

Denial of language diversity: the ultra-right in South Africa

J.C. Moll, Free State University, Bloemfontein, South Africa

1. Point of departure

This a liberal, humanistic orientated discussion, the point of view being that the potential value and goodness of human beings are of prime importance and that no cultural propensities, championing of race or language, religious convictions, moral persuasions or whatever, are to be considered more important than the well-being or furtherance of the human condition. Africa is a continent where dictators are thriving and where democracy seems to be on the wane and South Africa is very high on the list of the most violent societies with serious problems in social services, health management etc. For the true humanist none of these negative factors furnishes the right to be a racist. South Africa as a constitutional democracy has through its constitution, brought the greatest freedom to all its peoples in all spheres of life in a country plagued for decades by discrimination and oppression.

As with all social or political concepts, the concept of ‘radical right’, ‘right wing extremism’, ‘far right’ or ‘ultra-right’ (See Billig 1989:4) undergoes constant change as a result of the dynamics of cultural and social life. That is the reason why some academics prefer the term ‘new ultra-right’ to accentuate the changing character of the term.

2. The terms Afrikaner and Afrikaans

Two terms, – Afrikaner and Afrikaans – need some explication. An African is a person from Africa, especially a black person, although many whites consider and call themselves Africans. The rightist definition of an Afrikaner is an Afrikaans speaking white person, while a liberal definition would be simply an Afrikaans speaking person thus including the many brown/coloured people speaking the language. I subscribe to a wide definition of Afrikaners in which colour, religion, political beliefs, sexual preferences are irrelevant. Anyone who *feels* him- or herself Afrikaner is entitled to be called Afrikaner (See Scholtz, 1998).

Afrikaans is one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. The language is derived from the form of Dutch brought to the Cape by Protestant settlers in the 17th century and spoken by around 6 million people. South Africa has a total population (rounded figures) of around 48 million: blacks 80%; whites 9%; 8,5% coloureds; Asian 2,5% (*Financial Mail*, 11 April 2008:27). That is, until 18 June 2008 when Chinese after a struggle of nine years qualified for full benefits of black economic empowerment and now fall within the definition of black people in the Constitution (Masombuka 2008:4).

3. Introduction

There seems little reason to defend studies on the radical right and the disturbing truth is that racism, violence and ultra-nationalism (or neo-nationalism as it is sometimes termed) have become an international phenomenon and part of the “political normalcy” of our time (Shah 2007:2). It seems as if this way of thinking is gaining in strength in spite of serious attempts by humanist activists from all quarters to stand up against what is also called neo-fascism (Griffin 1993:175). One of the most important reasons for its persistent occurrence is the increasing demographical, political and environmental crises facing the First World to accommodate more immigrants. Indigenous populations are opposing immigration more and more vehemently, while fundamentalist and ethnic ultra-nationalists worldwide, and especially Islamites, are reacting more rebellious within the societies they find themselves, becoming more aware of their own cultural identities and opposing all forms of assimilation much stronger.

There seems to be general consensus about the renaissance of right-wing extremism in many parts of the world as a result of factors like xenophobia, tribal and cultural clashes (which often manifests itself in language disputes), competition for resources, renewed racism, etc. Language rights usually come to play wherever cultural clashes occur. These are in the ascendant and bode ill for the future. In my own country we have recently been in the throes of very serious xenophobic attacks, many dying and being robbed of their possessions.

The cardinal point this presentation wishes to make is that, although far-right groups have largely disappeared from the scene, it is important to analyse their thinking as it still is very much in the ascendant under the guise of language activities and rights and a total concern with the own culture, the own language, the own group, the own

separate space. Many of their ideas have always been mainstream Afrikaner thought, a way of thinking that, in disguise, continues as part of the mainstream discourse.

4. General characteristics of the ultra-right

The problem in discussing the radical right is that it is usually used in a pejorative sense. Admittedly a liberal humanist finds himself in the same position of total aversion and rejection of ultra-right views, but one's earnest endeavour should be to try and explain this phenomenon as truthfully as one understands it. It is also a term that is almost always exonymic, i.e. applied by others to a group rather than by a group labeling itself. "There is no political party that calls itself 'right-wing' extremist' or 'left-wing extremist', and there is no sect of any religion that calls itself 'extremist' or which calls its doctrine 'extremism' (Extremism 2008:1).

