

The New African Movement: The Early Years.

by

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The New African Movement was constituted by the historical intervention of New African intelligentsia through political, cultural and intellectual praxis in the construction of African modernity in South Africa. Utilizing the historical constructs of civilization, education and Christianity the New African intellectuals strove to bring about the entrance of the New African masses into modern age of the twentieth century. Practically all the New African intellectuals had been educated in the European missionary system. The establishment missionary education in South Africa, as well as in the rest of Africa, was an expression of the triumph of European colonialism and imperialism over the African peoples and their histories. Although profoundly appreciative of the education imparted by the missionaries, the New African intellectuals who had been educated under its auspices, came to resent and eventually resisted their process of acculturation into Europeanism and Eurocentricism. This resistance entailed a complex process of rejecting Europeanism, which was in effect white domination and hegemony, while embracing European modernity with the intent of transforming it into African modernity. This African modernity would transcend African tradition while in a state of continual dialogue with it. The New African intellectuals came to be preoccupied with a profound historical conundrum whether it was possible to embrace European modernity while struggling against its hegemonic forms which expressed themselves through colonialism and imperialism.

The actuality of the New African Movement was constituted or brought into being by New African intellectuals through the process of appropriating the historical lessons of African American modernity within United States with the intent of displacing and decentering the hegemony of European modernity in South Africa. This appropriation and imparting was to bring about very deep and complex affinities between African Americans and African people in South Africa from the late nineteenth century throughout the twentieth-century. The historical construct of *the regeneration of Africa* developed and articulated from the middle of the nineteenth-century by African Americans such as Martin Delany, Alexander Crummell, Bishop Henry Turner of African Methodist Episcopal Church (A. M. E. Church) had a pronounced effect on New African intellectuals such as Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Solomon T. Plaatje and R. V. Selope Thema in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

In looking to the lessons from the praxis of African Americans within United States modernity, the diverse ethnic complexion of New African intellectuals had been anticipated forty years earlier in the 1880s when a group missionary educated Africans, Elijah Makiwane, Pambani Mzimba, Mangane Maake Mokone, John Tengo Jabavu and Walter Rubusana forged ETHIOPIANISM, learning from African American Independent Churches, as a means of struggling against European modernity in South Africa. In constructing the philosophy and ideology of ETHIOPIANISM these Xhosa intellectuals ushered in a Xhosa Cultural Renaissance. The forum of their intellectual discourse was the newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu* whose editor was the eminent John Tengo Jabavu who was hostile to ETHIOPIANISM. Walter Rubusana, who was in many ways a protege of Jabavu, was an enthusiastic supporter of ETHIOPIANISM, which had the consequence of breaking with his master and founding his own newspaper *Izwi Labantu*, together with Allan Kirkland Soga, son of Tiyo Soga and correspondent of the African American newspaper, *The Colored American Magazine*.

Pixley ka Isaka Seme was aware that although it had political implications, ETHIOPIANISM would not be sufficient in dislodging European domination and hegemony, since it was an ideology principally preoccupied with ecclesiastical matters. Seme felt that an effective struggle would have to be launched in the political domain proper in order for Africans succeed in their political and historical quest. Seme launched two momentous projects. While an undergraduate student at Columbia University in 1903 he wrote a major historic essay called: "The Regeneration of Africa". In it he argued that the relation between modernity and tradition had to be examined and understood as a historical problem. Secondly, the invention of AFRICAN NATIONALISM would be much more effective in overthrowing European (white) domination than ETHIOPIANISM had been. Thirdly, the idea of the regeneration of Africa was one of the most concrete way of establishing the interconnection between African Americans and Africans. From this philosophical and ideological perspective Seme was to recognize that a political organization would be necessary to bring about the realization of AFRICAN NATIONALISM. It is within this context that Seme initiated his second momentous project, the launching in 1912 of the AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (A. N. C.) to bring about the unity of the African people, a few years after his return from United States. What impressed Seme on seeing the American Negroes in Harlem, the black neighborhood near to Columbia University, was their unity of belonging to the black race. He felt that the A. N. C. would enable the African people to forge a unity as belonging to the black race, beyond their ethnic differences. In United States the African Americans immediately recognized the historic importance, that it was compiled together with essays by W. E. B. Du Bois, Bishop Henry Turner and by others in a book published in Seattle in 1910 called *THE BLACK MAN*. In South Africa

this essay could be said had the impact of launching the New African Movement. One could summarize the political philosophical position of Pixley ka Isaka Seme in the following manner, that for him the following was axiomatic, AFRICAN NATIONALISM + NEW AFRICANISM + AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS = THE REGENERATION OF AFRICA and THE LIBERATION OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE.

At nearly the same time as Pixley ka Isaka Seme was writing his essay in New York City, another major New African intellectual within the New African Movement, Solomon T. Plaatje strengthened the ETHIOPIANISM founded within the Xhosa cultural renaissance and the AFRICAN NATIONALISM seriously launched by Seme himself by arguing that the achievements of the African Americans had to be appreciated and appropriated as an intellectual task and historical process. In an essay of 1904, "Negro Question", published in his newspaper *Koranta ea Becoana* (Bechuana Gazette) and later known as *Tsala ea Batho* (The Friend of the People), Solomon T. Plaatje sought to construct the metaphysical principles which he thought unified black people all over the world. In a direct way, this essay was a direct response to the inspiration and impact of W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* which was published in 1903. In this classic book, Du Bois had written the famous sentence: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line . . . " Du Bois' book had such a profound impact on Solomon T. Plaatje, who was present at the founding of the A. N. C. in 1912 and became its first Secretary-General, that on writing his book and published in London in 1916, *Native Life in South Africa*, which was a political and intellectual response to the Natives' Land Act of 1913, it was structurally modelled on *The Souls of Black Folk*. To the oppositional spirit of ETHIOPIANISM and to the political organizational skills of Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Solomon T. Plaatje added the intellectual acumen of a thinker: the mind should direct the oppositional spirit in the body.

