

BEING AFRIKAANS IN THE NEW (MULTILINGUAL) SOUTH AFRICA ¹

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1.

It will be possible to say something meaningful about Afrikaans people in the new South Africa only if we approach the subject in the spirit of the old fellow who prayed each night: “Lord, give me the strength to seek the truth, but defend me from those who have already found it.”

The great problem with being an Afrikaner in the apartheid years was that there were so many people, particularly politicians and academics, who had already found the truth. They were very sure about who and what the Afrikaner was, what challenges he faced, and how the struggle for survival should be conducted.

What this illusory certainty did, particularly in the heyday of apartheid, was to place Afrikanerdom within a restricted and often stultifying ambience. To be an Afrikaner was to be white, conservative, and strictly Reformed (in religion). It meant being absolutely sure that the welfare of everyone in the land consisted in separating white, brown and black from one another.

I always wondered how they could be so certain about the Afrikaner's identity and outlook. Historically, the term “Afrikaner” has been used in at least four different ways. The most frequent of these refers to white Dutch- or Afrikaans-speakers.

But the term had other applications. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it also referred to the better-educated slaves and their descendants, who were also known as “oorlamse” — persons who had adapted to European ways. In 1830, the first issue of the first Afrikaans newspaper defined Afrikaners as Dutch- and English-speaking colonists who gave priority to the welfare of South Africa. In the years preceding the Jameson Raid, Cecil John Rhodes and his adherents referred to themselves as John Bull

Afrikaners and Anglo-Afrikaners. Leaders like Generals Hertzog and Smuts and Dr Malan, who grew up in this era, were still speaking of Afrikaans- and English-speaking Afrikaners in the third decade of the present century.

“Afrikaner” also sometimes included brown Afrikaans-speakers. During the ten years following the First World War, when the National Party was trying to win the Coloured vote, MPs from Cape constituencies were using the term in this way. J. H. H. de Waal, who was also well known as one of the early Afrikaans writers, wrote in 1919 that the Coloureds were people “who speak the same language, have the same love for South Africa, have substantially the same history and interests, are led by the same friends, and are in almost all respects in the same situation” [translation]. They were, as he put it, “fellow Afrikaners”.

With the exception of the ideology of segregation and apartheid, which prevailed between 1936 and 1976, there was never a dominant political dogma in Afrikaner history. Perhaps the dominant political value was a pragmatic search for allies. In order to succeed in the difficult task of surviving as a fairly small group — regardless of how one defines the term Afrikaner — allies were essential.

For the most part, these allies were white English-speakers, but the position varied with changing circumstances. In the 1929 general election, the Cape Nationalists advised General Hertzog to abandon his old allies, the white Labour Party, in order to concentrate preferentially upon the Coloured vote.

Before the ideological glacier of segregation and apartheid overwhelmed their thought, Afrikaners had widely different ideas on the question of a survival strategy. Still writing in Dutch, Prof N. J. Brummer remarked in the 1918 issue of the Victoria College memorial album:

The Afrikaner is a utilitarian. “Useful” is his favourite word: a useful fellow, a useful horse, a useful place. The word “useful” has a moral connotation for him. “Useless” means morally bad. His highest value is “Usefulness”, not “beauty”. Everything is judged according to its usefulness in life. Character is extremely important to him, and religion also, for this, in his opinion, is the source of character. [Thus] both religion and char-

acter are prized because they guarantee useful people. The Afrikaner will therefore not seek any knowledge for its own sake, but only for the sake of its usefulness to him. Similarly, he derives his love of freedom and independence from circumstances that make these things indispensable. In order to make a success of life in this country, he must act independently and conduct his affairs in freedom.

These words published in 1918 provide a much better guideline for the survival of Afrikaans-speakers in this country than anything written by any of the apartheid theorists. Apartheid was the very antithesis of independent living and freedom of action. It transferred to the state the task of ensuring the survival of Afrikaners and Afrikaans. Apartheid wanted to do this by means of a white political monopoly, compulsory mother tongue education, and the entrenchment of Afrikaans in many other ways. Moreover, apartheid sought to classify people, once and for all, into definite groups. Once a person had been classified into a certain group, he would never be able to escape from it. It treated people, not as unique individuals, but as categories.

