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Topic:

## THE UNMAKING OF AFRIKANERDOM

Speakers:

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The aim of these dialogues is to create a space for open and informed dialogue and debate around key local and global political, social and economic issues facing South Africa.

## THE UNRAVELING OF AFRIKANERDOM

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Near the outset of his artfully written memoir, Leon Wessels meditates on the Anglo-Boer War and a question put to him by Cyril Ramaphosa: “What is it with you people that you can’t make peace with the English?” Wessels struggles to answer. He admits that “the Anglo-Boer War is still in my subconscious when I try to make sense of the present. The suffering and humiliation of the Boers during the Anglo-Boer War is etched into the psyche of the Afrikaner community.” For all the power and energy poured into separate development, despite the successes of the Afrikaner movement and years of Afrikaner rule, despite republican independence, important historical roots of Afrikaner identity (as opposed to white racial identity) still seem rooted in recollection of British imperialism and resentment at the condescension of English-speaking South Africans – now black as well as white.

To some extent the Afrikaans language still remains a rallying-point, but there too English (and perhaps again “the English”) presents a problem, succinctly captured in Leon Wessels’ recollection of the late night words of an ANC constitutional negotiator in 1996:

We are tired of you Afrikaners waging a language struggle against the English in the name of multilingualism. The other languages are always disrespected. Advance of other languages is a chimera to which you pay only lip service. The real issue is always Afrikaans. We don’t want to be part of the axe you continue to grind with the English. Afrikaans is an important language and it is understandable that you don’t want to allow

English a special place in the Constitution. But you also need to understand that we cannot agree to allow the creation of a special space for Afrikaans.

Without state support, though, a local language like Afrikaans (and other native languages also, of course) necessarily struggles to hold its own against English as an international language. This is often a practical issue that tends to get read in ideological terms.

In contemporary South Africa, “Afrikanerdom” with its exercise of power and domination has disappeared into the night. What is left to Afrikaners (however one wishes to define them) is a history and a language, poetry, song and perhaps church life, although this too has been transformed. To use the terminology of Aletta Norval, the “Afrikaner myth” continues to echo among the ruins of the “apartheid imaginary.” Indeed, I would argue that the Afrikaner myth, as Afrikaner history reinterpreted in terms of what F.W. de Klerk called “the last trek,” provided moral and intellectual justification for the abandonment of Afrikaner power, polluted as Afrikaner power was by racist policies justified in cultural terms. Cultural arguments, rooted in the struggle of the Afrikaner movement, were completely discredited. That, though, raises a question: What is the situation now for Afrikaners when it becomes impossible to speak inclusively of or for “the” Afrikaner?

That is the topic of this talk, written as the first draft of an introduction for a new edition of *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*. It has two parts. First, let me try to deal with the place of moral contradictions in the collapse of Afrikanerdom and, second, allow me to address the question of where Afrikaners now stand from a moral and intellectual point of view?

## I

Despite the misery wrought by the twentieth-century South African state's pursuit of racial interests, the origins of apartheid ideology in what I have called "the Afrikaner civil religion" meant that there were always those who sought to justify apartheid's fundamental precepts in moral terms. However cruel apartheid was in its effects and however blind its adherents were to the suffering it caused, many Afrikaners (especially Afrikaner intellectuals) saw separate development policy as an attempt to deal with a moral dilemma rooted in their own experience of colonial domination.

From its inception, the application of apartheid policy engendered intense debate among Afrikaner intellectuals. 1960 and 1976 were fundamental turning points. During the crises of 1960, the policy elicited moral critique even from many supporters, but they were silenced. When the Soweto uprising in 1976 brought matters to a head again, Afrikaner critics of the system sought to reformulate the policy (often appealing to the anti-colonial roots of Afrikaner sacred history) to make a case for change. The accession to power of PW Botha in 1979 increased destabilization in bordering states and eventually occasioned internal states of emergency, but his regime also implemented constitutional reforms the so-called *verligte* intellectuals had been arguing since the late 1950s and urging since 1976. While those reforms failed completely to stem a welter of urban unrest and economic decline, FW de Klerk's "leap forward" in 1990 would have been inconceivable without them. Please note that this paper makes no attempt to argue that debates amongst Afrikaner intellectuals *caused* the transition of the 1990s (there were many much more concrete causes which I cannot take time to list now), but de Klerk clearly articulated (perhaps even formulated) his direction and marshaled his support along the lines of those debates.

