

**TRENDS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
AND THE ROLE OF BOPHUTHATSWANA**

Lucas Mangope

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Lucas M. Mangope

With every passing month since Bophuthatswana assumed independence, the whole Southern African region has been moving ever faster towards an unpromising historical watershed. Its peoples and governments are faced with momentous options, and it has become a focal point in world affairs. This is not surprising, for indeed, the future of Southern Africa is very much in the balance.

The search for solutions to our dilemma has become an obsession. Countless new formulas are being put forward, and yet - if we are to be quite honest - we are essentially still drifting. We have a less than clear and unanimous idea about our direction.

The central concern in this search is for a formula of freedom, harmony, peace and prosperity for all. The alternative is a loss of freedom, civil strife, violent confrontation and economic and human disaster. The implications of the alternative are clear to us all, and they are - in the now famous phase - "too ghastly to contemplate".

We also know that our region is being watched with unprecedented intensity by the whole world. Yet let us make no mistake: the dice are definitely being cast *here*, and the world knows it. Hence the uncertainty and disarray, the fanatical and extremist preoccupation with Southern African issues, the lack of objectivity. Hence the flood of conflicting recipes, which tell us what to do - recipes that are uninformed, contradictory, confused - that demonstrate that the world is still unable to appreciate the extraordinary complexity of our situation in realistic perspective.

Yet there is one point on which there is clear unanimity. This point, which enjoys world-wide consensus, is the total abhorrence of institutionalised, and thereby officially condoned discrimination - and, whether we like it or not, we must bear in mind that our search for a solution is - and will remain - immersed in the current of world events. We cannot opt out of this stream. It is therefore imperative that we undertake an unsentimental survey of trends and currents that give direction to world events.

Major polarities at present determine the dynamics in international policy-making. Among these, the East-West confrontation still dominates world affairs. In this arena, Africa has at present become the main focus of confrontation, and the eye of the storm is now closing in on Southern Africa. The question is whether we are yet truly honest and realistic enough about the factor that will determine the outcome of this confrontation in our region. Regrettably the answer is a clear "no".

We still fondly deny that it is for us to play the decisive ammunition into the right hands. We still fondly deny that the decisive ammunition in this struggle is entirely of our own manufacture: it is our stand in principle, in our legislation, and in our daily actions and attitudes, on the issue of racism and discrimination. Whatever progress we as a region are timidly making on this issue, the cruel fact is that we still overwhelmingly continue to play into the hands of the East.

The main thrust of Communist strategy in this region is to exploit - in its all-out bid for revolution and domination - the universally detested realities of continued institutionalised discrimination. Under the pious cloak of

spearheading the crusade for liberation of this subcontinent from racism and colonialism, the Eastern bloc is partially succeeding in giving an aura of moral justification to its dreams of imperialism.

So masterful is their exploitation of the racial issue, that the Marxists are wooing the sympathy of world opinion with an uncanny measure of success. We have reacted with a sense of profound shock and outrage. Southern Africa is now facing a situation where even Western governments and churches - for long regarded as the citadels of freedom - are actively or tacitly collaborating with the Communist strategy. Yet it is the same Southern Africa that - through its reluctance to introduce creative change - continues to fuel this strategy.

This cynical situation has thrown the Western ranks into a state of confusion and disarray, not equalled ever since the World War II allies parlayed the greater part of Eastern Europe into the hands of Russia. We know all too well that unless the West rallies immediately to take an uncompromising stand against Russian neo-imperialism in Southern Africa that we may ultimately share the fate of Eastern Europe. Yet the tragic fact remains that the hands of the West will remain tied until Southern Africa itself unties them. It is clear that at present the West cannot be expected to take a firm stand, because of the fundamental moral issues involved. The West is totally committed to opposing institutionalised discrimination. It is in this moral commitment that we must seek the root cause of the West's actions, for example when it fails to support us in the world's council chambers, when it endorses boycotts, sanctions or economic disengagement, or when it blasts us with harsh and hostile publicity.