These early writings of Pixley ka Isaka Seme and Solomon T. Plaatje, which established the early constructs of the New African Movement, were in a sense realized within a major historic event of 1900 of which they were not immediately historically aware: the founding of the political organization of PAN-AFRICANISM by the Trinidadian Sylvester Williams in London. Williams immediately in the same year of 1900 visited South Africa on launching the organization. The only member of the New African Movement who was immediately aware of the connection was F. Z. S. Peregrino, a Ghanian who resided in South Africa for decades and died there. He founded the newspaper the *South African Spectator*. In it, he sought to connect together PAN-AFRICANISM, AFRICAN NATIONALISM and NEW AFRICANISM. Having lived in United States, in the Rochester area, for a decade before coming to South Africa, F. Z. S. Peregrino was clear about the similarity in the nature of racism

confrontating the African people in South Africa and the African Americans. Peregrino made the South African Spectator the political and intellectual forum of this connection across the Atlantic.

It was only in the 1920s with the second generation of New African intellectuals, that the identity construct of New African was theorized as being modelled on that of the New Negro. The principal person to do this was R. V. Selope Thema in the intellectual forum of this generation, the newspaper *Umteteli wa Bantu* (The Mouthpiece of the Native Peoples). Arguably, Selope Thema was the ideologue of the New African Movement. Together with H. I. E. Dhlomo, H. Selby Msimang, Solomon T. Plaatje, Allan Kirkland Soga, R. V. Selope Thema on the pages of *Umteteli wa Bantu* was to undertake the realization of AFRICAN MODERNITIES through the theorizing of the concepts of NEW AFRICAN, NEW AFRICA and NEW SOUTH AFRICA. All of them were conscious that realization of AFRICAN MODERNITIES would not be possible without the exemplary nature of African American modernity. R. V. Selope Thema was more profoundly conscious than the others of the exemplary nature of the NEW NEGRO for the NEW AFRICAN. He was also to make clear the important role of newspapers in making possible African intellectual history in South Africa. R. V. Selope Thema was unwavering in his belief that for Africans to overthrow European domination they must align themselves with MODERNITY and possibly MODERNISM.

It was only in the 1930s and in the 1940s that modern forms of artistic expression (in contrast to traditional forms of expression) were able to play a serious role in support of the political quest of the New African Movement. The principal figures were Peter Abrahams through his novels, and H. I. E. Dhlomo through his plays and prose-poems. While Peter Abrahams appropriated his lessons from Richard Wright, H. I. E. Dhlomo was fascinated by the poetic achievements of Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes within the HARLEM RENAISSANCE. Dhlomo had deep affinities with Cullen because of their passion for EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM. In other words, while both Peter Abrahams and H. I. E. Dhlomo identified with African American modernism, it could not be at the expense of EUROPEAN MODERNISM. Abrahams and Dhlomo were in the forefront in the quest to create AFRICAN MODERNISM in service to the political struggle of the African people. Benedict Wallet Vilakazi, an extraordinary scholar who wrote his literary criticism in English and a great poet who wrote in Zulu, by his formidable creative practice posed the historical question of whether this African modernism should be realized in the European languages (English) or in the African languages (Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Tswana, etc.). In his endeavor to establish African modernism on the bases on the foundations of the African languages, Benedict Vilakazi was continuing on a project which the great Xhosa poet S. E. K. Mqhayi had been working for decades. The position of Dr. Benedict

Vilakazi was a challenge to his very close intellectual interlocutor H. I. E. Dhlomo, who was then writing very extraordinary essays theorizing African modernities in the *Ilanga lase Natal*, a newspaper established in 1903 by John Dube, founder of the Ohlange Institute which was modelled on Tuskegee Institute, and the first President-General of the A. N. C. From 1943 H. I. E. Dhlomo was editing the newspaper together with his brother R. R. R. Dhlomo.

The early 1940s was part of a formidable decade for it posed fundamental questions to the third generation of New African intellectuals (Benedict Vilakazi, H. I. E. Dhlomo, Albert T. Nzula, I. B. Tabata, Yusuf Dadoo, Govan Mbeki, Monty G. M. Naicker, James Mathews, Z. K. Matthews and others). Because of their political alignment, Nzula, Tabata, Dadoo, Mbeki and James Mathews forced the question for historical examination of the relevance of MARXISM for the construction of African modernities. Peter Abrahams with his proletarian novel *Mine Boy* posed the question of the relationship between Marxism and African modernism. In as much as Naicker and Dadoo made unavoidable the role of the people of Indian descent in the construction of African modernities, likewise James Mathews and Peter Abrahams also made impossible the avoidance of the role of 'Coloureds' in the construction of South African modernities. Was African Nationalism or Marxism a better ideological cement in unifying the oppressed people of South Africa to the same historical objectives.

