwhelming majority of South Africans voted for the ANC and gave it a mandate to govern the country for another five years.

There is no doubt that the ANC is the leading party in government; the ANC rules. Therefore the programmes of the national government, and those of eight of the nine provinces, reflect the policies of the ANC. These policies are based on the resolutions of the ANC conference in Polokwane in 2007, later refined in our election Manifesto. There is therefore nothing untoward in a statement that says the ANC makes policy and government implements that policy.

Speaking at the conclusion of the debate of the Presidency's budget vote, I said: "Having formed a government to implement its policies and programmes, the ANC cannot then disappear for five years. It must perform its own oversight functions to ensure that the government it formed stays true to its mandate. It owes that to the electorate of this country. In undertaking this responsibility, the ruling party will engage in internal processes and consultations it considers necessary, as do all other parties. The organisation's interaction with cadres it has deployed does not detract from the responsibility of government to serve all the people of South Africa."

This point was raised sharply at the Polokwane conference; the challenge of ensuring that the ANC performs its own oversight functions to ensure that government remains true to the policies of the organisation and its electoral mandate.

In assessing the ANC's performance in governance, conference delegates noted that ANC structures were not sufficiently involved in giving guidance to its deployees in government and in monitoring their performance.

Delegates resolved that the constitutional structures of the ANC at all levels should closely monitor and direct the work of government. Among other things, this means that they need to strengthen their policy sub-committees.

It was also one of the main reasons for the resolution to accelerate the establishment of the ANC Policy Institute. This would provide the movement with the capacity to continually monitor government's performance and to provide support to policy development processes.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Doctors' strike suspended for a week | The doctors' strike was called off following an intervention by COSATU. Doctors have agreed to suspend the strike for a week as a gesture of good faith. They warned that the Health Department must present them with a plan to fix the health-care system.

Parliament dissolves SABC Board | Parliament dissolved the SABC Board following two weeks of enquiry where Board members and Management were grilled by parliament on their role in the near collapse of the SABC. Parliament further appointed an interim Board to be headed by Irene Charnley.

Michael Jackson passes away | The music icon and King of pop, Michael Jackson, passed away after suffering from a cardiac arrest. He had just finished rehearsing for a come-back tour that would have seen him holding 50 concerts in the United Kingdom.

Second Airbus in a month crashes in Comoros Islands | A Yemeni Airbus 310 crashed into the ocean north of the Comoros Islands. 154 people on the flight died, except for a 14-year-old girl who was found holding on to a piece of plane debris. This was a second airbus crash allegedly due to bad weather condition in a month.

This is long overdue. While the ANC has been remarkably effective in developing good policies and has made significant progress in implementing them, it needs a dedicated facility to measure performance. This will improve not only the quality of policy, but will contribute to a better record in ensuring these policies improve the lives of the people.

The Policy Institute should not remove responsibility for the development of policy away from the ANC's constitutional structures or its members. Instead it should empower structures and members to debate governance issues and take informed policy decisions.

One of the strengths of the ANC is that it consults widely on policy, within the organisation, among its Alliance partners and with different stakeholders in society. This enriches the policy process and means that government programmes reflects a broad range of inputs.

Debate improves policy. We should not be afraid of debate within the ranks of the ANC or Alliance, even when the different views of allied organisations are expressed in public. As I said in Parliament last week: "It does not make sense to call for robust debate within this House and in society at large, but then to insist that the President of the ANC should stifle debate within his own party."

In contrast to government – which serves a five-year term on the basis of a political mandate – the state refers to those public institutions which remain in place beyond a specific term of office. These institutions, the professional public service for example, are meant in their composition and conduct to be non-partisan.

Matters relating to these institutions are regulated by provisions of the Constitution and the laws of the country. We cannot allow a situation in which the institutions or resources of the state are used to advance party political or other partisan interests.

This means that we must ensure that the relevant laws and regulations are strictly adhered to. Where there are violations, action needs to be taken in line with our laws. It also means that we need to develop a consciousness within state institutions and among public servants that it is unacceptable to use the instruments of state to advance narrow party interests.

Public servants should not behave in a partisan manner. But they are expected to diligently and enthusiastically implement the policies and programmes of the government of the day. They are expected to undertake without favour the tasks necessary to implement the will of the people.

Regardless of the party that won the election, the government of the day is the government of all South Africans. As it implements its mandate, it must therefore equally attend to the needs of all South Africans. This extends to all institutions of the state.