It has been argued that the world decadence provides the key to the ideas of the ultra- right. The existing order is seen as decadent and one which needs to be altered or removed (Woods: 1989: 124 et seq). Modernity is rejected as decadent and parliamentarianism is perceived as bankrupt; the obsession is with nationalistic rebirth and the mythic core of this sort of viewpoint can best be summed up in the words of Griffin in his concept of 'palingenetic [meaning rebirth] ultra-nationalism'. (Griffin 1995: 2). This is a theoretical framework that can lead one to the heart of rightist thinking.

This desire for the impossible ideal of moral purity and political unity has been described as a kind of political nympholepsy, "the desire, that is, for the unattainable [...] an impossible ideal of moral purity and political unity" (Billig 1989:176), a quest which amounts to a rejection of the prosaic complexities of the world we live in.

The world of the radical right is punitive (Vaughan 1991:213), not compassionate, especially as society has to be cleaned up of its pernicious elements. It is filled with emotive analogies and value laden vocabulary where family imagery like the strict father (against the nurturing parent), mother, son, blood, love are used when discussing national identity. Threats to the nation are often described in sexual connotations like rape, miscegenation, homosexuality, prostitution, etc. Concepts like conspiracy and dark forces and deep-laid plots that run the world, abound. These help to

provide a sense of identity “through the revelation of having seen the dark forces which run the world in their ‘true light’”. (Eatwell & O’Sullivan 1989: 72).

The right’s conspiracy theory can ultimately be traced back to Christianity and monotheism, which simplifies world conflict into a struggle between God and Satan, a tendency which encourages a belief in the existence of a hidden, evil hand. This is reinforced by a tradition, dating back to the Manichean heresy and secularized and simplified by the Enlightenment, which portrays the world as a struggle between an in-group and out-group. More crudely put, there has always been a side to the Christian tradition which is anti-Semitic). Here one enters a world reminiscent of neo-fascism: racism, ultra-nationalism, anti-Communism, rejection of equality as humans are not seen as free and equal.

Of importance is also the advocacy of the authority principle in the family, return to the land, the reliance on religious values to strengthen the family and transform education. Fear of the black masses tends to drive the “small man” to demagoguery and acceptance of vitriolic oratory like that of the leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging) in South Africa, more of which later.

4.1 Important traits of ultra-rightist thinking

A number of the more important traits of right-wing extremism are usually listed such as:

- . An inclination to character assassination.
- . Name calling and labeling and hate speech is the order of the day. It seems true that each culture apparently have approved things to hate and “whole cultures may be induced, invited, or permitted to hate people or ideas they fear, or who are perceived as threats to dearly held values” (Whillock & Slayden: 1995: Introduction).
- . The making of irresponsible, sweeping generalizations
- . The absence of adequate proof for assertions
- . A bipolar (Manichean) world view and viewing opponents as evil)
- . Self-identification by reference to the enemy
- . Substituting intimidation for argument (slogans and ‘thought-terminating clichés’)
- . Claims to moral superiority based on conservative religiosity

- . Doomsday thinking attached to the idea of a time of great danger
- . Justification to do bad things in the cause of the supposedly ‘good cause’
- . Emotion opposed to reasoning (sensationalism)
- . Vigilantism (citizens undertaking law enforcement in their community without legal authority)
- . Divinely-inspired and mystical rationale for actions and beliefs
- . Intolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty (fanaticism)
- . Personalization of hostility (Extremism: 2).
- . Extreme nationalism
- . A law and order mentality
- . Anti-communism (which still is one of the key-words for far-right South African groups but hardly seems to make any sense as it is no longer seen as a real threat)

Perhaps more enlightening to come to grips with the ethos of the far-right, is to focus on ideological criteria tied to a theoretical concept of social change. In this regard modernization theories seem to be helpful. Right-wing extremism can then be defined as the undoing of social change towards a nationally defined community and a return to the traditional roles and status of the individual. The radical right constitutes an ethocracy instead of a democracy. And returning to Griffin, the core of radical right-wing thinking is the “nationalistic myth” which is characterised by trying to reach an ideal of national belonging by radicalizing cultural, ethnic and religious criteria of exclusion. The followers react with rigidity and closed-mindedness to follow promises of a simpler, better society.