Structural pressures on Afrikaner politicians and their intellectual support groups (and they were complex and myriad), can in no way deny the importance of individual Afrikaner actors and their moral understandings. This was particularly the case for Afrikaners in South Africa. It is striking how *internal* moral and political debates were to a narrow, ethnically defined, community of Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans. Moral debates amongst Afrikaners were referenced in the Afrikaans press and published in widely read collections of essays, but with little or no participation from English-speaking whites or from brown-skinned Afrikaans-speakers, let alone Africans. Such inwardness, compounded by the very effects of apartheid itself, probably closed off the majority of even morally aware Afrikaners from full comprehension of the suffering their policies had occasioned, but it also magnified the impact of moral and intellectual internal debates on those Afrikaners who exercised political power. It is to some central themes of these debates that I now turn.

## II

Readers of *The Rise of Afrikanerdom* may remember that I criticized Piet Meyer's early conception of the Afrikaner "calling" as circular. "Afrikaners", I wrote, "are Afrikaners because of God's calling and God's calling means that they should be exclusively Afrikaner". In his final book, Meyer modifies his argument somewhat, concluding that "for our People it was never a matter of survival (*voortbestaan*) for the sake of survival (*oorlewing*), but to bring to fruition our divine destiny in Africa and in the entire world". The argument remains circular, however. Meyer never spells out a substantive content for Afrikaner divine destiny that extends beyond Afrikaner existence. What exactly *is* the Afrikaner calling?

It is precisely in addressing this fundamental question that N.P. van Wyk Louw started his more mature reflections. “The whole question comes to this”, he wrote: “How do we know so precisely the decision of God [about] survival or demise for our People?” Afrikaner nationalism “has found no reasonable answer to the fundamental political question, ‘What moral right has a small nation to wish to survive *as a nation?*’.”

His answer to this question in *Liberale Nasionalisme* was two-fold: national calling demands both that there be cultural values worth defending and that the realization of that calling should not oppress others. In the first place, Louw said, while people like Meyer are important, “active and faithful on the purely political level: good organizers, wide awake, going to meetings, voting when it is necessary to vote... [Nonetheless] defense on this front opens our flanks from other directions”. If this is all we do “then one day we will discover that we no longer wish to defend our city, because there is nothing valuable *within* that we want to keep”. This is why, for Louw, literature and art were so important. But he insisted that art and literature must be truly alive. While necessarily expressed through a national tradition and in a local idiom, ethnic art (*volkskuns*) must develop according to creative demands out of the fullness of human experience in all its moral complexity and tragic intensity. Doubt about national values arises, he wrote:

only when people have the right to feel that the spiritual life of their group is not enough for the individual to exist; when group life becomes a prison for the individual; when the language offers too little to satisfy the hunger for understanding; when the accepted ideas of the People, petrified, isolate persons from the wide world outside.

The goal of the artist is to convey, movingly and powerfully, within an ethnic idiom, insight into the depths of the human condition in all its grandeur and its grubbiness, its horror, its glory and its pettiness – whether in crisis or in mundane everyday activity. That is the artist’s vocation. It coincides with the calling of the People. It provides the reason for their existence. When it is realized, then social context, language, ethnic aspirations and realizations are all enhanced. Only through such creative work can a People claim a right to exist. Unless one can live a whole life, creative and fulfilling, within and from out of the traditions of a People, he concludes, that People cannot survive. If, in the end, a majority of Afrikaners consider it no longer worth the trouble to continue to exist as a People, Louw added, Afrikaans-speaking “individuals each will be able to continue – indeed, perhaps survive in prosperity – but they will no longer make up a separate People”.

In the second place, Louw argued, the Afrikaner People will not survive “if a large part of the People are in danger of reckoning that we do not need to live in justice with our fellow Peoples in South Africa”.

Suppose that a People has come into the narrows – finding that it must mount a life or death defense; it summons up all material and political powers, guards and marshals its spiritual, technical, intellectual assets, does everything it can to survive.... Then it comes before the last temptation: to believe that bare survival is preferable to *survival in justice*.... This is the lasting temptation awaiting a People in their desert days – the biggest almost mystical crisis before which a People can stand. I believe that in a strange way this is the crisis from which a People appear, reborn, young, creative. This “dark night of the soul” in which it says: I would rather perish than survive through injustice.