As the ANC we are committed to ensuring that this happens in practice. All structures and members should remain ever vigilant to ensure that the government of the ANC does indeed fulfil its mandate and that it remains at all times a government of all the people of South Africa.

Jacob G. Zuma

EVENTS IN HISTORY

3 July 1992; 31 years after being expelled, South Africa has its membership of the Football International Federation Association (FIFA) reinstated. on 3 July 1992. The reinstatement was motivated by the release of all political prisoners and open negotiation process with all political parties in South Africa.

4 July 1973; apartheid government introduced Bantu Labour Regulations Amendment Bill in the wake of widespread labour unrest to set up a limited system of collective bargaining rights for Blacks. Because of various restrictions and apartheid still being imposed on labour unions, many Black trade unions were not interested in registration.

5 July 1989; Nelson Mandela, at the time still imprisoned on Robben Island, held a brief meeting with President PW Botha. The unfavourable economic situation of South Africa, due to sanctions and lack of foreign investment, meant the apartheid was no longer feasible and changes needed to take place in South Africa. The meeting was significant as it brought together two opposing leaders in a surprisingly cordial manner.

7 July 1988; Trevor Manuel, Ebrahim Rasool, Mountrain Qumbela, Hilda Ndude and Mzonke Jacobs, all officials of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the Western Cape region and prominent anti-apartheid activists, were released in Cape Town after being detained for two years under the Internal Security Act. It was believed they were detained in the hope of weakening the powerful structures of the UDF in the Western Cape.

8 July 1946; Passive Resistance protests against anti-Indian legislation that had engulfed Natal, resulted in police brutality against the resisters. Hundreds of resisters were arrested and appeared before court - some or as many as five different charges. The Riotous Assemblies Act was invoked against the leaders of the movement, and they were given long terms of imprisonment.

A response to an article written in the Sunday Times 28 June 2009 by Mr Moeletsi Mbeki



Whom do you think you are fooling Mr. Mbeki?

Like every state in the world, South Africa cannot afford to have permanent friends or permanent enemies. International affairs are in a constant state of flux so conditions often arise where the interests of state converge. The change of administration in the USA obviously facilitates such a moment between South Africa and the USA. But even in the absence of the Obama administration, there were and will be areas where US and South African interests intersect. South African foreign policy must seek to maximize the benefits of such convergence when it occurs, but we have to be equally vigilant at moments when they diverge, as they will on some issues.

To claim that a movement like the ANC, that has from day one, interacted with the international community in a number of ways, had no foreign policy before 1961, as Moeletsi Mbeki does (Sunday Times, 28th June 2009) is either a function of sheer ignorance - which I doubt - or is this a disingenuous way of white-washing the USA's role in relation to the South African liberation struggle?

Towards the end of 1913, the ANC (then still called the South African Natives Congress) sent a deputation to Britain to lobby the British parliament and the colonial office on the 1913 Natives Land Act. August 1914 found the deputation still trying to win support for their cause. The First World War broke out. Convinced that a demonstration of loyalty to the British cause would rebound to their favour, the ANC deputation hurried back home to help mobilize support for the war effort. The enthusiasm for British cause generated by the ANC leadership, other elements of the Black elite, the churches and some traditional leaders is well documented in prose and in poetry.

At the end of the war, an ANC deputation was amongst many others from the various colonies who converged on Versailles in the hope of some token of reward for supporting their colonial masters during the war. A second South African delegation, led by Hertzog representing the National Party, was also at Versailles. To the surprise of all the other delegations, the Afrikaaner Nationalists, with the skeleton of De Wet's Rebellion rattling in their cupboard, were the only ones to come away with any sort of reward - a firm promise of greater autonomy - realized through the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

This pattern repeated itself when the Second World War broke out in 1939. Hertzog, opposed South African participation in the war and broke with Smuts' United Party. The "Whites Only" parliament voted to support the allies by a narrow margin. The ANC, under the leadership of Dr A.B. Xuma, once again rallied to the flag even though Smuts pointedly refused to permit African soldiers to bear modern arms.

After Roosevelt and Churchill set out the allied war aims in the Atlantic Charter, including the principle of "government by the consent of the governed", the ANC leadership felt vindicated in their decision to support the war effort. Dr Xuma hurriedly convened the blue ribbon committee that drew up "The African Claims", interpreting the Atlantic Charter from an African (i.e. continental) perspective. Govan Mbeki served on that committee, alongside a number of others.