The white group is presented in favourable terms whereas blacks, immigrants, minorities are portrayed as “the source of problems, conflicts, threats” (Whillock & Slayden 1995:10). Different cultures are seen as incompatible and references are made to the ‘fanaticism’ of Moslem fundamentalists, the ‘underachievement of minorities’ the ‘criminal tendencies of non-whites’ (Whillock & Slayden 1995:14). The persistence of the outdated term non-whites is revealing, illustrating how in these circles white is still considered the measure of all things civilized and acceptable.

There is in under ultra-rightist groups always the “capacity for extremism and intolerance” and hate speech is the order of the day. It has to be born in mind that each culture does seem to have approved things to hate and “whole cultures may be induced, invited, or permitted to hate people or ideas they fear, or who are perceived as threats to dearly held values” (Whillock & Slayden 1995: X). Is this not a reason for us to wear the cloak of ethnicity and nationalism very warily and circumspectly?

Certainly hate is used by far-rightist groups to polarize so as to “organize opposition, solidify, and marshal resources toward forcing a ‘final solution’ to a thorny problem” (Whillock & Slayden 1995: XI). All cultures seem to use hate speech to establish in-groups and out-groups and it may be true that if we admit hate as part of a culture, it will bring us closer to trying to understand its nature and uses. Expressions of hate should alert us that something is wrong and we should look at the conditions that create receptive hearers and examine critically what is being said and why. “Hate speech must be recognized as a legitimate and valuable form of symbolic expression in society – not because it is true or sound, but because it identifies discontent, injustice, inequities (Whillock & Slayden 1995: V).

5. The ultra-right in South Africa and manifestations of neo-fascism

During the apartheid years the accusation was heard from various quarters that South Africa was a fascist state (Moll: 1984:114-166). The apartheid system of Prime ministers D.F. Malan and H.F. Verwoerd and their followers was typified as fascism and the ANC maintained throughout that apartheid and Nazism was in reality identical (Scholtz 1997: 7). A group of leading Afrikaners who had studied in Germany was strongly influenced by Nazism during the late thirties and early forties of the previous century, especially by the German mystical, romantic reverence for nation and fatherland. Thereafter the idea of ethnicity was applied to black ethnic groups with the idea of a homeland for each group and thus the apartheid ideology was formulated and applied. Anti-Semitism was also present under many Afrikaners. This attitude and way of thinking seem to be entrenched among many Afrikaners up to the present day (Scholtz 1997:7).

The charge of fascism against white domination in the country centred around accusations of racism and specifically the herrenvolk idea, the draconic laws

characterized as ‘Nuremberg legislation’, the totalitarian features of the regime, anti-Semitism, intolerance, terror and physical force against opponents, the wide control over propaganda and on many facets of public life. As early as 1970 P Duncan prophetically warned in his *South Africa’s Rule of Violence* (1970:10): “the apartheid issue is already a symbol of the world-wide clash of colour destined to mobilize the world against this latter-day Nazism, this new rule of the herrenvolk”. The terrible experience of millions of people during the Second World War as a result of fascist domination led to worldwide condemnation of any form of racial superiority and discrimination. The ANC elicited attention and great support and sympathy with its continuous accusation that South Africa’s regime was racist and fascist, while human rights supporters hammered on the ‘Hitler style policy of racism’ (German Democratic Republic Committee for Human Rights Bulletin 1976:6). Newspapers referred to the apartheid murderers and the National Party rule was castigated as a racist minority regime.

One of the bitterest attacks came from the pen of B Bunting in his book with the revealing title, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (1964). His conviction was that various factors were responsible for fascist ideas finding resonance with the Afrikaner: the historical ingrained enmity towards Britain, German miscegenation in the Afrikaner people, the white rulers’ susceptibility towards doctrines of race and blood and anti-Semitism.