“How can a small People”, he concluded, “survive for long if it is something hateful and evil for the best within – and without – it?” This is a theme to which Afrikaner intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s would return again and again – and which they continue to ponder today.

Theoretically, Louw was enough of a Platonist to believe that there is *truth* out there. Indeed, he insisted he was not a relativist at heart. How could he be, with his commitment to beauty and justice? Indeed, in the 1930s he expounded an aristocratic ideal, in the artistic sphere but also in society, a ranking of commitment and ability. Practice, he came to see, particularly political practice, however, was another matter. Here democracy worked best, he was saying in 1952.

*No person and no group can truly see through the chaos of a large community and make proper decisions on its behalf [he wrote then]; human partiality and murky insight clings to everyone – even the greatest spirits.... Precisely because all knowledge and insight is relative and one-sided, the elite must eternally be pulled by the dull demands, the confused but different insights of the masses. Every human insight needs a corrective; and in the totalitarian state the insight of the dictator or dominant group never gets its necessary corrective.*

Hence Louw insisted on the importance of democracy, especially of open polemical struggle, public argument, ongoing debate (*oop gesprek*).

He was opposed to simple majority rule, which is itself, he said, a form of dictatorship by the masses. Instead, he advocated majority rule within a framework of checks and balances (*remmende factore*) such as “a free press; party politics; established rights for subordinate bodies: provinces, municipalities, individual persons: an independent judiciary and relatively

entrenched written laws”. Louw shared a distaste for unsavory party politics. Nonetheless, it was necessary for democracy. “The value of parties in a democracy”, he said, “lies not in their *purity*, but in their *existence*; the fact that they can stand against one another; in the fact that each thought can get corrected, however crudely.... The bare existence of more than one party gives to political life in a democracy something of a dull reasonableness (*redelikheid*): the possibility of an open debate before the People; the setting points of view against one another”. In the final analysis, for Louw, the “spiritual blood circulation” of any body of people was “open discussion (*oop gesprek*) both within and between Peoples”.

Already in the early 1950s, Louw thus had abandoned the conviction that the nation is an organic entity, even “the fulfillment of the individual life”. “A People is not *one being*”, Louw was insisting by 1952, “it has no unity of judgment, no unity of will; it does not make *one* decision. It exists out of countless individuals, and where it thus “decides” or “chooses” this is the result of countless judgments and decisions, half judgments and lame decisions”. For all the passion of his commitment to his People, then, Louw’s liberal nationalism is at odds with primordial Afrikaner Christian Nationalism (whether Stoker’s neo-Calvinist or Diederich’s neo-Fichtean – or any other -- version).

One further point is perhaps worth making again here. After 1948, and even before that, debates about practical politics and moral ideas largely took place among Afrikaners. “Open discussion” amongst Afrikaners usually (but not in every case) excluded English-speaking whites and Afrikaans-speakers of color and almost entirely excluded open and equal discussion with black Africans. As a result black South Africans could but assent or make themselves heard through protest. Such protests could be read by Afrikaners in different ways – and were -- but there was no open debate with Africans. Protest confronted power and Afrikaners debated

intensely *among themselves* what it all meant with next to no *open* conversation across the fences set up by those in power. Indeed, the effects of apartheid physically impeded dialogue – and progressively so. As we shall see, however, open discussion, a public sphere, even amongst Afrikaners, was sometimes simply silenced – especially during the Verwoerd years.

### III

With characteristic insight and aplomb, Van Wyk Louw was one of the first Afrikaner intellectuals to publically suggest the notion of “separate development” as a policy to accommodate the existence of all the Peoples of South Africa with justice. He argued in 1946 that liberal demands for justice threatened the survival of Afrikaner ethnicity. Liberal demands for individual rights could be realized only “over the dead body of the entire [Afrikaner] People”. The only alternative, he wrote, would be “the separate development of the different groups – with as final goal something other than the current centralized Union”. This argument or something very like it was the logical and moral basis for Verwoerd’s announcement early in his premiership that independent African homelands were to be established.