Whereas we in Southern Africa so readily indulge in rationalising with bitterness and self-pity about the West's spinelessness, double standards and outright treachery, we should rather take realistic heed of the fact that, worldwide, policies towards Southern Africa will continue to pivot around the central issue of institutionalised discrimination. What this means is that our fate will be sealed *not* in the council chambers of New York, Moscow or Addis Ababa, but right here in the council chambers of Southern Africa, and on topics such as equal opportunity and consolidation.

We, and nobody else, will in the final analysis determine whether there will be salvation or disaster in the African sub-continent. We must not deceive ourselves about this harsh truth. As long as institutionalised discrimination remains legally and constitutionally enshrined, we will have to accept two uncompromising consequences: On the one hand, we will continue to embarrass, confuse and paralyse the West. On the other hand, we will be continuing to give international credibility to the faked moral varnish of the Eastern bloc's expansionist strategy. In this way the Marxists will be allowed to proceed - unchallenged by the West - in their bid for conquest by violence, or - as they treacherously like to call it - to liberate the oppressed multitudes of Southern Africa through the barrel of the gun.

No amount of words can change this situation, or argue it away. *Deeds and actions* are what we need - actions that testify to a new departure in our human relations; actions that are consistent, dignified and born out of faith in our common destiny of freedom.

Against this background of the crucial role we have to play in shaping the immediate destiny of Africa in terms of the East-West confrontation, we must not lose sight of another dimension in contemporary world affairs. This is the

so-called North-South polarity, or the confrontation between the affluent countries on the one hand, and the less developed and least developed countries on the other. This more recent confrontation between the "haves" and the "have-nots" is rapidly escalating. Since neither side seems inclined to come to grips with the realities in a convincingly self-searching way, the vicious circle continues to operate. This is to say, that the affluent countries are becoming more affluent, whereas the poor countries are sinking into greater depths of frustration and deprivation. As long as this gap continued to widen, it is bound to generate enormous new areas and potential for conflict and tension. Not only is the North-South polarity destined to become a primary factor in the world affairs of tomorrow, but there is no doubt whatsoever that the Communist bloc is going to exploit it ruthlessly in furthering its goal of world domination.

Southern Africa will be a major focal point in this confrontation. South Africa is not only one of the few countries in the southern hemisphere belonging to the affluent camp, but it is virtually the only one on the African continent. What makes South Africa an infinitely more vulnerable target in this North-South conflict is the additional fact - unforgivable in the eyes of the international community - that its affluence remains overwhelmingly the monopoly of a white minority. It is futile to hope that any historical justification for this privileged status will ever be considered as being of relevance. Since the Southern African region - and particularly South Africa - contains within its borders in microcosm the essence of the worldwide North-South conflict, no concessions will be credited with even a grain of relevance or credibility, except for a fundamental departure from racially entrenched privilege, in favour of a realistic formula of equal opportunity for all.

In the context of these two mighty tides of world-encircling conflict, the East-West and North-South confrontations, Southern Africa has become the most widely acknowledged test case. What is more, by deciding to cling to certain anachronisms of institutionalised discrimination, South Africa has put itself in this embattled position by a process of free choice. Thus far - though it is rumbling at our gates with increasing fury - the deluge of bitterness and discontent has not yet swept us over the brink of unmitigated disaster. Time, however, is running out fast. But still - and this is the merciful challenge of history - we have, even in this late hour, the freedom of option.

This raises the one big question which - whether we are white or black - matters most: What are we *doing* about it? On what programme of goal-orientated *action* have we embarked, or have we committed ourselves to embark? The urgency of *doing* something that is constructive, that will reconcile and unify all the children of this subcontinent, so as to be able to stem and avert the tide *together* - that is the central question of our present generation. It is not only the central question for each and every statesman and politician, but confronts with equal responsibility every man and woman, every community, and every national or cultural component group in our subcontinent. It confronts those most of all, who wield most power.

It is the urgency of this fateful question that brought Bophuthatswana into being. As a responsible member of the Southern African family of nations, we pledged ourselves to dissociate ourselves from the futility of recrimination, speculation and drifting. We pledged ourselves, instead, to do something creative, courageous and unifying for the sake of the great cause. This cause is the common cause of all of us, namely safe-guarding and fulfilling the long-term destiny of Southern Africa, of pioneering the road to freedom, peace and prosperity for all its people.