But to hark back to the present. During the nineties South African ultra-rightist groups multiplied to such an extent that there were according to calculation almost sixty active groups. In 1990 the Pretoria *Organisation for Peace and Conflict Studies* reckoned there were between 46 and 56 different groups making their appearance like mushrooms (*Die Volksblad* 1990). Their common ideological connection and aim were “to ensure the political rule and political exclusivity of the Afrikaner” (Delpont 1990:7) often resulting in a search of self-determination through the creation of a nation state. The names of many of these groups revealed their aims and intentions: the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (*Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging*); the Boers’ Resistance Movement (*Boere Weerstandsbeweging*) with the aim of restoring the old Boer Republics; White Security (*Blanke Veiligheid*); The Afrikaner People’s Union (*Afrikaner-Volksunie*); the Christian White Confederation (*Christen Blanke Konfederasie*); the Boer State Party (*Boerestaats Party*) (Uitnodiging Boerestaats Party:1-4) with the aim of establishing an exclusively white state under Boer control (Wroughton 1988:3); the Afrikaner People’s Guardian (*Afrikaner Volkswag*) aiming to set up a healthy nationalism under Afrikaners and a

homeland for Afrikaners (Cull 1990:8); Power Action Afrikaner Nationalism (*Magsaksie Afrikanernasionalisme*) to preserve the Afrikaner heritage and assure that the country would not be overrun by blacks or foreigners; the Afrikaner National Socialists (*Afrikaner Nasionaal Sosialiste*), a racist neo-Nazi organisation that glorified Hitler and refused Jews and people 'of other colour' to live in the country; Israel Identity (*Israeli Identiteit*), a fanatical religious group trying to lay proof from the Bible that white South Africans were descendants from the lost tribe of Israel, part of an elected race and convinced that blacks were not 'humans' and a group with international Aryan movements connections (Cull 1990a:6); the branch of the World Apartheid Movement, an international white racist organisation adhering to a philosophy committed to white racial purity and white world domination and convinced that AIDS would destroy the black races (Cull 1990a:6).

The refrain of most of these groups is Afrikaner exclusivity, race purity and race superiority, the militaristic aspiration for a Afrikaner homeland, hatred for and derision of non-white groups, aggressive assertion and preservation of Afrikaner culture, the vociferous cherishing of the people's interests and ultra nationalism. All these elements carry the characteristics of Griffin's matrix of 'reborn ultra-nationalism'.

Almost all the important traits listed above are to be found in the radical right's attitude in South Africa. Especially identifiable towards other cultural groups is racist religiosity which projects grievances "fears and anxieties into the 'shadow' figures of blacks with the result that religious transcendence [beyond the merely physical human experience] is stunted. Among a large number of Afrikaans speaking Christians there is no genuine spirituality, but separation and condescension and rigid self-righteousness, salvation depending on the elimination of the other. It is a question of a Manichean view of "good and evil, light and darkness" with humanity being debased in the process (Goodrick-Clarke 2002: 6). Of course such a closed outlook leaves very little room for the cultural or language rights of 'the other'.

The vocabulary one encounters here is crude. The refrain of most groups is Afrikaner exclusivity, racial superiority, hate and scorn against black groups, aggressive assertion of Afrikaner culture, ultra nationalism. There is talk of blacks as 'mud races', of 'ape kaffirs', of the corpse of Afrikaans or the Afrikaner being like a dog with a chopped off tail. Most adherents show abhorrence towards the blacks as the natural enemy (like the fanatical *Israel Identity* religious organization which maintains blacks are not human beings), calls for the redemption of the Afrikaners as the chosen people and an inciting

call for Afrikaner self-determination. The accent is on exclusiveness: Afrikaner, Boer, Farmer, Christian Whites, White this and that, etc.

To these groups can be added the ultra-extremists who have been responsible for bomb explosions and the murdering of what they call the “chimpanzee kaffers”, one being Chris Hani, one of the most cultured and dynamic of black leaders.

Causes for the strengthening of the far-right in South Africa is the backlash against affirmative action and political correctness causing a growing strain on the white middle classes (Goodricke-Clarke 2002:229) and as elsewhere in the world, the impact and drift towards the far right is increased by unemployment (especially young white males not finding work and standing at the back of the queue), by farmers scared of the increasing specter of land appropriation, by the degree of violence permeating everyday life, the insecurity of a bleak political future for whites, the increasing cost of living, incapable ministers (like the minister for health), government and ANC corruption, disregard of minorities, the prospect of a tainted future president.