Verwoerd’s mind seems to have operated at two levels; a political and pragmatic racial level and a moral and theoretical cultural level. Thus, he oversaw one of the most ambitious township construction projects for Africans in South African history while at the same time convincing himself that African urbanization could be stopped in its tracks. While not racist in his personal behavior, he flatly refused to compromise the deeply discriminatory racial assumptions of “petty” apartheid in pursuing the cultural goals of “grand” apartheid. At the same time that he constructed a massive empire – a state within a state based entirely on authoritarian rule justified by cultural assumptions – in the department of Bantu Affairs, he

pandered unashamedly to popular white assumptions of racial superiority. Immensely intelligent, he comes across as a combination of administrative competence, theoretical rigor and moral self-righteousness based on premises that shifted, apparently seamlessly, from culture to race depending on the context and the level of application. In theory, for Verwoerd, cultural assumptions were central, in practice, race trumped culture at every turn. One could argue that core disagreements amongst those who shared his inheritance centered on whether Afrikaner separate development policy should be focused on racial or cultural differences. One key to this ambiguity, it seems to me, was always to be found in how one addressed the question of Afrikaans-speaking Coloured people.

As an example both of Verwoerd's style of government and of his ideological ambivalence, then, we may consider his confrontation with the Cape Broederbond and Nasionale Pers on the question of Coloured representation in Parliament. Afrikaans-speaking, Dutch Reformed, sharing common everyday cultural practices, "brown people" were culturally Afrikaner. They even shared many aspects of the Afrikaner sacred history. There are "brown" bones among those of the Voortrekkers who fell under Dingane's clubs with Piet Retief. Despite this common history, "brown people" were increasingly alienated from their white Afrikaner culture-mates by the racial ravages of apartheid practices.

The Sharpeville massacre in early 1960 and the march on Parliament in Cape Town elicited great concern in Afrikaner intellectual circles. The fact that Coloureds refused to participate in the unrest was noted with approval in Cape Broederbond and SABRA circles. Cape Afrikaner intellectuals embarked on a movement to grant political rights to Coloured people -- to have "brown people representing brown people on Parliament". At a Broederbond

meeting in Cape Town in April 1960, Verwoerd was distinctly cool to the idea, arguing that there could be no turning back on the path to racial separation. Writing in his political column Piet Cillie, editor of *Die Burger*, nonetheless floated the idea for “general consideration”. It was his impression, he said, “that the National Party was already more than half-way to supporting the principle [of Coloureds in Parliament representing Coloureds]. With strong leadership the Party could be completely won over”.

After the success of the republican referendum in 1960, Verwoerd had begun to make overtures to English-speaking South Africans. After all, despite the long Afrikaner cultural struggle against British imperialism, Afrikaner ideals had finally been realized. With the achievement of this final Afrikaner political goal sealing Afrikaner power, the time seemed to be on hand, Verwoerd implied, for Afrikaners to join hands with English-speaking South Africans in a common South African citizenship. His efforts at rapprochement with the English had engendered hostility from culturally committed Afrikaners such as Albert Hertzog and other unreconstructed Christian Nationalists, however. Albert Hertzog also eschewed those in the Cape National Party who thought that Coloureds should be included in such reconciliatory moves. In fact in terms of ethnic nationalist logic, Cape Broederbonders argued, Coloureds had prior claim.

In October, D.P.Botha’s book, *Die opkoms van ons derde stand*, appeared with a forward by Van Wyk Louw. The cultural logic of separate development should not be applied to Coloured people, Louw wrote: “The brown people are our people, they belong with us.... I have a sincere desire – no, a passionate *will* – that my People, white and brown, and the language we speak, survive in this land.... In a wider context, I am concerned about all who represent *human* values in this country”.

Verwoerd was livid. Racial apartheid was at stake, he said. Representation of brown people by their own in the white parliament would ultimately lead to racial integration – indeed, “biological assimilation”. “I am not going down in history as the man who led the Afrikaner People to bastardization”, he told his wife. The racial foundations of his conception of Afrikanerdom came adamantly to the fore. “The Government and the leaders must stand like walls of granite. The survival of a People is at stake”, he declared. Cape Afrikaner intellectuals were shocked at the flat bleakness of Verwoerd’s announcement. Verwoerd nonetheless elicited unanimous support from the Cabinet – against the grain of ministers such as Donges, Paul Sauer and P.W.Botha. Letters to the editor of the *Burger* came in overwhelmingly, and often crudely, in favor of Verwoerd’s appeal to racial attitudes.