The founding of the ANC Youth League in 1943-44 by the fourth generation of New African intellectuals, Anton Lembede, Jordan Ngubane, Nelson Mandela, A. P. Mda, Congress Mbata, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and others was a response that only African Nationalism was capable of defeating Afrikaner (white) nationalism, besides being the most relevant ideology in the construction of African modernities. The Youth League managed to re-invigorate the parent organization (ANC) to the challenges of the 1950s and beyond. Through their intellectual and ideological forum, the newspaper *Inkundla ya Bantu*, the Youth League called for the establishing of an African Academy of Arts and Sciences. While Jordan Ngubane was the brilliant editor of their newspaper, Anton Lembede was the incomparable ideologue of this remarkable constellation. Arguably, the greatest achievement and triumph of the Youth League was the inauguration exactly fifty years later in May 1994 of Nelson Mandela as first freely elected president of South Africa: African Nationalism had assumed state power in however tenuous a form.

The fifth and last generation of New African intellectuals (Can Themba, Bloke Modisane, Henry Nxumalo, Richard Rive, Arthur Maimane and others) to participate in the historical mission of the New African Movement were the DRUM writers in the 1950s. Through their literary creativity, these SOPHIATOWN RENAISSANCE short story writers and autobiographers,

constituted the last act of African modernism. One of the unique characteristics of this cultural moment was the attempt to appropriate a whole literary movement, the HARLEM RENAISSANCE, rather than a particular literary style or literary technique or a singular generic form. The other unique characteristic was that this group of intellectuals seems to have been the first one to totally dispensed with political matters in a decade of great political manifestations, such as the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Congress of the People gathering in Kliptown which formulated and adopted the FREEDOM CHARTER in 1955, the March on Pretoria by Women in 1956, the breakaway of the Pan-African Congress from the ANC in 1959. One central achievement of the DRUM writers is to have brought into being a major African novelist: Bessie Head. The other is to have produced two outstanding literary critics: Ezekiel Mphahlele and Lewis Nkosi. With the destruction of the SOPHIATOWN RENAISSANCE by the apartheid state in the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, which brought to a finale the New African Movement, its exile writers gravitated toward a historical rendezvous with the great Nigeria modernist writers: Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and others. The point of contact beginning in the early 1960s between Nigerian literary modernism and its South African counterpart were two outstanding magazines: *Black Orpheus* based in Nigeria and *Transition* based in Uganda.

Inside the country there followed an interregnum of twenty years in which the political and cultural creativity of the African people was silenced. The Durban strikes of 1973 and the founding of the literary review *Staffrider* in 1977 indicated that a new era had begun in South Africa: was it a postmodern era as the novels of J. M. Coetzee postulated?

While inside South Africa, the New African Movement was entranced by African American modernist literary, intellectual and political practices in United States, at the moment of its demise and disappearance it was confronted with the huge continent of Africa. At its beginning in 1903, Pixley ka Isaka Seme lives in Harlem is studying at Columbia University, at its demise in 1960 Nelson Mandela is travelling throughout Africa to canvas support for the newly founded Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC.

The metamorphosis of the New African Movement into UMKHONTO WE SIZWE was necessitated by the logic of South African history in the twentieth-century.

II

Although New Africanism was a philosophy of history and life which was invented by African intellectuals in the 1920s to articulate their entrance and participation in the new historical experience of MODERNITY, it designates a phenomenon whose origins can be traced back to the Xhosa cultural renaissance of the 1870s and the 1880s. It was at this moment that the missionary educated African intelligentsia at such institutions as Lovedale became conscious of the necessity to give historical meaning to the tensions and conflicts between modernity and tradition. New Africanism was the outcome of the encounter between African history and European history, whose end result was the domination of Africans by Europeans. The conflict between the two histories was because of European imperial expansion. The Xhosa and Khoisan peoples were among the first Africans in South Africa, since they were located in the Cape, the point of European penetration, to feel the full impact of this colonial imposition. In newspapers such as *Isigidimi sama Xosa* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*, AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS such as Elijah Makiwane, Pambani Mzimba, John Tengo Jabavu and Walter Rubusana argued that it was imperative embrace modernity in order for African people overcome their domination and oppression by Europeans. With this early African intelligentsia the question of the possible distinction between European modernity and its reshaping into African modernity was unrecognizable or immaterial. It was only in 1920s that the possibility of creating a distinctively African modernity emerged, since the NEW AFRICAN INTELLECTUALS in that decade took cognizance of the intellectual and cultural achievements of African Americans in constructing an African American modernity within the context of United States modernity. The fundamental historical project of New Africanism was to construct an African modernity.