5. Examples of far right manifestos

5.1 Orde Boerevolk (Order Boer Nation)

By quoting from two far-right manifestos the mindset of the radical right is more fully illustrated. The first shows some of the contents of a manifesto by one of the most extreme right-wing leaders (Piet Skiet [Shoot] Rudolph) of the *Orde Boerevolk (Order Boer Nation)*:

Manifesto of the leader of the Order Boer Nation

1. Because I believe in the indisputable truth of the Bible, in God Triune and the existence of his elect chosen people here at the Southern Point [of Africa] therefore I sign this manifesto with my whole heart, faith and mind .
2. I consider the new manuscripts or Roman MSS as false and deliberately discovered and created to eventually replace the God of Israel with an assimilating God of the Liberal Theology. In the same way I reject the Moslem God and sacrificed victuals thrust upon on me and my country.

3. I am a proud Afrikaans speaking Boer who here has a mission to fulfil and belief in the advancement of my Language and Culture which form a further corner stone on my future path. I will do everything in my power to fulfil my God given task, namely to establish, advance and support my People (*Volk*) and thereupon establish me and my family and their future.
5. As member of the Chosen People and proud citizen of my country I demand without denial my own state and republic as it existed and were acknowledged world-wide before it was conquered by Britain.
6. I will do everything in my power to respond to the summons of my God, my People and my Country to once again protect my Country.
7. I believe in the inalienable right as citizen of my Country to educate my children in the traditions of my forefathers.
8. I believe that the seed-line and white genes implanted in me and my forefathers make me a superior race and that nothing will stand in my way to extend and uphold this.
9. I believe God is the only Head of the community and the His land and I do not acknowledge that my country can be extended by means of political groupings and institutions.
11. I will achieve my aims with the Word before me, with my weapons and my equipment in and around me and will not hesitate for a moment to protect my property and my People with everything at my disposal.
13. I undertake to nail this manifesto against doors and spread it throughout the Country where I live and thereby make known my resolve to the present liberal and leftist government of South Africa and other enemies.

(Rudolph 1990)

The key sentiments and words here are: total conviction; chosen, superior race; advancement of own language and culture by any means; withdrawal into an own state; the rejection of other political groupings or institutions.

5.2. Statement of principles of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement

When far-rightist groups were at their height in the 1990's (at one stage not fewer than 60+ were counted of which most have since disappeared), the biggest and most important of the far-rightist groups was the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (*Die Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging: AWB*).

The movement sets as aim "to unite all White Christians into one great Afrikanerdom founded on the self-determination right of nations" and therefore "to inspire the Afrikaner with a powerful awareness of its organic blood, culture, soil and historical bond" of which the Afrikaner language will form the "growth nucleus". The common enemy against the body and soul of the entire White race is seen as the "anti-Christian powers, namely communism, Zionism and liberal ideologies". As primary target the consistent preservation and strengthening of the Christian White race through the "traditional principle of separation between white and non-white" is set. What is strongly denounced is the "anti-national striving for cultural homogeneity, race miscegenation" and the striving for a world state. Only whites can be citizens of the state (Programme of Principles of the AWB). The Programme was amended over the years and became less aggressive and although it was stated that a revolution was not intended, the warning went out that a black communistic government and everything that was foreign and hostile would be opposed "to the death".

R. Griffin has pointed out that the programme of the AWB shows many characteristics of a 'palingenetic' mindset. It believes in the purity of a homogenic nation and the idea that 'palingenesis' is required. Frequent references are made to "Mammon, Humanism, Communism", how to bring them to light and how to combat them (Griffin 1995:377). The principle is laid down that the racially pure people must be freed from these and other undermining powers in modern society. On one occasion a vow was taken to die rather than share power with other races in South Africa.

