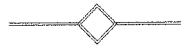


## KWAME NKRUMAH

*Kwame Nkrumah (1909–72) became deeply involved in the struggle for African decolonization during his studies in the US and Great Britain. Despite being arrested by the British in 1950, he won election to the Ghanaian parliament while in prison. In 1951, after the British had determined that Ghana would obtain independence, he was released and allowed to take his seat in parliament.*

*In 1952 Nkrumah became the country's first prime minister. Nkrumah declared Ghana's independence in 1957 and, in 1960, proclaimed the nation a republic. In the following excerpt from I Speak of Freedom, Nkrumah argues that African unity will be necessary in order to repair the damage of the colonial era and to move forward in the modern world.*



### I SPEAK OF FREEDOM

For centuries, Europeans dominated the African continent. The white man arrogated to himself the right to rule and to be obeyed by the non-white; his mission, he claimed, was to 'civilize' Africa. Under this cloak, the Europeans robbed the continent of vast riches and inflicted unimaginable suffering on the African people.

All this makes a sad story, but now we must be prepared to bury the past with its unpleasant memories and look to the future. All we ask of the former colonial powers is their goodwill and co-operation to remedy past mistakes and injustices and to grant independence to the colonies in Africa. . . .

It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.

Although most Africans are poor, our continent is potentially extremely rich. Our mineral resources, which are being exploited with foreign capital only to enrich foreign investors, range from gold and diamonds to uranium and petroleum. Our forests contain some of the finest woods to be grown anywhere. Our cash crops include cocoa, coffee, rubber, tobacco and cotton. As for power, which is an important factor in any economic development, Africa contains over 40 per cent

of the potential water power of the world, as compared with about 10 per cent in Europe and 13 per cent in North America. Yet so far, less than 1 per cent has been developed. This is one of the reasons why we have in Africa the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, and scarcity in the midst of abundance.

Never before have a people had within their grasp so great an opportunity for developing a continent endowed with so much wealth. Individually, the independent states of Africa, some of them potentially rich, others poor, can do little for their people. Together, by mutual help, they can achieve much. But the economic development of the continent must be planned and pursued as a whole. A loose confederation designed only for economic co-operation would not provide the necessary unity of purpose. Only a strong political union can bring about full and effective development of our natural resources for the benefit of our people.

The political situation in Africa today is heartening and at the same time disturbing. It is heartening to see so many new flags hoisted in place of the old; it is disturbing to see so many countries of varying sizes and at different levels of development, weak and, in some cases, almost helpless. If this terrible state of fragmentation is allowed to continue it may well be disastrous for us all.



Kwame Nkrumah is inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of Ghana in 1960. New York World-Telegram and Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection.

There are at present some twenty-eight states in Africa, excluding the Union of South Africa, and those countries not yet free. No less than nine of these states have a population of less than three million. Can we seriously believe that the colonial powers meant these countries to be independent, viable states? The example of South America, which has as much wealth, if not more than North America, and yet remains weak and dependent on outside interests, is one which every African would do well to study.

Critics of African unity often refer to the wide differences in culture, language, and ideas in various parts of Africa. This is true, but the essential fact remains that we are all Africans, and have a common interest in the independence of

Africa. The difficulties presented by questions of language, culture, and different political systems are not insuperable. If the need for political union is agreed by us all, then the will to create it is born; and where there's a will there's a way.

The present leaders of Africa have already shown a remarkable willingness to consult and seek advice among themselves. Africans have, indeed, begun to think continentally. They realize that they have much in common, both in their past history, in their present problems and in their future hopes. To suggest that the time is not yet ripe for considering a political union of Africa is to evade the facts and ignore realities in Africa today.

The greatest contribution that Africa can make to the peace of the world is to avoid all the dangers

inherent in disunity, by creating a political union which will also by its success, stand as an example to a divided world. A Union of African states will project more effectively the African personality. It will command respect from a world that has regard only for size and influence. The scant attention paid to African opposition to the French atomic tests in the Sahara, and the ignominious spectacle of the UN in the Congo quibbling about constitutional niceties while the Republic was tottering into anarchy, are evidence of the callous disregard of African Independence by the Great Powers.