Tiyo Soga, who precedes the XHOSA CULTURAL RENASCENCE, was conscious of the need to bridge or overcome the historical distance between modernity and tradition. For Tiyo Soga this overcoming had to be on the terms of modernity. In a Journal entry of April 25, 1865, he posed question in the following dramatic terms: "I should like to be informed---in the Second place---After what interval of Time is a nation in the state of barbarism in wh the Kaffir's [Africans] are after the introduction of Xty [Christianity] & civilization, to begin to ascend the scale of human progress and enlightenment---When should a nation, begin to improve in civilization after its introduction? . . . Had the Europeans never set their feet in Kaffirland---& allowed only the missionaries to introduce the gospel---wonders would have been wrought---& no doom of the Kaffir race would be pronounced---There is a destructive civilization---that civilization wh when it comes into contact with Barbarians---seeking to profit by their ignorance, wh in fact---seeks its own good---not their good---this civilization must come into collision with the natives & of course the natives must fair worse---It has been thus in Kaffirland---The gospel has been interfered

with---its good has been neutralized---the vices of Civilization, have been introduced---& never better---& hence this---doom of the Kaffir---but the fault of it lies at some other door---Give me the gospel alone to any people---give me Xn civilization alone to any people---that civilization carried by Xn men---carried on philanthropically---for the good of native---& the world would be subdued---it might take time---but it wd ultimately conquer---& it wd be unattended by those evils of the civilization I complain of" (*THE JOURNAL AND SELECTED WRITINGS OF THE REVEREND TIYO SOGA*, [ed.] Donovan Williams, A. A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1983, p.39-40). This excerpt makes clear that the view of Tiyo Soga in South African intellectual history as a sycophant of Western culture and civilization is in many ways unjustified.

What is remarkable about this passage is that although he was the first African (Ntsikana excepted) to grapple with the meaning of European modernity in Africa history, Tiyo Soga anticipated the conundrums which were to confront the African intelligentsia as the twentieth century unfolded. Like the other African intellectuals who were to follow after him, especially in the next century, he was well aware that the intervention of European modernity in Africa was not an altruistic venture, but served to enrich Europe's economic interests. This insight was arrived at despite the conceptual absence of his understanding of the idea of imperialism. Like the other intellectuals who were to follow, he refused to implicate Christianity as a willing participant in the dark ventures of European modernity, which he unreservedly condemned. Also like many other generations of intellectuals who came after him, be it those around *Izwi la Bantu* in the 1900s or those around *Izwe la Kiti* in the 1910s or those around *Umteteli wa Bantu* in the 1920s or those around *Bantu World* in the 1930s or those around *Ilanga lase Natal* and *Inkundla ya Bantu* in the 1940s or those around *Golden City Post* in the 1950s, they all followed his implicit edict that African modernities were inconceivable in isolation from Christian principles. On yet another plane, Tiyo Soga argued that the horrors of European modernity should not be utilized to negate its positive contributions. Fearless and determined as he was, Tiyo Soga posed the question as to whether was there another path to African history other than that opened by European modernity. Like many of the Christian African intellectuals who followed in his wake, was not so much the intervention of European modernity per se, but rather its nature which was at issue. The 'heathenism', 'barbarism' and 'ignorance' of African societies could only attain civilizational awareness through Christianity. Though Tiyo Soga can be criticized for having lacked a deeper sense of African history, made manifest in conceiving of civilization as only synonymous with European modernity, thereby being unable to understand that there were African civilization(s), his seminal significance resides in having grappled with historical issues whose complexity still fascinate our historical imagination just a few years before the end of the twentieth century.

Of the African intellectuals working together in *Imvo Zabantsundu* and who constituted the Xhosa cultural renaissance of the 1880s, Elijah Makiwane was more conscious of the legacy of Tiyo Soga and its consequences than his colleagues, Pambani Mzimba, John Tengo Jabavu and Walter Rubusana. A decade earlier in an Editorial of the first issue of *Isigidimi sama Xosa*, written in Xhosa and translated into English, Elijah Makiwane voiced the view of the importance of newspapers in dissemination of knowledge so essential in the making of modernity: "The period when newspapers begin to live in the history of any people is an important era. . . The reception it meets will help to determine whether those ambitious thoughts and deplorable deeds that are shaking mankind at the other side of the world can be read with any interest in the native village, the mission station, and towns of this colony, by those for whom the paper is chiefly intended. . . The demand for the products of the press is a sure gauge of the intelligence of the people of any country and a just measure of the results produced by education. . . The paper will be addressed to the intelligent portion of the native community who are able to read, or have an interest in what is going on in the world beyond their own dwellings. . . The co-operation of all missionaries and all who are interested in the progress of the native people is most earnestly and respectfully solicited to assist in this revived effort to make knowledge prosper" ("To Our Readers", vol.1 no.1, October 1, 1870). Both Tiyo Soga and Elijah Makiwane were establishing the ideas and concepts which would be essential to the mapping and construction of African modernities: Christianity, civilization, education, progress and knowledge.

When as a member of the constellation of intellectuals around *Imvo Zabantsundu*, which was then edited by its founder John Tengo Jabavu, Elijah Makiwane became conscious of the central role of cities and towns in the forging of modernity as well as active intervention of Africans as historical agents in its making. He was equally aware of the debilitating effects the cities could have on Africans who were searching for new identities in cordance with the new world they had entered. In one essay he makes several observations: that the rural peasants are forced to work in towns in order to pay government taxes; two distinct classes begin to emerge among Africans settled in the towns; religious belief and affiliation was becoming increasingly a determinant of where the newly modernized Africans lived---there were different areas of settlement in the location, depending on whether one was a Christian or a non-Christian; the detrimental effect of alcohol on Africans. Makiwane concluded his reflections on the need for amusement in towns in order to hold at abeyance bad influences, as well as the need for the Church to exercise more influence on Africans in the locations ("Natives in Towns", 19 July 1888). Although he had reservations about the bad effects of modernity, in one of his longest essays Elijah Makiwane launched into a bitter attack on the Pondomisi people for steadfastly resisting the

beckoning of modernity, thereby in his estimation wallowing in witchcraft and superstition ("Five Months in Pondomisiland", 10 February 1886). What Makiwane could not acknowledge is that while to him modernity was the means by which the African people could overcome heathenism and backwardness, to the Pondomisi nation it represented what they detested most, European oppression and domination. He was not in a historical position to recognize that European modernity was a complexified dialectical paradox of enlightenment and domination. It was because of the absence of modernity that the Europeans had been able to defeat Africans. In a major address at the founding of Native Educational Association, to which all the African intellectual around *Imvo Zabantsundu* belonged, Elijah Makiwane insisted that it was essential that they implant the idea of progress and construct an intellectual culture among the African people ("Educated Natives", 26 January, 2 & 9 February 1885).