Cillie was unrepentant. He warned publically against a “heresy hunt” against Nationalists who had supported the idea of Coloured inclusion:

The people who are sympathetic to the idea of direct representation for the Coloureds are a minority in the Afrikaner ranks, but they are not a small number. They are also not unimportant. Some of them have reached their position through deep thought and much remorse, some also through prayer. We may overrule and reject their ideas because we believe them not to be practical politics; but if we begin to abuse them as liberals, integrationists and supporters of “biological integration” – the hideous new euphemism for bastardization – then it will begin to be the end of our National Party.

Besides, he added in a separate editorial, Verwoerd’s position was not official National Party policy. The official party line was simply that Coloureds should be represented by whites in Parliament. That could be subject to change or reform in changed circumstances “without it

exposing anyone to automatic condemnation for treachery against Nationalist rule, the National Party or the white race”.

Verwoerd could not let this point pass. It did not help that the Cottesloe declaration intervened at this point, insisting there could be no Biblical justification for apartheid. Verwoerd mobilized the full power of Broederbond connections on both fronts; in the church and in the party. All the NG provincial church synods rejected the Cottesloe declaration that apartheid could not be biblically justified. On January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1961, the Federal Council of the National Party unanimously and flatly denied as a matter of principle that Coloureds could be represented by Coloureds in Parliament. As Phil Weber noted in his diary at the time, however, the moral dilemma remained: “Coloureds have no homeland and restrictions on them ultimately mean repression”.

The entire business disgusted Piet Cillie. He felt that Verwoerd had had an opportunity to display true moral leadership on the issue. Impractical and impolitic as the idea of Coloured representation might have been, given racial feelings in the Afrikaner rank and file, Verwoerd could nonetheless have engaged in “open discussion” (to use Van Wyk Louw’s terms) that would have led to further debate. Ordinary Afrikaners could have been educated in a way that would have left the door open for future decisions on the matter. Instead, Verwoerd had acted with crass, arrogant and overweening racism. Race trumped culture and party politics overruled moral dissent in the Afrikaner churches after Cottesloe (despite editorial support for the dissidents from Cillie), in SABRA on serious development in the black homelands, and, as we have seen, in regard to the Coloured representation. Both Cillie and Van Wyk Louw remained in the National Party, but of *ope gesprek* at this stage there could be no question.

The question of the *Afrikanerskap* of “our brown people” became the logical and ethical Achilles heel of the entire policy of separate development as justified by cultural differences. There was no way of getting around it if culture were the basis for political rights. It seems that Verwoerd himself was aware of this. In the middle 1960s, when the South African legal team was defending separate development on grounds of culture as a policy for South West Africa before the International Court in the Hague they felt they could make a strong case that South Africa was helping the Ovambos, Hereros and so on on a road to independence. They asked Verwoerd (who was working closely with them): “But what about the Coloured people; they speak our language and share our culture, what logical reason can we supply for them?” Verwoerd said that there was no logical reason. What then, they asked: “Verwoerd paused for a moment and answered: ‘Eventually the Coloured will have to find his political future with the whites. But the time is not yet right’”.

So Verwoerd eventually acknowledged (at least in private) that Cillie was correct. In that case Cillie was also right that the debate about Coloured representation was truly a lost opportunity to establish a genuinely moral basis for separate development. If Verwoerd had conceded the point, even at a theoretical level, the cultural aspects of the policy would have been more defensible down the road. Perhaps Verwoerd was correct politically in the short term, given the racial attitudes of most of the white population at the time. But Verwoerd made no effort to educate his white supporters. Instead, he bludgeoned the Cape Broederbond into silence with adamantly racist arguments. Meanwhile, the policies of forced removal, the devastation of District Six, the international embarrassment of charges under the Immorality Act, and the humiliation of Coloured cultural, social and political leaders continued unabated. Even revelations of wide-spread economic and social misery by the Theron commission in the 1970s

did nothing immediately to alter the policy of racial separation for the Coloured people. Claims to rights of citizenship rested firmly on racial rather than cultural foundations. Whatever moral claims might be made for separate freedoms, as long as Coloured people were excluded from Afrikanerdom, the policy of separate development for different cultures remained racial apartheid.