We have to prove that greatness is not to be measured in stockpiles of atom bombs. I believe strongly and sincerely that with the deep-rooted wisdom and dignity, the innate respect for human lives, the intense humanity that is our heritage, the African race, united under one federal government, will emerge not as just another world bloc to flaunt its wealth and strength, but as a Great Power whose greatness is indestructible because it is built not on fear, envy and suspicion,

nor won at the expense of others, but founded on hope, trust, friendship and directed to the good of all mankind.

The emergence of such a mighty stabilizing force in this strife-worn world should be regarded not as the shadowy dream of a visionary, but as a practical proposition, which the peoples of Africa can, and should, translate into reality. There is a tide in the affairs of every people when the moment strikes for political action. Such was the moment in the history of the United States of America when the Founding Fathers saw beyond the petty wranglings of the separate states and created a Union. This is our chance. We must act now. Tomorrow may be too late and the opportunity will have passed, and with it the hope of free Africa's survival.

#### Study Question

1. To date African unity has been virtually impossible to obtain, despite its obvious advantages. Why?

### A.L. (ALBERTUS LOURENS) GEYER

*Dr A.L. Geyer (1894–1969) was a journalist and diplomat. Between 1950 and 1954 he served as the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in Britain. This speech, to the Rotary Club in London, discusses the apartheid policy of the National Party under Daniel Malan and provides Geyer's*

*interpretation of the future benefits of the policy. The speech was given in August 1953 at which time the British government was already expressing opposition to the racial policies of the South African government. In 1961 South Africa left the British Commonwealth and declared itself a republic.*

### THE CASE FOR APARTHEID

As one of the aftermaths of the last war, many people seem to suffer from a neurotic guilt-complex with regard to colonies. This has led to a strident denunciation of the Black African's wrongs, real or imaginary, under the white man's

rule in Africa. It is a denunciation, so shrill and emotional, that the vast debt owed by Black Africa to those same white men is lost sight of (and, incidentally, the Black African is encouraged to forget that debt). Confining myself to that

area of which I know at least a very little, Africa south of the Equator, I shall say this without fear of reasonable contradiction: every millimetre of progress in all that vast area is due entirely to the White Man.

You are familiar with the cry that came floating over the ocean from the West—a cry that 'colonialism' is outmoded and pernicious, a cry that is being vociferously echoed by a certain gentleman in the East. [This refers to Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India.] May I point out that African colonies are of comparatively recent date. Before that time Black Africa did have independence for a thousand years and more and what did she make of it? One problem, I admit, she did solve most effectively. There was no overpopulation. Interminable savage intertribal wars, witchcraft, disease, famine, and even cannibalism saw to that.

Let me turn to my subject, to that part of Africa south of the Sahara which, historically, is not part of Black Africa at all—my own country. Its position is unique in Africa, as its racial problem is unique in the world.

1. South Africa is no more the original home of its black Africans, the Bantu, than it is of its white Africans. Both races went there as colonists and, what is more, as practically contemporary colonists. In some parts the Bantu arrived first, in other parts the Europeans were the first comers.

2. South Africa contains the only independent white nation in all Africa. The only South African nation which has no other homeland to which it could retreat; a nation which has created a highly developed modern state, and which occupies a position of inestimable importance.

3. South Africa is the only independent country in the world in which white people are outnumbered by black people. Including all coloured races or peoples the proportion in Brazil is 20 to 1. In South Africa it is 1 to 4.

This brings me to the question of the future. To me there seems to be two possible lines of

development: *Apartheid* or Partnership. Partnership means cooperation of the individual citizens within a single community, irrespective of race. . . . (It demands that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever in trade and industry, in the professions, and the Public Service. Therefore, whether a man is black or a white African, must according to this policy be as irrelevant as whether in London a man is a Scotsman or an Englishman. I take it: that Partnership must also aim at the eventual disappearance of all social segregation based on race. This policy of Partnership admittedly does not envisage immediate adult suffrage. Obviously, however, the loading of the franchise in order to exclude the great majority of the Bantu could be no more than a temporary expedient. . . . (In effect) 'There must one day be black domination, in the sense that power must pass to the immense African majority. Need I say more to show that this policy of Partnership could, in South Africa, only mean the eventual disappearance of the white South African nation? And will you be greatly surprised if I tell you that this white nation is not prepared to commit national suicide, not even by slow poisoning?'