The definition and expression of Afrikaner culture in the period from the forties to the eighties was time-bound. It was a form of politics, if it may be so described, which can never occur again. This form of politics included:

- * the mobilisation of all political energy to the end of establishing and defending a racially and ethnically defined state.
- * the narrow and exclusive definition of the Afrikaner: in political science the theory was that rigid boundaries keep organisational costs low;
- * the assumption that every group — and particularly the dominant group, the Afrikaners, has a collective identity and collective interests;
- * elitism as the reigning political style. It was the cultural and political elite who defined the group, its political interests and its culture, and which marginalised Afrikaans-speakers who were unwilling to conform.
- * despite lip-service to grassroots mass organisations, the subjugation of whichever of these could be useful in the service of the political elite.

The result of this type of politics was not merely to make national identity and culture the subject of political controversy, but also to confine them within a corset of establishment behaviour: thus regimented, they became boring.

In the case of the Afrikaners, elitist politics was carried almost to its utmost limits when one considers that it took place within the context of democracy for whites. The process was a long one. As early as the twenties white workers as a class had been co-opted by the state. Business soon began to take its lead from the government. In the universities the influence of the Broederbond became dominant during the fifties.

In the political sphere, some of the most crucial decisions were left to a handful of leaders. The Afrikaners raised no objections. An opinion survey conducted in the seventies revealed that more than 60 per cent of them were prepared to accept the leaders decisions, even if they did not understand them. A far cry indeed from Brummer's independence of mind and freedom of action!

The result of the Afrikaner's elitist political style of the past fifty years was that the transition to a democracy in South Africa amounted to a settlement between the black elite and the Afrikaner elite. The white electorate had no choice but to sanction this mutual accommodation of elites. In any case they had long since lost the capacity to assert themselves politically, having been so long confined to the context of party and polling-booth.

White voters had to accept the settlement, just as the so called citizens of the Transkei had to accept independence in 1976, whether they liked it or not. Do not misunderstand me: the Afrikaner-ruled state remained firmly entrenched, and in that sense the Afrikaner elite did surrender its power of its own free will. But ideologically — and I am using the term nonpejoratively to mean something that binds a particular community or a political party together Afrikaners suffered a tremendous defeat from which they have not yet recovered. There was not (and is not) any coherent system of values which could be set over against the demand for black empowerment and majority domination, particularly when this demand was clothed — however scantily — in a guise of non-racialism.

I hope that my commentary does not seem critical of the democratic settlement. One way or another, whites had to relinquish

power, and it is important that they did so within a democratic framework and from the platform of a firmly-grounded state.

However, certain aspects of the settlement are open to severe criticism. The simplistic notion that South Africa, with its deep divisions, is suited to conventional majority rule (something which depends upon regular changes of government), was accepted without the least contention during the final phase of the negotiations. And today, voters are fed the illusion that the ANC can be defeated at the polls in the short or medium term.

Worse still was the manner in which the previous government left its officials, particularly those in the security forces, without any protection, and neglected to obtain any real guarantee for single-medium schools. The vacillating management of the negotiations, particularly in the period following May 1993, creates the impression of an elite which had ultimately lost its convictions and had abandoned itself to political wishful thinking and the acceptance of idle assurances from the black elite.

2.

In order to discuss Afrikaans cultural politics in the post-apartheid era, one must begin with a great riddle. From the statements of National Party leaders over the past 25 years, one gained the impression that the maintenance of Afrikaans culture was, and still is, one of the Afrikaners' highest priorities. The Afrikaans newspapers of today reinforce this impression, particularly if one looks at their letters columns. Afrikaners who air their opinions in the press are intensely worried about their culture, and about the possibility that it will not survive under the ANC government.

But a completely different picture emerges from opinion polls which canvass the views of people at grassroots level. In 1977, Lawrence Schlemmer conducted a survey in which Afrikaners were asked to place the principles or policies of their party in order of importance. White security was placed first, with 27%, followed by fairness to all races (15%) and moral standards (14%). Language and culture came only seventh, with a shameful one per cent.

One might argue that in 1977 Afrikaner culture was so well protected that there would have been no reason for concern. But in 1992, when Schlemmer conducted a similar poll, the writing was already on the wall as far as apartheid was concerned. People

were already seriously worried about the political future. Nevertheless, Afrikaners' priorities showed no change from the 1977 poll. This time the future security of whites was still the highest priority, with 27% as before, followed by equity for all races with 15% and moral standards with 7%. Language and culture came eighth with 3%. The results in 1977 and 1992 were practically identical, in spite of a dramatic change in the political scene.