It was in the spirit of this commitment that we chose, a mere fourteen months ago, to embrace the road to "greater independence". Lest you have forgotten, I must remind you that I deliberately rejected the concept of "full sovereign independence". We rejected it particularly in its short-sighted sense, whereby we mutually wash our hands in dishonest "righteousness" about the fate of our neighbours. We, the people of Bophuthatswana, are convinced that all nations of Southern Africa must accept the principle of interdependence as a fundamental fact of life. It is the cornerstone on which we alone can hope to build a meaningful future of peaceful, dignified and prosperous co-existence. We are all fellow passengers in one little boat, tossed by the storms of an age of change, and if we do not accept this fate positively, our boat will certainly sink.

In order to enable ourselves to contribute meaningfully to our common future, we believe the term "greater independence" to be the most realistic and the most responsible one. We see our step as the beginning, and not the end, of the road towards our national aspirations, and towards the fulfilment of our historical task. Why this step was necessary will - we are convinced - be recorded by history. In fact, we believe that the first year of our "greater independence" has already fully vindicated this strategy.

What we desperately needed, in the first place, was a *power base*, a free platform of our own, in order to assert the principles that will forge the road into a meaningful future, not only for us as a nation, but for ourselves as integral members of the Southern African Community. Only by achieving this essential power base, have our hands and our hearts become truly free to dedicate our service - in humility and faith - to the fulfilment of our vision. Our deepest and foremost commitment is to root out in our society every trace of discrimination on the grounds of race, culture or creed. Inasmuch as we remain true to this commitment, Bophuthatswana shall become, God willing, a catalyst for accelerated and peaceful change, so as to overcome at last the very real and potent threat of racialism in the sub-continent.

You are entitled to ask whether we, a relatively tiny and weak nation, are not over-optimistic when we hope to play the role of catalyst. My answer is this: In our interpretation of history, we believe that in the destinies of men and nations the ultimate victory will not be won by the forces of arms, money and numbers, but by the forces of the spirit. Thus we believe implicitly that the forces of love can and shall overcome the forces of fear. And wherever love prevails, the Kingdom of God shall prevail, and remain invincible.

We have no illusions about the magnitude of our task. We know full well that in order to become a catalyst we must first succeed in building Bophuthatswana into a worthy and convincing model. This requires high standards of dedication, integrity and perseverance. It also requires the courage to abstain from boastfulness and corruption in favour of self-searching humility and self-discipline. At this stage I can say with confidence and gratitude that we have come a long way - and in a short space of time - in demonstrating that we mean to remain true to our calling, that we mean to serve faithfully the honourable cause to which we have committed ourselves as a nation.

In this national endeavour, in this will to develop, our guiding star is our Constitution. More than any other Constitution on this continent, it binds us to translate into concrete realities the principles of non-discrimination, calling upon each and all of us to rise above everything the past has inflicted on us,

and to genuinely learn to accept people. You are welcome to put the integrity of this intention of ours to a test by asking the dedicated whites who are working side by side with our people in the ranks of our public service. I am confident that you will find those who have identified with our larger vision will confirm that they feel more accepted, secure and wanted than perhaps in any other black state in Africa. Inasmuch as they identify with our cause with loyalty and dedication, we will never regard such people as aliens or temporary sojourners. On the contrary, we are going out of our way to instil in them the confidence and security of truly belonging.

Other basic principles of our Constitution which are indispensable cornerstones of the model we are pledged to build, are the concepts of a free democracy, the bill of fundamental human rights and dignity, the rule of law, the system of free economic initiative, and our deep-rooted respect for Christian values.