The only alternative is a policy of *apartheid*, the policy of separate development. The germ of this policy is inherent in almost all of our history, implanted there by the force of circumstances. . . . *Apartheid* is a policy of self-preservation. We make no apology for possessing that very natural urge. But it is more than that. It is an attempt at self-preservation in a manner that will enable the Bantu to develop fully as a separate people.

We believe that, for a long time to come, political power will have to remain with the whites, also in the interest of our still very immature Bantu. But we believe also, in the words of a statement by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1950, a Church that favours *apartheid*, that 'no people in the world worth their salt would be content indefinitely with no say or only indirect say in the affairs of the State or in the country's socioeconomic

organization in which decisions are taken about their interests and their future.'

The immediate aim is, therefore, to keep the races outside the Bantu areas apart as far as possible, to continue the process of improving the conditions and standards of living of the Bantu, and to give them greater responsibility for their own local affairs. At the same time the long-range aim is to develop the Bantu areas both agriculturally and industrially, with the object of making these areas in every sense the national home of the Bantu—

areas in which their interests are paramount, in which to an ever greater degree all professional and other positions are to be occupied by them, and in which they are to receive progressively more and more autonomy.

#### Study Question

1. Why did British, and later global, opposition to the imposition of apartheid have little effect?

## DESMOND TUTU

*Desmond Tutu (b. 1931) entered the Anglican priesthood in 1960, serving as a parish priest and lecturing at a theological seminary in Johannesburg. By 1975 he had become an outspoken member of the anti-apartheid movement, calling for global economic sanctions against the apartheid government. The following year he was consecrated as Bishop of Lesotho. His anti-apartheid work was recognized by the Nobel Prize Committee in 1984, and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace; however, the*

*South African government refused to acknowledge the award. By 1986, Tutu had been elected the first black archbishop of Cape Town, making him the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa. He would serve in this post, continuing the fight against apartheid and its after-effects, until 1996 when he resigned to become the full-time head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The following excerpt outlines Tutu's vision for a post-apartheid South Africa.*

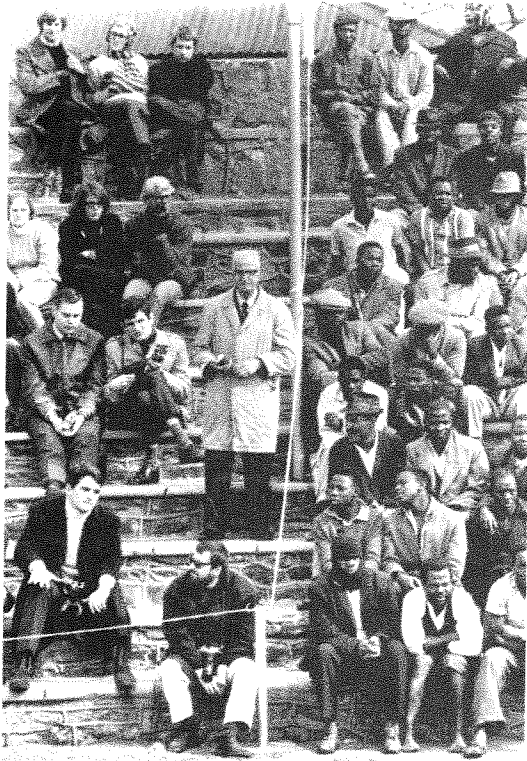
### MY VISION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

We should all have the freedom to become fully human. That is basic to my understanding of society—that God created us without any coercion, freely for freedom. Responsibility is a nonsense except in the context of freedom—freedom to accept or reject alternative options, freedom to obey or disobey. God, who alone has the perfect right to be a totalitarian, has such a tremendous respect for our freedom to be human, that he would much rather see us go freely to hell than compel us to go to heaven.

According to the Bible, a human being can be a human being only because he belongs to a

community. A person is a person through other persons, as we say in our African idiom. And so separation of persons because of biological accidents is reprehensible and blasphemous. A person is entitled to a stable community life, and the first of these communities is the family. A stable family life would be of paramount importance in my South Africa.