The issue of the historical choices and closures which modernity made possible or impossible, which preoccupied figures such as Elijah Makiwane or a later generation of thinkers like Solomon T. Plaatje, was to find literary representation or figuration in the creative work of the first African literary figures who felt themselves to be writing within the purview of modernity rather than tradition: William W. Gqoba, Isaac Wauchope, S. E. K. Mqhayi. The demarcating point between modernity and tradition as historical choices in Xhosa history was the catastrophic Nongqawuse Episode of 1857. This "National Suicide of the Xhosa People" came about through the instigation of the young prophetess Nongqawuse who told the Xhosa chiefs of having met with the 'spirits of the ancestors' who demanded that livestock all means of livelihood should be destroyed. This had near cataclysmic results among the Xhosa people. From this moment the modernizers began to ground against witchcraft, superstitious beliefs and irrational belief systems. In a great Letter of 6 February 1860 to Dr. Alexander Somerville, D. D., Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Tiyo Soga alluded to the impact of the Nongqawuse Episode on the historical imagination of the Xhosa people about the 'choices' they were making or had made at this critical juncture: "It is really delightful to see the young people, so lately sunk in the ignorance of heathenism, coming forward to avow their intention of forsaking sin & serving Christ---The invariable answer of these and others when asked why they have come to the missionary & are sad often, I am sure, touches me---'It is our sins'---A man awakened truly to the awfulness of his transgressions against God, cannot but feel sad---this is one of the characteristics of Repenetance---I pray these young people, may be truly earnest & sincere---We have now a goodly number of the Kaffirs driven hither by famine & other causes---May a good work begin generally among them . . . The state of the heathen around us is just now very interesting---The Kaffirs---my own countrymen---are still very careless and manifest only outward respect for the word---Sandilli swayed too much by evil

advisers, I was afraid, was retrograding towards the old Kaffir habits, the destruction of which, the recent national calamities---threatened and partially effected---By a sudden impulse---one of the characteristics of a weak mind---he will again begin to take an interest in the Station & to attend the Sabbath services---He lately of his own free will---without my having made the least movement in the matter . . . Superstition had once more been at work---that some Superstition---which in the recent disasters among them, one wd have thought---would present itself to all, as a hideous (sic) hateful monster . . . " (Tiyo Soga, op. cit.). Tiyo Soga grappled with the issue of whether the 'choice' of modernity was an expression of the free will of the Xhosa nation or the intervention of Divine Providence or the imposition of European history. Thomas Mofolo in *Chaka* and Solomon T. Plaatje in *Mhudi* in the early part of the twentieth century had to come to terms with the imperativeness modernity in reaction against Superstition, the 'hideous and hateful monster', as will be evident in a moment.

The measure of the importance of the Nongqawuse Episode can be measured by the fact it gave rise to a prose work in Xhosa by Gqoba which was to be a standard of measure to writers who were well within the territory of modernity like Mqhayi, Rubusana, Bud-M'Belle. The following passage is rendered in an incomparable translation by the great Xhosa novelist and brilliant literary scholar, A. C. Jordan, a traumatizing event which the seventeen year old Gqoba witnessed, though recollecting it many decades later: "Just at this time, there was a tremendous crash of big boulders breaking loose from the cliffs overlooking the headwaters of the River Kamanga, whereupon, the men gazed at one another wondering, for they were seized with fear. It seemed that some unknown thing on the cliffs was going flames. While they stood wondering, the girl was heard saying, 'Just cast your eyes in the direction of the sea'. And when they looked intently at the waters of the sea, it seemed as if there were people there in truth, and there were sounds of bulls bellowing, and oxen too. There was a huge formless black object that came and went, came and went and finally vanished over the crests of the waves of the sea. Then it was that all the people began to believe . . . She went on to say that there was another chief, mounted on a grey horse. His name was Grey, either-wise known as Satan. All those who did not slaughter their cattle would become the subjects of the chief named Satan, and such people would not see the glory of our chief, Napakade, son of Sifubasibanzi. That then was the cause of the cattle-killing of 1856 to 1857 . . . The community was split in two. One section believed that the resurrection of the people would come some day, but not that of the cattle. Thereupon, father fell out with son, brother with brother, chief with subjects, relative with relative. Two names emerged to distinguish the two groups. One group was named amaTemba (the Submissive), that is, Nongqawuse's converts. The other was called amaGogotya (the Unyielding), that is, those who were stubborn and would not kill their cattle. So some slaughtered their cattle, and others did not"

(Cited in A. C. Jordan, *Towards an African Literature: the Emergence of literary Form in Xhosa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973, p.72-74). This passage, an intermixture of Xhosa traditional and Christian eschatological images, captures the division between the Converters and the Non-Converters, the Believers and the Non-Believers, the modernizers and traditionalists, that was to profoundly characterize Xhosa intellectual discourse from the poetic reflections of Isaac Wauchope and John Knox Bokwe's biography *Ntsikana* in the 1900s to Noni Jabavu's autobiography of the late 1950s, *The Ochre People*. This division had the most pronounced effects among the Xhosa people because they were the first African nation in South to encounter the unalloyed form of European modernity, be it Portuguese, Dutch and, most consequentially, the British.