In New York city, close to the United Nations headquarters, is an independent organisation that monitors the quality of freedom enjoyed by populations in all countries of the world. In its offices at Freedom House is a huge world map, on which all countries are shaded in according to their classification into three groups, namely "free", "partly free" or "not free". In Southern Africa, Botswana is the only country classified as "free", South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia are indicated as "partly free", whereas Bophuthatswana, along with all the remaining countries, is stated to be "not free". Needless to say, this contradicts our Constitution and our attitudes and actions as flowing from our national commitment. We are determined to build a model in Bophuthatswana that will change this Map of Freedom in keeping with the newly emerging realities.

We realise, of course, that it is not enough to have the finest principles written into a Constitution which may be collecting dust in a forgotten drawer. We must never fail in solemnly appealing that these principles become the actual guide-lines in all our day-to-day actions and attitudes. Only then will we be motivated to turn into a living reality those qualities which are the indispensable ingredients to real progress and national self-upliftment. These are all related to the quality of our self-discipline as a people, and foremost among them is our performance record in terms of hard work, ever increasing efficiency and productivity, sobriety, impeccable politeness, honesty and helpfulness in rendering service to the public, and, last but by no means least, an absolute intolerance of all forms of bribery and corruption. I feel so strongly about the last point, that I have no hesitation in saying that even though we should succeed in meeting all other challenges, yet if we condone the evil abomination of bribery and corruption in our ranks, be it in the public or the private sector, that we will definitely fail in building the model that will be a catalyst to a brighter future, not only for our nation but for the family of nations in the whole Southern African region.

All that I have said - when frankly assessed in perspective against the realities and trends of the Southern African and the world scene - converges in one clear and urgent message: If we are going to salvage our future, time is of the essence, and if we do not muster the courage to embark immediately on action - and I mean action that is unified, imaginative, determined and rooted in faith - then time is hopelessly against us.

We find it greatly heartening that my consistent call to opt for the road towards a Southern African Economic Community, with its political expression in a federal or confederal structure, with a strong emphasis on internal autonomy so as to safeguard the cultural aspirations of the component identity groups,

is finding a positive echo from rapidly widening circles of leading South Africans in political, private sector and academic circles, and is given favourable publicity by the media. It is also most encouraging that my call for a Council of States, as a first significant step on this new road, is receiving attention at the highest levels.

After an in-depth assessment of strategies most likely to serve the long-term interests and the common cause of the peoples of Southern Africa, there is no doubt in my mind that we can and must agree on one strategic priority: this is, as I already emphasised earlier, to stop drifting and to put a conclusive end to those things which give ammunition - specifically of a moral or ethical nature - into the hands of the Marxist-Leninists. Instead, we must act without delay to satisfy the one imperative condition which will give the West and the O.A.U. the moral justification of rallying to our support. This condition is - and we all know it - to do away altogether with institutionalised discrimination. This stumbling block is at the root of the present deadlock in our relations with the O.A.U. and the West, and only we here in this region can remove it.

To those who try to justify the continuation of institutionalised discrimination on the grounds that it will make no difference either way to the hardened attitudes of the O.A.U. and the West, I hereby reply, out of my deepest conviction, that I totally reject and defy that view with all the contempt it deserves. All of us who have contacts abroad can vouch for the fact that a significant breakthrough in this region's internal deadlock on the race issue will mark a turning point, leading to an eventual breakthrough in terms of our international image and credibility, the like of which has not been seen in many decades.

To assist in initiating this breakthrough is the central concern of my message, and I am addressing myself to all governments, to all politicians, to all leaders and opinion-makers in the private and public sectors, and to every man and woman in the Southern African region:

My earnest appeal at this critical juncture is, firstly, that the rulers and leaders of all nations and communities of this region, for the sake of our common future, and the future of our children and our children's children, be urged jointly to explore and define those basic principles on which we shall find ourselves to be on common ground; and, secondly, that we shall pledge ourselves to honour such principles as being the guide-lines for the orderly and peaceful evolution of this sub-continent in terms of political, social and economic structures and the quality and dignity of human existence and human relations.

My appeal would, however, be devoid of credibility if I did not spell out the fundamental principles in question. First and foremost, there must be an unwavering commitment to oppose and to abolish any form and manner of institutionalised discrimination on the grounds of race, culture or creed.