The idea of a reborn Boer nation which has to denounce its enslavement takes on a clearly racist undertone in the pronouncement that Afrikaner Boers have to be made aware of their "white descent, their blood relationship and nationalism and the importance of racial purity; the advancement of family love, hearth and home, nation and fatherland, the furtherance of an ardent consciousness of tradition and history among the youth and the maintenance and development of Afrikaner-Boer culture". Coloureds are

to receive a “separate state community” and the Indian is considered “a foreign object in the South African fabric” with no claim to a say in the government. All of this is closely linked up with a linguistic nationalism by accentuating the upholding of the Afrikaans language (Program of Principles AWB).

Probably the most unique feature of the AWB variety of neo-fascism is the accentuation of being Christian and the definition of the nation as fountainhead of final authority. What the AWB visualises is really a mixture of an ‘ethnocratic’ and a ‘theocratic’ state (Griffin 1995:376). The AWB postulates in their conception of nationhood “the supremacy and guidance of the triune God in the destiny of nations”, the acceptance of the Word of God as guide for the existence of the nation, while the Protestant faith and the Christian national worldview must determine the development of the national life in every sphere (Program of Principles AWB). In fact, the AWB programme is a mixture of Christian fundamentalism and ultra-nationalism. Measured against Griffin’s definition it becomes clear that the movement is an example of Christian fundamentalism and ultra nationalism, especially in the policy towards the youth which refers to a Christian national education in order that the youth will grow up in the fear of the Lord to honour and obey him. It is an example of a post-war, non-European form of neo-fascism (Griffin 1995:378).

The reasons why the label of neo-fascism is pinned on the AWB becomes even clearer by analysing the movement’s emblem: three sevens in circular design encircled in red. It is a reference to Christian nationalism’s struggle against the Monster of the Apocalypse with its satanic figure of 666, but it does not seem coincidental that the emblem is also a variation of the Nazi swastika (Right Wing Afrikaner Flags:1). The official AWB explanation of the AWB is that the “emblem acknowledges the Biblical symbolism of the protective solicitude of the Lord”, objecting to the hostile, liberal press which sees it as a swastika (Schutte 1987:5).

5.4 Principles of the Freedom Front Plus (FF+)

The followers of this less radical party (Vryheidsfront 2008) refer to themselves as ‘rightist Afrikaners’ and is the most rightist party with representation in Parliament. The main emphasis is on the protection of the cultural rights and interests of Afrikaners

with strong emphasis on language rights and mother language education and a community grounded in Christian values. The vision of a volkstaat' (a separate homeland for the select group) is explicated as follows: A volkstaat for Afrikaners and for all people closely identifying with the Afrikaner culture, language and tradition. Judging from the mild Afrikaner support for this party it seems that most Afrikaners' biggest worry is not Afrikaner unity, but anxiety to present a strong opposition.

6. Consequences of a rightist ethos on a South African campus

The FF is overwhelmingly represented on the Free State university campus and during their campaign in 2006 received 84% of the votes and controls the Student Representative Council. The FF supporters were very vociferous all over the campus, handing out pamphlets openly stating their narrow aim to first and foremost protect and further the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner culture. They reveled in their victory and seemed to be under the impression that they could manage all of student life, especially in the largely segregated hostels, as a personal fief. They were strongly represented in one of the hostels, Reitz where a flagrant racist incident caught worldwide attention and eventually led to the closure of this hostel. The incident was a video made by four of the inmates of an initiation ceremony showing black cleaners who were persuaded to take part to show their identification with the hostel, drinking a potion purportedly of urine. The leaking of the above video caused one of the worst turmoil in the University's hundred year history and all this as a result of rightist thinking in student politics, showing slight regard for the delicacy of black-white relationships.

6.1 Some deductions of an investigation (2006) into the art and cultural experience and expectations of students on the UF Campus

By the end of 2005 I was requested by the University management to investigate the cultural set-up on the campus and make recommendations (Moll, 2006: 1-63).

But first a word on what a university is supposed to be. A university is not a place where one celebrates one's language, culture or religion. It is a place which should be

defined and driven by an academic culture where academic communication, research and teaching occupy the central position and where the best language to achieve this should be chosen and used. The Free State University is for almost 70% black and these students prefer English and through English, communication nationally, with the rest of the Continent and internationally becomes possible.