The literary style of William W. Gqoba was forged on the pages of *Isigidimi Sama-Xosa*, of which he was the last editor, and the newspaper folded with his death in 1888. A. C. Jordan writes of this extraordinary newspaper: "In the first few years of its life, from 1871 to 1878, *Isigidimi* was highly respected and trusted by the literate section of the Africans. Politicians, ministers of religion and lovers of general cultural progress paid tribute to it in prose and poetry. But with the sharpening of the struggle between black and white in the bloodiest period of the Wars of Dispossession, the people became disillusioned; and, by 1884, hardly any leading writers has a good word to say for the journal" (op. cit., p.91) 1884 is the year in which John Tengo Jabavu founded his newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*.

William W. Gqoba was among the first African poets to poeticize the intellectual discourse between Christians and Non-Christians about education and civilization in the conflict between tradition and modernity. A. C. Jordan has translated the following excerpt from a poem by Gqoba: "You deserted your chiefs and came to the/ Whiteman;/ You destroyed our rule and sided with the enemy;/ But now your faith is lean and shrivell'd/ Even like a chameleon whose mouth is smear'd/ With nicotine on a sultry summer's day." While with Gqoba the historical distance between modernity and tradition was not wholly irreconcilable, with Isaac Wauchope, belonging to the next generation, the division was Manichean. The Manichaeism of the generation of Isaac Wauchope, from Thomas Mofolo through Solomon T. Plaatje to Pixley ka Isaka Seme, was an expression of their certainty as "New Africans". The certainty and combativeness of this generation was imprinted on the pages of the newspapers that expressed their historical vision of modernity: *Ilanga lase Natal* (editor, John Dube), *Izwila Bantu* (editors, Allan Kirkland Soga and Walter Rubusana), *Tsala ea Becoana* and later *Tsala ea Batho* (Solomon T. Plaatje), *South African Spectator* (F. Z. S. Peregrino), *Ipepa lo Hlanga* (Mark S. Radebe, Sr.), to name just the most prominent.

Even though Isaac Wauchope in actuality belonged to the generation of *Isigidimi sama Xosa*, given his prescience which made him far advanced of his generational period, his articulations were more in proximity with those of *Tsala ea Becoana*. It is because of his decisiveness, determination, forthrightness and thoroughness that I would like to quote two of his poems. In poem cited by A. C. Jordan in his book, not interested in lamenting the tragedy of the Nongqawuse Episode, but in opening the future to new visions and combats, he writes:

"Your cattle are gone, my countrymen!
Go rescue them! Go rescue them!
Leave the breechloader alone
And turn turn to the pen.
Take paper and ink,
For that is your shield.
Your rights are going!
So pick up your pen,
Load it, lad with ink.
Sit in your chair,
Repair not to Hoho,*
But fire with your pen."

(Jordan cites Wauchope under the name of "I. W. W. Citashe", p.88; Jordan explains it as a mountain-forest where a Xhosa Chief was shot and killed).

This is a clear call for a national identification with modernity. In another poem "Imfundo" (Education), originally published in *Imvo Zabantsundu* (28 May 1896) but much longer, the historical reasons for this choice are indicated:

"We have returned, Lord (of ours),
To this house of learning.
We have been taken away from our countrymen
In order to be taught righteousness.
Our sun has arisen,
And we have been shown the light;
Be with our hearts,
So that we receive the truth.
Darkness still reigns
In our homesteads,
Because sins have not ended
which cause our misfortune.
Customs which are ancient,
Which are in opposition to holiness
Still govern our homes.

Reveal yourself and enlighten us.
You have chosen us and selected us
From various homes.
Speak to us in kindness
So that light may penetrate us.
Lord, appear and support them,
These who teach us;
Lead them, encourage them
So that they labor and not get tired."

(Cited and translated by Wandile Francis Kuse, *The Form and Themes of Mqhayi's Poetry and Prose*, dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1978, p. 65).

The African intelligentsia who were publishing and editing the aforementioned newspapers at the turn of the twentieth began to be conscious of themselves as "New Africans". New Africans were known as such because they were creatively establishing New Epistemologies and New Knowledges to rationally make sense of the historical meaning of the intervention of European modernity in African history. They were "New" because they were seeking historical identification with the New Negroes in United States by appropriating lessons from them about questions and matters of modernity. In contrast with Tiyo Soga for whom there could only be a singular modernity, specifically European modernity, with the New Africans, resulting from careful observations and absorptions across the Atlantic, European modernities were amenable to subversion into African modernities. The New Africans saw themselves as possessing a new historical consciousness because with them the struggle with the process of establishing African modernities was equally a means of regenerating Africa. Lastly, the New Africans came to a realization that the construction of African modernities had to be simultaneous with challenging the political consequences of the hegemony of European modernities.