It must be stated forthrightly that the deeply entrenched tradition of colonial-style discrimination, which is, alas, still alive in South Africa, has brought forth a bitter harvest not only in the fields of human relations, political rights, and economic opportunity. At this stage, in fact, the problem of territorial consolidation must be seen as perhaps the most sinister

and potentially most disastrous manifestation of the iniquity of discrimination. It is the one question on which we Batswana - a proverbially peace-loving nation - might very well be driven to the desperate point of taking up arms.

Also to be spelt out clearly by all participating leaders, must be the intent to structure the order of society and government on the basis of a Bill of Rights, the Rule of Law, the principles of democracy and free economic initiative, and on respect for Christian values.

It is my belief that the launching of this appeal comes at such a critical juncture in the fortunes of our sub-continent, that its chances of bearing the desired fruits are infinitely more hopeful than at any previous stage in our history.

It will be taken as self-evident - and yet I wish to emphasize this point - that the spirit which pervades the major policy statements of the Prime Minister of South Africa, and the way it is eagerly echoed by leading members of his Government and the public, has contributed very significantly in kindling this flame of renewed hope. In particular I must sincerely commend his decision to review the provisions and implications of the 1936 Land Act. During the past decade, as you will remember, nobody has surpassed me in consistently exposing the irrational and immoral interpretation that was given to the 1936 legislation. And I did it with the contempt which that exercise in dishonesty deserved. If the spirit of the Prime Minister's statement is soon converted into concrete reality, then indeed a major watershed will have been crossed, for it will allow coming generations of both blacks and whites to face their common future with much greater confidence and security.

It is also most sincerely to be hoped - in the interests of all parties concerned - that my persistent advice on a more constructive approach to territorial consolidation - hitherto conspicuously ignored - will be considered with the seriousness it deserves. If consolidation is interpreted merely as a process of haggling over hectares and percentages of land owned by blacks or whites, this must necessarily lead to tragedy. It is patently impossible to unscramble all the injuries and injustices of history - with the resulting claims and counter-claims - to everybody's full satisfaction. The one meaningful objective of consolidation - if we take the long-term forward view - should be seen in providing optimal foundations for peaceful and creative co-existence, foundations on which we can successfully build a federally or confederally structured Southern African Economic Community.

With this over-riding goal in view, I have always pleaded for the principle of *territorial credibility*. The most crucial ingredient for the successful implementation of this approach is a departure at once from the cruel and painful iniquity of expropriating the land of white farmers prior to handing it over to black governments. Nothing will ever convince my Government that it is just and honourable forcefully to disown and eject white farmers, if their land is to be included in Bophuthatswana. On the contrary, we will welcome them with open arms and hearts to remain on their farms, if they so desire. After all, their experience, diligence and know-how give dynamic impetus to our own development and economic upliftment. Therefore, we not only welcome them to continue tilling the land of their fathers, but we are willing to negotiate suitable guarantees and safeguards, which will make them feel accepted and secure in our midst. All we ask of them is to honour our aspirations as laid down in our Constitution, just like any loyal citizen of any free country.

We regard the choice - i.e. between adopting Bophuthatswana as his new country, or else putting his farm up for sale and quitting - as the inalienable right of each individual farmer. My Government has given extremely careful consideration to this approach as a more realistic and economic alternative to the present policy, and I believe it to be the only formula by which the issue of consolidation can be deflected from striking the terrible rocks of disaster.

In conclusion, I feel there is one point on which we can all agree as never before. Mercifully, the realisation that the hour has now come for black and white to stand together in order to save both our heritage and our future, is gaining ground among the rank and file of our populations at an unprecedented rate. Let us pledge ourselves at this hour to do everything in our power to encourage that spirit, so that it may grow from strength to strength. We are at the crossroads, and from here onwards we know for a fact that united we stand or divided we fall. If and when Providence should grant us - after our path through the wilderness - to reach the Promised Land, we still know that we shall never be privileged to gain entrance unless we enter it *together*!

May the Almighty give us abundantly that spirit of togetherness - to us assembled here, the people of Bophuthatswana and South Africa, but also - and in the same full measure - to all His children in Southern Africa!