For the investigation a questionnaire was devised and answered by more than 700 students of which about 50% men and 49% women. Most came from smaller towns (56%), medium towns (21%), and cities (15%). As is shown, the investigation was about art and culture in general and as should be expected, language came into play. Some of the questions and responses were:

Do you think enough is being done culturally to make young people feel at home on the campus and really enjoy themselves? About one out of three thought that not enough was being done.

If not, why is that so and what can be done? Comments on racism showed that black students experienced it the most and see it as preferment of whites and contempt for black cultures; the word apartheid is heard; top management is accused of racism because they prefer white culture; the presence of top management and whites at functions where black culture is cultivated can turn the tide; apprehension of non-English speakers and non-Sotho speakers that their languages are being threatened; Afrikaners look down on English.

How can cultural deficiencies be corrected? Integrate lectures; make sure that every learner is taught in his/her mother tongue just like Afrikaners are taught their mother language; more focus and energy into projects that require a racial quota so that all may feel they are represented; have more activities that involve black students; inclusion of all cultures in the SRC; by involving everyone black and white so that we can learn their culture; make people of different races and cultures stay together in hostels; a cultural day where every student will represent his/her culture and be able to sit at one table of brotherhood.

Do you experience any discrimination against your culture on the campus? Almost 50% answered in the affirmative.

Where do you experience discrimination? Students of other colour (meaning blacks) want to force my language out; it feels as if the campus wants to wipe out my culture; non-whites think we are all racists; everywhere I go; hostel versus hostel; this University is the most discriminatory place in the country; the term interaction does not exist on campus; most white students get early classes and students who are not Afrikaners get late-night classes; when it comes to our marks; some white lecturers give white students scope before writing exams; the Reitz hostel.

In which way do you experience discrimination? The reaction covered many facets but only language issues will here be touched upon: people are negative about Afrikaans and want to wipe it out rather than accommodate; a lecturer mixes Afrikaans and English classes for tutorials and then speaks Afrikaans throughout without English explanations; the language issue whereby 75% of proceedings is conducted in Afrikaans; if you are not an Afrikaner or Boer and don't speak Afrikaans you suffer; why everything in English if UFS claims it is double-medium?; white people speak English to us; some lecturers are entirely Afrikaans but take English classes; they cannot even complete a single sentence in proper English which makes it difficult to grasp what is being said; some white lecturers give white students scope before writing exams, neglecting blacks; classes are not presented in my language; classes are mostly in English; discrimination against Afrikaans people in class; lecturers speak English on account of only one English student; white lecturers who make Afrikaans classes work easier by giving them better scopes for tests; departments are the major cause because they make timetables to suit only Afrikaans students.

White students feel unhappy when too much English is spoken in class. Black students distrust Afrikaans classes and lecturers in that they are suspected of doing more for one group than the other. My recommendation was that English be made the medium of instruction.

Remark: It is clear that language as instrument of culture is enormously important. On the one side there was dissatisfaction of what was seen as the disregard of Afrikaans in and outside the lecture room. On the other hand there was the perception under black students that Afrikaans students were being favoured by white Afrikaans speaking lecturers. A very forceful argument is that black students are prepared to forgo their mother language in order to be lectured in English, but Afrikaans speaking students make no sacrifices. There were many more comments from black students than white students on discrimination.

What would you change? The most important sentiments from black students (and a few white students) were integration (cultures, hostels), unity (of all), interaction (between cultures, the staging of cultural events), and exposure (between races). Black and white students complained about discrimination against their cultures and activities discriminating against different cultures or focussing only on white culture instead of all groups being treated equally. The most important sentiment of white students was protection of their own culture.

My recommendation was that top management should send out a signal that too many separate cultural pursuits are not the way forward and that 'black' universities should be visited to find out how culture is organised and practised.

How would you change things? Most comments deal with fighting racism, transformation, (transform now and the next generations will face a happier future), tolerance, equality, cultural contact (the appeal is for a friendlier, happier campus atmosphere where all can work together and learn from one another); or accentuating diversity (white students accentuate the right to practise, value and protect their own culture).