Concerning the renewal of Africa, the principal document which could be taken to represent the historical and ideological vision of New Africanism was Pixley ka Isaka Seme's essay of 1950: "The Regeneration of Africa" (1906). Beginning with the observation that Egyptian civilization was one of Africa's greatest creations in antiquity, Seme argues that in our time the creation of African modernities as a means of overcoming colonial domination should be the principal task of the Regeneration of Africa: "The African already recognizes his anomalous position and desires a change. The brighter day is rising upon Africa. Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Ayssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities" (Reprinted in *The Black Man: The Father of Civilization*, (ed.) James Morris Webb,

Seattle, 1910). It is interesting to note that at this particular historical moment, Allan Kirkland Soga wrote a book length manuscript which was subsequently lost called: *The Problem of the Social and Political Regeneration of Africa*. It needs to be emphasized that the historical idea of the Regeneration of Africa began with the African Americans, Martin Delany, arguably the first Pan-Africanist, and Alexander Crummell, the founder of a University College in Liberia. To both of them the Regeneration of Africa meant the transplantation by African Americans of Christian civilization in Africa, the initiation of modern commerce and the institutionalization of education.

Probably the three newspapers that attempted with consistency and conviction to establish the African modernities as a means of regenerating Africa were: *Izwi la Bantu* (November 1897-April 1909) published by Allan Kirkland Soga and Walter Rubusana; *South Africa Spectator* (1900-1912) published by F. Z. S. Peregrino; *Tsala ea Becoana* (1910-1912) and later it was known as *Tsala ea Batho* (1912-1915) published by Solomon T. Plaatje. Although a few observations about the role of each of these newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century in the construction of South African modernity is in order, two other newspapers should be mentioned. One preceding these, and the other at the simultaneous moment as the others. *Imvo Zabantsundu* came to being in 1884 under the guidance of John Tengo Jabavu as a direct challenge to *Isigidimi sama Xosa* whose understanding of the new challenges had weakened and its political orientation had been exhausted. In the first Editorial John Tengo Jabavu eschews the newspaper from being a mediator between Africans and 'Great' Britain, that is it will concern itself with imperial and colonial matters, let alone with their investigation and possible critique, but rather, it hopes to be an a modernizing instrument on the ideological side of the newly educated Africans, with the intent of pulling superstitious Africans from the shore of tradition to that of modernity and Christianity, which for him as it had been with Tiyo Soga could only be European modernity: "For over half a century Missionaries have been labouring assiduously among the Natives of this country, and Government has invested, and is still investing enormous sums of money with the professed object of civilising them. The result---which will ever be mentioned in these columns with gratitude---is, that a large class has been formed among the Natives which has learnt to loathe the institutions of barbarism, and to press for the better institutions of a civilized life. Hitherto this newly formed class has been tossing from pillar to post, despised by its former friends of the heathen state, and misunderstood by the representatives of civilization in this country. This uncertain drifting hither and thither of 'School Kafirs', as they are called, has given rise to some hateful comparisons as to whether 'Red Kafirs' are better than the 'School Kafirs'. The fact is, the so-called 'School Kafirs', or, as they are sometimes called, 'Educated Natives', have had stirred up within them a desire for better things, and in their perhaps clumsy efforts to attain to them, they have been misunderstood by their

white friends. This is due to the fact that there is no touch between the great mass of reclaimed Natives and those who are on the shores of civilization. A newspaper of the nature of the *Native Opinion* would seem to us to be likely to serve the purpose of a rope to tow these stragglers to the desired shore" ("The Launch", November 3, 1884). This historical task which *Imvo Zabantsundu* defined for itself was to preoccupy practically all newspapers and magazines published or purporting to serve the interests of Africans, right up to *Drum* in the 1950s.

The 'School Kafirs', a historical construct that was to metamorphose forty years later into 'New Africans', around the newspaper formed a Native Educational Association and a Lovedale Literary Society in order to effectively intervene in the making of South African modernity. The Association defined among its central tasks, a concern with ethical matters that would make for a qualitative improvement of life of Africans, a call for the prohibition on liquor which was having disastrous consequences on them, and the diffusion and publication of African literatures ("Native Educational Association", January 21, 1887). The major addresses to the Association by its President, Elijah Makiwane, were subsequently published in *Imvo Zabantsundu*, as the philosophical and ideological perspectives of the newly educated Africans. In one of the addresses Makiwane developed and articulated positions and propositions, some of which were very controversial: he took exception to the thesis put forth by the younger members of the Association that Africans were equal to Europeans, arguing contrariwise that it could not be so because Africans had not as yet produced a Shakespeare or a Milton or a Francis Bacon; since education is a critical acquisition which enabled one to make entrance into modernity, it had to made to reflect the needs and wants of Africans; although the English language was a great enabler of entrance to modernity, it should not be valorized at the expense of African languages; the idea of progress should be instilled in the young people; a serious intellectual culture must be developed among young Africans; just because England has brought into being a Shakespeare or a Milton, it does not follow that every Englishman is superior to every African; and on the matter of intellectual lineage, he argued against a patronizing attitude by young Africans against *Isigidimi sama Xosa* since it was a non-political newspaper having been founded by missionaries, in relation to which *Imvo Zabantsundu* is held in high esteem as a political newspaper founded by Africans ("Educated Natives", January 26, February 2 and 9, 1885). In another of his major addresses, Makiwane heavily criticized Africans whom he considered heathens as well as Afrikaners as the deadly enemies of progressive Africans because, for different reasons, they were resistant and obstacles to progress and enlightenment that was imperative for South Africans to strive for. He was particularly harsh against the Afrikaner Bond which was opposing the educational strivings of Africans. Being an Anglophilia, Makiwane saw English modernity as a paragon of what should be attained in South Africa (more correctly in the Cape Province, since