Earlier this year, the Volksstaatraad ([Afrikaner]National State Council) conducted an opinion poll among whites in Pretoria. It was found that 60% of the respondents would favour a national state, with certain qualifications. The responses indicated, however, that cultural considerations were by no means a priority. The respondents' ranking of problems in the present political order was as follows;

1. Crime
2. Economic problems
3. Personal security
4. Affirmative action, and the perception of discrimination against whites
5. Educational standards
6. Population growth
7. Health services
8. Language and cultural rights and opportunities
9. Housing
10. Other

These three opinion polls give no indication that people at the grassroots level are worried about (or care about) Afrikaans and Afrikaans culture. It is possible that another set of questions might evoke a somewhat different response, but we are still left with the riddle of why it is that language and culture are placed so low on the list.

We know that white Afrikaners have a considerably higher ethnic identification than the other whites, but even here, the picture is much more complex than cultural and political leaders would lead one to believe. The study carried out by Elirea Bornman in 1994 in the (then) PWV area, yields the following information:

in reply to a question about the way in which people identify themselves, 42% of white Afrikaans-speakers identified them-

selves as “Afrikaners”, 30% as “South Africans”, and 25% as white. In the case of English-speaking whites, the “ethnic” response, i.e. “English-speaking South Africans”, was 28%.

- * the better-educated and the more highly qualified the Afrikaans-speaking whites were, the less inclined they were to identify themselves as Afrikaners.
- * the more strongly the Afrikaans-speakers identified themselves as Afrikaners, the better the self-image they presented. With the blacks, the case was precisely the opposite: the stronger the ethnic identification, the poorer the self-image.
- * Afrikaners feel much closer to English-speakers than the latter do to them. There is no longer a white group which can be mobilised in pursuit of common goals. In other words, Afrikaans-speakers or Afrikaners have only themselves to rely on for anything they wish to achieve on the cultural level.
- * persons who have the perception that Afrikaners are being unfairly treated, are more inclined to identify themselves as Afrikaners.
- * persons who identify themselves as Afrikaners, are less inclined than other white Afrikaans-speakers to mingle socially with blacks.

Another study, also carried out in 1994, indicates that Afrikaners feel considerably more strongly than do English-speaking whites, that their social, political, financial and employment circumstances are likely to worsen in the short to medium term.

The tendency of well-educated and well-qualified white Afrikaners not to identify very strongly with fellow Afrikaners is not a new thing. About a century ago, the Dutch- and Afrikaans-speaking elite, particularly in the Cape Colony, were rapidly becoming Anglicised. However, ethnic identification is often strongly reinforced by the perception of injustice towards one’s language-group. This is what occurred early in the present century. Ethnic conflict usually arises when the idea upon which a nation is based, sometimes referred to as “civil nationalism”, has lost its significance for important sections of society, or when the government has broken faith with it.

Nevertheless, the responses to the opinion polls embody good as well as bad news for those who would like to see Afrikaans culture grow and flourish.

The good news is that people who regard themselves as Afrikaners have a good self-image. This means that their ethnic identification is a source of emotional support and security within the civil envi-

ronment. The bad news is that well-educated and well-qualified persons are less inclined to identify themselves in ethnic terms. This means that the group is in the process of losing people who would be capable of re-interpreting its traditions, its history and its value system in new and dynamic ways. Without such dynamic renewal, cultural survival is out of the question.

An Afrikaans language which is unserviceable in both the private and the public sectors, and which lacks a rich literature, both fictional and non-fictional, is in danger of simply reverting to the status of a kitchen-language (or, in present-day parlance, a braaivleis language). And there is real reason for uneasiness. Why is there no columnist who approaches the quality of Rykie van Reenen? Why is there no one occupying more-or-less the same planet as Van Wyk Louw as an intellectual essayist? I was going to ask why there is no one who can handle Afrikaans so well and who can make history so accessible as Piet van der Merwe did in his *Trek* trilogy, which appeared more than fifty years ago. But then I thought of Fransjohan Pretorius's *Kommandolewe tydens die Anglo Boereoorlog*: a real feast of a book.

3.

Organisations such as the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging, which are anxious to ensure the survival of the Afrikaans language and Afrikaans culture, cannot simply assume that the mainstream of Afrikaners share their concern. Opinion polls show that cultural rights and freedoms are at present very low on Afrikaners' priority lists. It may be that more and more parents will choose good English-medium education — or perhaps even English-medium education *per se* — in preference to Afrikaans education.

It is also possible that they may choose Afrikaans-medium instruction purely for the sake of convenience, having themselves no more than a lukewarm interest in the culture and religion which are normally interwoven in a language. Thus, the children of tomorrow may well speak Afrikaans, but may still lack an Afrikaans identity.