There would be freedom of association, of thought, and of expression. This would involve freedom of movement as well. One would be free to go wherever one wanted, to associate with whomsoever one wished. As adult humans we



Segregated seating, such as this in Bloemfontein, South Africa, was common at all public events during the apartheid era. Courtesy of the United Nations Photo Library (177913 UN/DPI/H. Vasai).

would not be subject to draconian censorship laws. We can surely decide for ourselves what we want to read, what films to view, and what views to have. We must not be frog-marched into puritanism.

Because we are created in the image of God one of our attributes is creativity. South Africa is starved of the great things many of her children can create and do, because of artificial barriers, and the refusal to let people develop to their fullest potential. When one has been overseas and seen for example the Black Alvin Abbey dance group, which performed modern ballet to standing room only crowds at Covent Garden, then one weeps for how South Africa has allowed herself to be cheated of such performances by her own inhabitants.

How many potentially outstanding people are being denied the opportunity to get on?

When I think of the splendid young people I have met, who despite some horrendous experiences at the hands of the system, have emerged quite unscathed with bitterness, and who have a tremendous humanity and compassion, then I weep because we are so wantonly wasteful of human resources. We need a course on human ecology.

I lay great stress on humanness and being truly human. In our African understanding, part of Ubuntu—being human—is the rare gift of sharing. This concept of sharing is exemplified at African feasts even to this day, when people eat together from a common dish, rather than from individual dishes. That means a meal is indeed to have communion with one's fellows. Blacks are beginning to lose this wonderful attribute because we are being inveigled by the excessive individualism of the West. I loathe Capitalism because it gives far too great play to our inherent selfishness. We are told to be highly competitive, and our children start learning the attitudes of the rat-race quite early. They mustn't just do well at school—they must sweep the floor with their rivals. That's how you get on. We give prizes to such persons, not so far as I know to those who know how best to get on with others, or those who can coax the best out of others. We must delight in our ulcers, the symbols of our success.

So I would look for a socio-economic system that placed the emphasis on sharing and giving, rather than on self-aggrandizement and getting. Capitalism is exploitative and I can't stand that. We need to engage the resources that each person has. My vision includes a society that is more compassionate and caring, in which 'superfluous appendages'<sup>1</sup> are unthinkable, where young and old are made to feel wanted, and that they belong and are not resented. It is a distorted community that trundles its aged off into soulless institutions. We need their accumulated wisdom

and experience. They are splendid for helping the younger to feel cared for; certainly that has been the experience in the extended family.

I believe too that in a future South Africa we must be supportive of the family. The nuclear family is not geared to stand all the strains placed on it by modern day pressures. There are things we can survive better in a group than singly. I know there are pressures in the extended family, but I need to be persuaded that these are greater than those presently haunting the nuclear family.

Basically I long and work for a South Africa that is more open and more just; where people count and where they will have equal access to the good things of life, with equal opportunity to live, work, and learn. I long for a South Africa where there will be equal and untrammled access to the courts of the land, where detention without trial will be a thing of the hoary past, where bannings and other such arbitrary acts will no longer be even so much as mentioned, and where the rule of law will hold sway in the fullest sense. In addition, all adults will participate fully in political decision making, and in other decisions which affect their lives. Consequently they will have the vote and be eligible for election to all public offices. This South Africa will have integrity of territory with a common citizenship, and all the rights and privileges that go with citizenship, belonging to all its inhabitants.

Clearly, for many people, what I have described is almost a Utopia, and we cannot reach that desired goal overnight. Black leaders would, I feel, be willing to go back to the black community, and say: 'Hold on—things are moving in the right direction' if certain minimum conditions were pledged and met, even in stages, by the white powers that be. These are:

- a. Abolition of the Pass Laws.
- b. The immediate halting of population removals.
- c. The scrapping of Bantu Education, and a move towards a unitary educational system.
- d. A commitment to call a National Convention.

These would be significant steps towards realizing the vision.

#### Note

1. The South African government referred to black workers as 'superfluous appendages'.

#### Study Question

1. Until the late-1980s official western support for ending apartheid was minimal at best. Why did so few western governments support the views put forward by Desmond Tutu and others?

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### TIPS FOR ANALYSIS

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#### 'Accuracy'

Is the document comparable to other writings on the same topic? While opinions and interpretations may vary widely it is usually possible to judge the degree of accuracy within the document. Compare the facts presented by the author to other accounts of similar events in order to judge the reliability of the source.