As in 1918, once it was clear that the Nazis would be defeated in Europe, Churchill added qualifications to the Atlantic Charter. The principle of government by the consent of the governed applied only to those countries in Europe that had fallen victim to Nazi aggression, he pronounced, but not to the colonies!

LATEST STATEMENTS

'COPE allegation scurrilous and baseless' - ANC, 2 July 2009
<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0702.html>

ANC media statement on upcoming by-elections, 1 July 2009
<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0701a.html>

ANC statement on the murder of a Khayelitsha toddler, 29 June 2009
<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0629a.html>

Statement on the Doctors' Strike, 29 June 2009
<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/pr/2009/pr0629.html>

LATEST SPEECHES

Speech at the 13th Ordinary Session Of AU Summit, 1 July 2009
<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/history/zuma/2009/jz0702.html>

Speech by the Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, at the Congress of the International Council of Nurses, 29 June 2009
<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?include=deputy/sp/2009/sp06291445.htm&ID=1955&type=sp>

Address by His Excellency, President Jacob Zuma, at the SANEF NAT NAKASA Awards Dinner, 27 June 2009
<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?include=president/sp/2009/sp06271147.htm&ID=1954&type=sp>

From its inception the ANC was compelled to have a foreign policy. From London, Sol Plaatjie, the ANC's first Secretary-General traveled to the USA where he established links with both the newly founded National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Garvey's (Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) as well as other African-American bodies. The movement's foreign relations were guided by a simple principle, enunciated by Rev. Mahabane: "The fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man". It was by appealing to this principle that the ANC approached the British authorities in 1913/14 and the victorious Entente powers at Versailles in 1918. That their faith was misplaced is another matter.

When the ANC threw its support behind the Allies in World War II it was because Nazism stood in diametrical opposition to that principle. That Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter with his fingers crossed is another matter.

Moeletsi Mbeki admits that the ANC was a participant in the Pan-African movement, supported the struggle for independence in India and attended Bandung Conference, a meeting of representatives of 29 African and Asian nations, held at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 to promote economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism. The ANC was very vocal too during the Suez crisis of 1956 and was a keen supporter of the Algerian armed liberation movement as conference resolutions of the time attest. It led the protests against the subversion of the government of the newly independent Congo in 1960 and murder of Patrice Lumumba. It is matter of record that it was at the forefront of attempts to forge a united front of liberation movements in our region. Apparently these are not foreign policy positions in his book.

Perhaps he will dismiss these as examples of the ANC ganging up with the weak and poor against the powerful and rich. But, when has siding with the weak in an unequal contest been morally questionable?

In January 1953, shortly after the ANC called off the Defiance Campaign of 1952, Professor Z.K. Matthews visited the USA in an attempt to mobilize support in that quarter. Though well received in academic circles - he was even invited to contribute an article to "Foreign Affairs", the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations - his visit had little impact on official US policy.

According to the official bio sketch of the late Govan Mbeki, Mbeki was won to Marxism by Dr Max Yergan, an African-American academic associated with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) who worked at Fort Hare during the 1930s. From Fort Hare Dr Yergan returned to the USA where he affiliated to the Council on African Affairs, led by Paul Robeson, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the founding fathers of the Pan-African movement, and Dr Alpheus Hunton.

In 1953, at the height of the McCarthy era in the USA, the Council on African Affairs was investigated by the great inquisitor. While Alpheus Hunton refused to cooperate with McCarthy, when he was summoned to appear before the Senate Committee on Un-American Activities, Dr Max Yergan capitulated. In his testimony he alleged that the African National Congress, the Natal Indian Congress and other bodies associated with them, like the Western Cape-based Franchise Action Council, were Communist infiltrated or Communist controlled. On the strength of that testimony the ANC was classified as a "Communist infiltrated or Communist controlled" movement by the USA.

On the eve of Mandela's release from prison, former US Vice-President, Dick Cheney, was able to invoke that classification to justify his insistence that Mandela remain in jail.

The attitude of US administrations, Republican or Democratic, towards the ANC during the 1950s, the 1960s and well into the 1970s was influenced by Yergan's testimony. In other words, it was consistently hostile! The suggestion that the ANC came to be regarded as "Soviet-aligned" by the USA because of the Sino-Soviet dispute is laughable.

I am amazed that a person of Mbeki's background and learning could flaunt such amazing ignorance of these well-known facts!