Protests about the absence of Afrikaans from beer-cans or the shabby way in which it is being treated on television may continue; but to what purpose, if the language and culture are no longer underpinned by a specific view of life and a particular world vision which are shared by most of the people belonging to the language-group?

A century ago, Lord Milner realised that his campaign to Anglicise the Afrikaners could not be won simply by enforcing the use of English as the sole medium of instruction in the schools. He wrote: "Language is important, but the tone and spirit [of education] is even more important". He added: "A good world-history would be worth anything... Everything that cramps and confines their views to South Africa only makes for Afrikanerdom and further discord."

A cultural group which is altogether lacking in understanding of and agreement concerning its origins, cannot hope to arrive anywhere as a group.

The new ruling party is to some extent Milnerites. Whereas Milner was quite sure that the English language and English culture were the highest and the best in the world, the ANC asserts the importance of cultural diversity. However, this affirmation is subordinate to the ideal of building a single nation, from which any political differences based on race or ethnicity would have been eliminated.

Looking at the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme, it seems that the government is intent upon progressively reducing the space available for cultural diversity. It is to be replaced by the individualistic and technologically-based identity of the developed Western world. Culture is to function at the individual and at the national level, but not at a sub-national level. Children may indeed be taught through the medium of Afrikaans, but this must happen in a school in which other children are being taught through another medium. At the national level, everyone may extol and share in the cultural achievements of the various ethnic groups.

We find the same idea in the English-language press. Individual rights and nation-building are the only legitimate concerns. Groups such as the Afrikaners and traditional Zulus, who wish to emphasise their own unique character, with or without state assistance, are characterised as relics of apartheid or as threats to national unity; or they may be regarded as somewhat comic.

The new political order absolutises the individual. Any collective behaviour or group-formation — other than class mobilisation — is evil. Insofar as it over-emphasises the individual and would wish to eliminate all differences between groups, the ANC conforms to the tradition of the Jacobins of the French Revolution. In 1789,

Duke Stanislas of Clermont-Tonnerre said, in the course of the National Assembly debate on the existing discrimination against the Jews: "It is necessary that we deny everything to the Jews as a nation, and concede everything to the Jews as individuals".

The Jews were thus obliged to make a bargain similar to Faust's: to sacrifice their collective identity in exchange for full rights as individual citizens. We are approaching the same position in South Africa: little or nothing will be conceded to Afrikaners if they organise themselves as Afrikaners, for example over the question of educational options. Their chances would be much better if they mobilised as multiracial individuals in pursuit of cultural goals.

4.

If Afrikaans and Afrikaans culture are to grow and blossom in these circumstances, we shall have to think anew about the manner in which we wish to promote the language and the culture. Let me try to formulate five hints for the survival of Afrikaans:

1. The time for white elitist politics, white elitist culture and white educational politics has passed beyond recall.

The future belongs inarguably to Afrikaans mass organisations such as the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging, with its 70 000 enrolled members. The only question is whether it will be able to attract a growing proportion of brown and black Afrikaans-speaking members, on the grounds of the type of culture it propagates and the services it offers its members.

2. More than in the past, being Afrikaans will be a matter of identity-choice.

The concept of being chosen was heavily emphasised in the history that was taught to our children during the apartheid years. God chose people to be Afrikaners, and the Afrikaners were chosen to rule the country. In contrast to this, modernity is characterised by the multiplicity of choices which one individual is able to make. There is no longer any conception of chosen-ness or of chosen people: people are choice-makers who choose their own identities. The more complex a community becomes, the more inclined it will be to displace ethnicity from its central position in its life and

work. Opinion surveys indicate that, among white Afrikaans-speakers, those with high educational and technical qualifications are less inclined to identify themselves as Afrikaners.

Afrikaans culture has no hope of surviving if it directs most of its attention to the past, and remains static and introspective. The challenge is to develop a dynamic identity, one that will help people to control their lives better and to adapt themselves to modern circumstances and rapid change.

3. The case for Afrikaans must not rest upon sentiment or tradition, but upon merit and excellence.

The constitution guarantees mother-tongue education, but goes no further. Schools will offer more than one medium, and parents will be able to choose the medium through which their children will be taught. Afrikaans parents will choose Afrikaans-medium instruction only if they feel that this is a responsible educational decision, and if the best teaching at a particular school is offered by the Afrikaans-medium stream. This means that the future of Afrikaans depends upon talented and inspired teachers, supported by enthusiastic parents on school management councils.