My recommendation was that top management should have refused dealing with a Student Council that does not reflect reality on and outside the campus. I stressed the fact that there were strong opinions regarding the fact that the existing language policy was perpetuating apartheid. What our University needs is a captivating vision and 'code of conduct' for the whole campus. The following is an example of the opening of the University of Queensland in Australia: "*Many Voices One Song*". A multi-faith-

multicultural concert to celebrate the beginning of the Academic Year. Featuring an indigenous Welcome and performances by the Buddhist, Christian, Greek, Orthodox, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim Faiths.

6.2 Reasons for English preference

English can serve as medium between different cultural groups whose own languages are not the same. English is an international language, Afrikaans only an indigenous language. English is for blacks the language of aspiration. The vast majority of people in South Africa prefer English above Afrikaans. Afrikaans was favoured under the previous dispensation and must be scaled down through affirmative action. Afrikaans schools and other institutions are 'islands of apartheid'. Multi-linguality is extremely costly and unattainable.

7. Conclusion

Many neo-fascist elements can be traced back in South African ultra-rightist notions, emotions and actions and the matrix of 'palingenetic nationalism' is here also applicable. The glorification of the own group and mistrust in the 'other' (the foreign, the blacks, the unknown), repugnance in the idea of equality, expressions of racism and hostility towards migrants, the incitement to 'save', to renew and to lead the Afrikaner to new heights, are all present. And there is reason to believe that this train of thought will not become less acute. The position of whites is becoming more precarious (the Free State campus now has about 60% black students) and understanding for cultural rights and true democracy by the ruler do not tally with white expectations and prospects. What is happening in the rest of Africa gives no cause for optimism.

The question is, does the Afrikaner again want to fall into the trap of aggressive nationalism which caused them to follow a fundamentally wrong direction? Those rightist Afrikaners who do not wish to immigrate to a white enclave like Orania will have to make the shift from their idea of a volkstaat to the new South Africa. The new South

Africa is a country with a black majority for which English is also only the second or third “*lingua franca*”.

Far-right convictions and actions are killing what should be the dream for Afrikaans and Afrikaners, namely to sincerely profess: the self-evident truth and inalienable right that all are born equal; that their children should live in a nation where they will not be judged on the colour of their skin but the content of their character. Whites are complaining that the government’s policy of affirmative action is precisely the reverse, but there are certainly no bridge-builders in rightist thinking and politics between the old and the new Afrikaner and the old and the new South Africa. Neither Afrikaners for Africa nor Afrikaners against racism are to be found among them.

When President Mandela was freed thousands of Afrikaners uttered these words with Mandela: ‘Never and never again in this beautiful country of ours will anyone be suppressed by another’. It is also clear that the demise of many ultra-rightist groups and the waning of the once strong AWB and of Afrikaners’ support for parties that further the cause of the Afrikaner *per se* is the result of the disillusionment with the ethnic mobilisation of their group for political purposes. Many withdraw from politics or support the ANC or settle abroad. In the words of Victor Hugo: ‘No force is more futile than that whose time has run out’.

Still the far-right stays active as illustrated recently at a national arts festival where posters were displayed with reference to a controversial song, De la Rey, one of the Afrikaner heroes during the Anglo-Boer War and to the motto of the apartheid South African state coat of arms. The song was sung throughout the country and there were requests from some quarters that it should be banned as it was fuelling racial tension.

Or is discrimination and hate speech normal occurrences? Some defend hate speech as a form of free speech. “Hate speech promotes an open society where both sides of a conflict are examined, a practice that encourages tolerance, engenders respect for ideas, and may even result in more robust dialogue” (Whillock & Slayden 1995:227). Is it advisable to sanitize campus conversations? The Supreme Court in America stated in a 1943 case (West Virginia State Board of Education vs. Barnette): “If there is any star fixed in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or

force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein (Whillock & Slayden 1995: 241).

To argue that it is merely a question of my language right or wrong will cause division and in South Africa a renewed sense of apartheid. The correct way to follow seems first of all to put academe first and use the language that will serve students best and open most opportunities nationally and internationally. Secondly to seek the good of the whole campus and the bringing together of black and white by making language subservient to a *lingua franca* that will bring students together. Will strife at universities be ended by banning the two most divisive factors in all societies, religion and ethnicity/nationalism from all campuses?

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