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANC President Jacob Zuma to deliver keynote address at the KZN Provincial General Council

Saturday, 04 July 2009
University of KwaZulu Natal,
Westville Campus

National Working Committee (NWC) members will attend and address the Western Cape Regional General Councils (RGCs)

Saturday 4 July 2009.
Dullar Omar, Boland,
Southern Cape, West Coast,
Central Karoo and Overberg regions.

US hostility to the ANC was expressed in a number of ways. For example, when Oliver Tambo sought a visa to visit the United Nations Organisation (UNO) shortly after his arrival in Britain in 1960, the US State Department deliberately delayed its issuance for months! By the time it was issued the impact of the Sharpeville Massacre had been superseded by other terrible events in other parts of the world, thus rendering Tambo's appeals less effective. The visa also restricted his movements to the city of New York, where the UN is situated! These were not indifferent actions. They are evidence of a definite tilt in favour of the apartheid regime.

There is compelling evidence that the Kennedy Administration was actively involved in the arrest and imprisonment of Mandela in 1962. Suspicions also abound about the Rivonia arrests and the role CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) officers played in assisting the apartheid regime's security services in surveillance of the farm. There is also the notorious "Tar-Baby Memorandum", penned under the stewardship of Henry Kissinger during the early 1970s. Consistent with the thrust of that document, the Ford administration made undertakings to the Vorster regime and incited it to intervene in Angola. Chester Crocker, pro-consul for African Affairs during the Reagan years, was motivated as much by his own view on the Southern African situation as the general direction of US policy until the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, which was to preserve the "White redoubt" in Southern Africa.

Moeletsi Mbeki conflates the people of the USA and the various governments they have elected. He even hints that the ANC drew no such distinction. That is self-evident nonsense!

The Council on African Affairs, red-baited out of existence by McCarthy, had close ties to the ANC and to other African liberation movements dating back to the 1930s. Mrs Eslanda Robeson and her son, Paul (Junior), visited South Africa, Uganda and West Africa during 1935. She was even present at the first meeting of the All African Convention (AAC) in Bloemfontein in 1935. Paul Robeson was in regular correspondence with Dr Roseberry Bokwe of Middelbush during the 1940s. At all relevant times the thrust of these engagements was grounded on a sharp distinction between the American people and their government - in very much the same manner as the ANC drew a distinction between the White population in general and the apartheid regime.

In cultivating such ties the movement's purpose was to influence the US population (and by extension those of other western countries) to exert the necessary pressure on their government to change its policies. That was finally possible during the 1980s precisely because of the size of the African-American population and the relative weight of that vote in a number of strategic constituencies. Fortunately for South Africa, the people of the US had outgrown the morbid fear of "Communism" that had made it possible for the McCarthyists to red-bait those who supported the liberation struggle in the past.

The majority of South Africans see the people of the USA, who came to their support, as their friend. But he/she would be a very foolish South African who imagines that such support was a spontaneous response based on principles shared by democrats the world over. We sweated blood to mobilize support among the US population! Literally scores of African-American students were expelled from Universities and Colleges for agitating for their institutions to dis-invest from South Africa!

Before the Free South Africa movement gained momentum, African-American workers lost their jobs for raising the matter on the shop floor! Caroline Hunter, a Black woman employed by Polaroid, took up the issue of Polaroid equipment being used for the Dom-pass as long ago as 1972! She paid heavily for her stance! To suggest that she and her employers were at one, but for a difference of opinion over tactic, spits on her sacrifice! Solidarity with the people of South Africa often came at a high price before there was a movement that the US establishment and authorities could not ignore!

While South Africa has to relate to the USA and every other country in the world, that relationship will and must be informed by past experience. Historically, the US establishment has not been a friend of the South African people. That the US electorate (including Qbama when he was a student) responded positively to the ANC's message is commendable and confirms that it is easier to achieve this in an open society.



CALL TO ACTION

On the 18th July 2009, the ANC calls ANC cadres, people of South Africa, the continent and all over the world to join Mandela Day and pledge 67 minutes of their time to do something worthy to help others in their communities.

But the USA also has a terrible track record, which might change under Obama, on the African continent and an even worse one in Latin America. These are realities South Africa cannot close its eyes to, much as we must relate to that state.

I know that Moeletsisi Mbeki is conversant with (or should be) with all the matters raised in this article, which provokes the question: Why is he misleading the Sunday Times' readers?

>> *Pallo Jordan is an ANC NEC Member and a Member of Parliament*