In this connection I should like to mention the astonishing progress which the Afrikaans press has made in the past few years, both in the improved quality of newspapers and in reaching hitherto excluded or neglected target markets. At the moment, *Rapport* and *Die Burger* are considerably better than their English counterparts, and they are managing to grow and to raise their standards simultaneously. *Die Burger* now has more brown readers than white, and *Die Huisgenoot* is at present the best-selling publication in the country.

These are achievements which no one would have predicted ten or twenty years ago. I have no doubt that when bankruptcy forces the SABC to privatise, the Afrikaans radio and television stations will be just as successful as the Afrikaans press.

4. The case for Afrikaans will be better served by an appeal to universal principles than by claims based on sectional interests.

In the political order of today it would serve little purpose to make demands, as Afrikaners, on behalf of Afrikaans. The new strategy

is that of multiracial alliances, and the flew idiom is that of common interests and universal principles.

The case for Afrikaans can best be served by giving preeminence to two universal principles, namely multilingualism and mother-tongue instruction.

Let us first consider multilingualism. Like Japanese, Afrikaans has developed, in a matter of two or three generations, from a relatively unsophisticated language into a medium for scientific and technological discourse, and for instruction at university level. Some of our other African languages may take the same route. Afrikaans should be ready to help, if help is desired.

Furthermore, Afrikaans must stand shoulder to shoulder with other African languages if the white and black elites begin to use English as a code, in order to restrict knowledge and skills to the middle class. University administrators must be persuaded to think twice about enforcing English as the sole medium of instruction. In the Western Cape, 60% of people speak Afrikaans in their homes, while a further 20% speak Xhosa.

The overwhelming majority, probably as many as 90%, do not have English as their home language, and have to make a tremendous effort to master English when they arrive at university. There are still 38% of brown people living below the minimum standard of living, and one may assume that the great majority of them are Afrikaans-speaking. Afrikaans is the medium which would enable a great many of the Western Cape's poor people to enter the world of industry, science and technology. That is what Afrikaans did for the poor white Afrikaans-speakers in the first half of this century.

Why should there not be a flexible policy which would give students in all three of the Southern universities the right to present their dissertations in Afrikaans, and would extend the same right to speakers of other African languages?

There is one constitutional provision (I understand that the executive director of the ATKV had a good deal to do with it) which could play an important part in furthering Afrikaans. It states that no level of government, national or provincial, may decide to make any one language the sole official medium. It will be up to Afrikaans-speakers, and speakers of other African languages, to make this provision a living reality. Why should we not challenge state-

supported institutions such as universities and technikons to devise flexible language policies within the context of this constitutional provision?

The same applies to schools. Afrikaans has a right to exist, not primarily because an Afrikaner minority insists upon it, but because it serves a large multiracial community of white, brown and black speakers. In the schools, Afrikaans-speakers should take the lead in making the principle of trilingualism a reality. Afrikaans can only lose if it tries to perpetuate the old bilingualism struggle with English. The real choice for schools in the new South Africa is between unilingualism and trilingualism. Unilingualism would smother all languages other than English, and this would be a national disaster, for as Jan Spies once remarked concerning the Namibian experience: "A multilingualism which leads to unilingualism ends up at non-lingualism" [translation]. Or, to quote the well-known words of Skutnabb-Kangas, "Unilingualism is an ideological cramp, it is a disease which should be eliminated as quickly as possible, it is dangerous for world peace, it is a reflection of linguistic assassination" [translation].

The best strategy for Afrikaans would be to make use of multilingualism as a constitutional and educational principle.

The other universal principle to which Afrikaans-speakers should appeal is that of the superior value of mother-tongue instruction. When Afrikaans parents send their children to English schools, they should be reproached, not for being disloyal Afrikaners, but for being bad pedagogues. I should like to recommend a work that has recently appeared: *Multilingual Education for South Africa*. It has been compiled by the "Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa" and the "National Language Project", both of which are under the directorship of Dr Neville Alexander.

In their chapters, Alexander and Gerda de Klerk demonstrate clearly how disadvantageous it is for children who do not have English as their home language to become "slaves of English" when they go to school. To compel such children to receive instruction in English from their earliest years at school is not even a good way of teaching them English! The evidence of international experience is that such children begin to have problems during their fourth year at school, and to fall further and further behind those children who are being taught in their home language. The great lesson is that

one should not try to teach a child another language whilst he is trying to master the more abstract portion of his schoolwork. It is much better for him to master the more demanding abstract portion in a systematic manner, and then use this as a basis for learning another language at a natural pace.