Indeed, it seems to me that it was awareness of this moral dilemma (as well as other more political considerations) that led finally to the establishment of a Tricameral Parliament in 1983. As things turned out, this spelled the beginning of the end for the National Party regime in South Africa, not only because of the Conservative Party breakaway but also because it was much too late to placate international opposition to apartheid. Moreover the UDF opposition, inspired by black consciousness commitments, included Coloureds and Indians as well as Africans. They too now had a long history of overtly racial oppression. Apartheid policy had made them “black.” In addition, reforms in urban local government simply exacerbated opposition from African township populations. Despite post-Soweto *verligte* arguments that petty apartheid must be abandoned, Afrikaner power was ultimately doomed. I doubt that de Klerk himself was aware of this when he made his “quantum leap” in 1990. There were many more pragmatic reasons for his decision to grasp the nettle, nonetheless the grim prospect of Afrikaner survival without justice was certainly on his mind.

#### IV

Andre du Toit argued as early as 1983 that, “paradoxically enough, Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaner power, inseparably interwoven with the historical development of the apartheid order, have become a serious threat to the Afrikaner cultural struggle itself. For the sake of the

future of Afrikaans language and culture it must necessarily be separated from this power base.”

The question unanswered today is whether the Afrikaans language and culture, now firmly separated from political power can survive among the ruins of the apartheid order. Did F.W. de Klerk lead his people on their “last trek” too late to ensure their “survival” as a group with their own language and culture? Afrikanerdom, with its implications of Afrikaner power, has unraveled at the seams. What is at stake now is the future of Afrikaans and Afrikaners per se. The current question is: To what do we refer when we speak of “Afrikaners”? Is the language all that is left, so that Afrikaners are constituted as “all those who speak Afrikaans,” or are there other fragments of Afrikaner identity, a common history (a *volksgeskiedenis*), what I call a “civil religion” (maybe a *volksteologie*), that can be pulled together into a foundation for collective action? Should there be such an identity and what might now be its direction – beyond use of the language?

Dirkie Smit argues that, in the new South Africa, ethnicity is no longer relevant at all. Nor are other wider social bonds or the old struggles for social justice. Individualism reigns supreme. Afrikaners no longer constitute a group. Not only apartheid but also Afrikaner collectivity itself has disappeared into the ruins of the old South Africa:

So, has there been any change? Yes, indeed, so much and so quickly that many people can hardly remember what apartheid was, and why it ever was so important. Who cares about Dr Koot Vorster or any other *ooms* and whatever they might have done? And about structural and institutional issues? About our past, and dealing with its legacies? We were facing a brave new world, on our own, colour blind, free at last, walking tall, *boetmanne* without much *boete*, in short, as self-sufficient individuals, sometimes with families, a few friends, and perhaps a few fellow *taalstryders*, at the most.

Smit himself was no slouch in the struggle against apartheid. In 1982, he drafted for the Dutch Reformed Mission Church the Belhar Confession, which mounted a direct attack on apartheid theology in the name of a Christian doctrine of reconciliation that rejects “any doctrine which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people.” But the Belhar Confession also presupposes the church as a Christian community, indeed as a structure and an institution. Smit’s comments about change thus represent an ironical attack upon congregational practices in the contemporary postmodern NG Kerk which he clearly believes have drowned the baby in the bathwater, abandoning community itself in anodyne individualistic amnesia (perhaps conveyed with charismatic enthusiasm, although he does not mention the latter).

I myself have met Afrikaners who conform to Smit’s characterization, also even in the Gereformeerde Kerk. These are consumerist Afrikaans-speakers for whom language matters little and ethnicity even less. Theuns Eloff summarizes their position in the new South Africa very neatly:

They are to be found typically in high income groups and accept readily the privileges which the economic policies of the administration have provided for them. They send their children to English schools (“in the interest of their futures, you understand”) and think secretly that it is just a matter of time before the country collapses (“just look at what happened in Zimbabwe” they will say)... at which point presumably they make use of their passports.

From the point of view of Afrikaner identity, I suspect that this category of Afrikaners, in a curiously inverse way, may also overlap with those Afrikaans-speakers (also quite well-off) for

whom apartheid and, for that matter *Afrikanerskap*, is a somewhat guilty memory. They are all too aware of apartheid and its legacies. Eloff describes them as follows:

[They are] those Afrikaners who do not feel very strongly about language and culture but strongly favor the new South Africa. They feel strongly about reconciliation and perhaps a little guilty that they did not stand up more strongly against apartheid. They want now to do their part and feel that an overemphasis on language and culture could possibly endanger essential unity and reconciliation. They are inclined to be rather politically correct.