David Ramirez, a Californian specialist in bilingual education, asserts that competence in both the home language and a second language is more firmly established if the second language develops at its own pace, with the home language as the medium of instruction at school. He illustrates this with a culinary example: if the recipe prescribes that a cake should be baked for an hour at 180 degrees, one cannot speed up the process by baking it for half an hour at 360 degrees. It will be raw in the middle and scorched on the outside. The same applies to language: one cannot accelerate the process by which children acquire a second language. To return to the cake: rather use the home language, because it has already spent some time in the oven at 180 degrees.

If Afrikaans parents send their children to English schools from the start, with the object of getting them to master English, do not tell them that they are disloyal Afrikaners. Say rather that they are poor teachers.

5. In order to survive, Afrikaans-speakers should make their community boundaries as inclusive as possible.

Between 1930 and 1990, the Afrikaner elite set very narrow limits for the group: its members were white, Protestant, and conservative. Interestingly, an opinion survey conducted in 1977 indicated that white Afrikaners at grassroots level rejected this definition. More than half of the respondents regarded brown Afrikaans-speakers as Afrikaners. But do white, brown and black Afrikaans-speakers really form a community? A people? To be (or become) a community, members must feel more and more strongly that they share something that distinguishes them from other groups in their society, something that carries more weight than the characteristics that they share with other groups.

Often, the spark that ignites this feeling of “togetherness”, of “belonging”, is the perception of a common threat or a shared injustice. In order to counter the threat and right the wrong, the group must develop a sense of its historical origins and achievements.

An organisation must arise from the community, with its own rules, its own leaders and its own spokesmen.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the challenge is to gather all Afrikaners into a single movement, which would then make demands on behalf of a minority group. Afrikaners are too refractory for this kind of thing, and moreover we are not a minority group but a former dominant group. A minority, in the original meaning of the word, is a group which by reason of its birth or its faith, has experienced discrimination in the course of many generations. The Jews in Europe or the blacks in the USA are good examples.

The Afrikaners do not fall into this category. Albie Sachs spelt this out very clearly in the Constitutional Court, and I think he was right. The only qualification I would attach to his statement is that there can be no discrimination against a group on the ground that it was formerly in a dominant position. If this is acknowledged, the door is open for Afrikaans-speakers to insist upon rights and to make claims on other grounds (for example multilingualism and mother-tongue instruction).

But the only way to ensure that these rights come into effect is by acting through an efficient non-political organisation. The challenge must be to organise all Afrikaans-speakers within a single, flexible movement. The ultimate objective should be the establishment of a body similar to the Jewish Board of Deputies. Within a non-racial Afrikaans Board of Deputies (AFRA [AFBD]), movements with predominantly white, or brown, or black members, should feel equally at home.

Such a movement would have the potential to speak with a powerful voice on such topics as the slighting of Afrikaans or ill-considered forms of affirmative action. It would be able to mobilise the buying-power of the strongest [economic] block in the country. Prof. Jan Sadie found that 36% of the personal incomes in the country go to persons whose home language is Afrikaans, as against 34% to persons who speak English at home. An advertising agency recently found that two-thirds of the persons in the A and B advertising categories have Afrikaans as their home language. Yet recently an airline flatly refused to supply gratis copies of Afrikaans newspapers to its clients, though it does provide English newspapers. Just think what a well-organised AFBD could do in reaction to this.

But envisaging an AFBD is really putting the cart before the horse. First and foremost, we must find out why Afrikaners are so unconcerned about their linguistic and cultural rights. We need to make an accurate assessment of the nonracial values which Afrikaans-speakers share, and to establish whether these are sufficient justification for such a movement and organisation. The second task is to organise parents in support of the undisputed pedagogical principle that mother-tongue education is the best for the child.

The third task is to inspire teachers to make Afrikaans education the best form of mother-tongue education. The fourth task is to bring Afrikaans teachers and university lecturers together to consider how the basic school history syllabuses could best be supplemented as regards the background of Afrikanerdom. My prediction would be that brown Afrikaners would make a justified demand for increased attention to the Khoisan and the slaves.

If we approach all these tasks in a positive spirit we can open up an exciting future for Afrikaans people. There is only one enemy: the defeatism that arises from a paucity of faith and trust. The basis for the whole endeavour must be practicality and the capacity for empowering people. To paraphrase Prof Brummer: Afrikaans is useful — useful for its own people and useful for the whole country.