Like the first group, however, they too, in Dirkie Smit's terms, are "facing a brave new world, on their own, colour blind, free at last, walking tall, as self-sufficient [if mildly guilt-ridden] individuals."

Theuns Eloff, however, does not restrict his analysis to the two types of individualists described above. Eloff also describes two other types of contemporary Afrikanerness (he says he includes both "Afrikaners" and "Afrikaanses" in all his categories). (Please note that Eloff is working with what Max Weber would call "ideal types" rather than fixed categories. "Real" Afrikaners fall somewhere on a crisscrossing matrix constituted by a scale of from unity to diversity on the one axis and enthusiasm for the new SA on the other. His "types" fall at the four extremes.) The first of his other two types is militantly critical:

Such people typically exhibit active opposition to the new South Africa (a small minority would actually use violence), and also usually have a closed and exclusive conception of the (for them white) Afrikaners. And indeed by definition they close out other (according to them leftist) Afrikaners.

I met some such persons several years ago. Students at the University of the Free State who were members of Vryheidsfront Plus, they were firm and very clear that their duty as Afrikaners (they were insistent that being white was essential) was to oppose, not only the ANC, but the entire social structure of the new South Africa. Farm killings and racial affirmative action policies (in regard to university admissions and in job seeking) were clearly near the front of their consciousness. They found black fellow students both arrogant and offensive. They despised them for their perceived laziness and sense of entitlement. Although they were scrupulously polite, I nonetheless thought of them as angry Afrikaners – or at least resentful -- with a strong sense of loss. I suspect that their number is growing.

For contemporary Afrikaners with a truly dynamic conception of their culture, we need to turn to Theuns Eloff's fourth type:.

They accept the concept of the new South Africa and a democratic and human rights dispensation, but are critical about how the country is being ruled and how minority rights are being neglected. They actively use the Constitution to realize a better dispensation for fellow-Afrikaners and other minority groups.... They are inclined in principle to take politically incorrect stands, just to make a point, and their position comes closest to what Van Wyk Louw called "critical solidarity."

As I read it, the argument is that Afrikaners of this ilk accept the definition of human rights spelled out in the new South African constitution but will use this definition to fight for minority rights, especially but not exclusively, as Afrikaners. A good example of such a position, I believe, would be the Solidarity movement, which has become much more than an Afrikaner trade union. Eloff carefully insists, however, "that Afrikaners, in balancing unity and difference, must accept and live out equalization of rights as a principle. Afrikaans can be nurtured, for example, only in a multi-lingual context. And I cannot complain about my poor service delivery unless I am also worried about poor service delivery to my

neighbor in a previously black township.” The new Afrikaner struggle must be for rights that can be shared with all South Africans, for Afrikaner interests that are also general interests

In terms of Eloff’s argument, there is no place for an exclusive group of “true” (ware) Afrikaners. “The concept ‘Afrikaner’ includes a variety of political positions, beliefs and cultural positions.” Nor can there be a single Afrikaner leader. Afrikaners need to accept that different leaders emerging out of different social circles will need to work together on this Afrikaner “national” project. Moreover, Eloff adds: “It is also obvious for both political reasons and reasons of principle that there is no longer any place for ‘race’ in the debate -- and also not for hidden (*verskuilde*) racism.” As I see it, the intent is to “bring together those who belong together” as a particular Afrikaner movement toward universal interests and constitutional values. Eloff is espousing a politics of ethnic reciprocity rather than a culture of exclusion. Principled positions must be taken and fought for on their merits as contributions to the wider South African society. Afrikaners must make alliances with other interest groups. Moreover, I would say, such alliances should cut across ethnic identities. There needs to be fluidity about being Afrikaner. As Van Wyk Louw argued, societies are not made up of tidy circles, shut off from one another by gates and fences. Afrikaners need to pitch in with the rest of us and sink or swim along with us.

While such a position may seem to be very far from the narrow politics (and culture) of Afrikanerdom in its classical mode, it does not seem to me to depart too widely from the principles set forth in Van Wyk Louw’s passionate “liberal nationalism” of the 1950s, now in a new context in which Afrikaner survival implies justice for all. Without such a “new Afrikaner”, Eloff argues, the new South Africa cannot succeed. South Africa needs a dynamic Afrikaner culture as much as Afrikaners need to survive and work as Afrikaners for overall minority rights which are also human rights. In the time-honored words of N.J. van der Merwe, “Daar’s werk!”