pre-1910 the country consisted of four autonomous provinces). He concluded by emphasizing the importance of education in the attainment of modernity ("Native Educational Association", July 28 and August 18, 1886). In one of his early Editorials John Tengo Jabavu defined the historical mission of the incipient African middle class and its organic intellectuals as being the transformation of the customs of tradition among Africans to the acquisition of the customs of modernity: "We often hear of 'English customs', and of 'Native customs'. There was a time when the first woollen blanket was worn by a Kaffir man in this country. Other men slowly followed his example until now it is 'the custom' to wear such blankets. There was a day when a Native was persuaded to wear a pair of boots; and now yearly the custom of going naked is giving way to the custom of wearing boots and other English garments. Thus all customs grow from are changed by some one person" ("Native Opinion", January 5, 1885). The customs of tradition can be remodeled into those of modernity.

The other newspaper that should be considered here, before analyzing the aforementioned three newspapers, is the "Coloureds" newspaper, *A. P. O.* (May 1909-November 1915, August 1919-December 1923, actually the newspaper ceased publication completely in the late 1920s), which could be seen to have subscribed and espoused, as did all the subsequent newspapers, the principle enunciated by *Imvo Zabantsundu*: customs, habits and traditions are subject to re-shaping by new historical forces. The founder of *A. P. O.* was Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman who made it the official organ of African Political (later People's) Organization, established in 1902. Much more than *Imvo Zabantsundu*, *A. P. O.* took much more seriously the international dimensions and connections of modernity. In this, it was following on the footsteps of *South African Spectator*, which F. Z. S. Peregrino had founded in 1900 with the intent of forging informed opinion among the Coloureds in the Cape. Whereas the *South African Spectator* was to reprint many articles by African Americans on religious matter as a way of supporting ETHIOPIANISM in South Africa, *A. P. O.* concentrated on reprints by the New Negroes concerning intellectual and political matters. Within a month of its founding, the *A. P. O.* reprinted a letter by Abdullah Abdurahman intervening in the shaping of political modernity in South Africa by indicating the dangers of the coming Union of South Africa of 1910 which will result in the disenfranchisement of Africans and Coloureds (Indians had no serious political voting rights to speak of): "The depression that has brooded over South Africa has been so deep and long-enduring that a vast proportion of the population of South Africa are looking to Union as the sole escape from the continuance of financial stress. Union achieved, they fondly hope the dark clouds will disperse and a brighter day will dawn for all. Whether those alluring hopes are but a mirage will be revealed in the future. Personally, I think they are not vain hopes. But for all that I would counsel caution and prudence in laying the foundations for a form of government under which South Africans must live for generations

to come. Care must be taken that no irretrievable blunder be committed. It is in the treatment of non-white sections of the community that blunders are most likely to occur; and it seems to me that the Draft South Africa Act contains clauses which will produce irremediable disaster, because they are founded on injustice towards the coloured races. I trust, however, that even at the eleventh hour the Imperial Parliament will intervene, and save my country from the dire consequences of the illiberal policy of that Act" ("Dr. Abdurahman's letter to *London Times*", June 19, 1909). With the exception of John Tengo Jabavu who was then falling into political disfavour with the African people, all the African, Indian and Coloured found much in agreement with this political position.

Perhaps much more than the other newspapers in its time, *A. P. O.* was aware of the need for a political solidarity among Africans, Indians and Coloureds in confronting the contradictions, paradoxes and oppression of political modernity. In this profound historical perspective, it was matched by Solomon T. Plaatje with his *Tsala ea Batho*. This is the explanation of Abdurahman having given a forum to Mahatma Gandhi to spell his views on passive resistance as a political instrument or weapon. Indians were facing a particular odious discrimination which was directed to them as Indians: the refusal of the Transvaal provincial government to grant them a permanent resident status which they were entitled to as South African citizens. Within a few months of the founding of the publication, Gandhi explained his form of passive resistance, SATYGAHRA, which was to be employed with extraordinary effectiveness by the Indian National Congress against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946 and by the ANC in the Defiance Campaign of 1952: "And of the methods? They are as pure as the ideal itself. Suffering is the panacea for all evils. It purifies the sufferers. We disregard the law we consider unjust---so unjust that it hurts our religious instinct. And we suffer the penalty of the breach. Two thousand five hundred Indians have passed through the Transvaal gaols. They find that they have a new power. If they are in the right the power is irresistible; if they are in the wrong, it is not the power that fails, but the wrong cause. And nobody is hurt except themselves---not even they, because they will have learnt from their mistakes. Some publicists have condemned passive resistance in a land filled with illiterate natives. I think it is the best for them. Let the illiterate men learn that if they feel a grievance, they are not to break other people's heads, but their own, in order to have it redressed. It will do away with all the fear of native and other unrest, and society will go on much more smoothly than hitherto. It is a superstition to suppose that passive resistance can lead to violence. It is a superstition to suppose that passive resistance can lead to violence. It will when soul force is transmuted into body force, but not till then" ("What is the Transvaal Struggle?", *A. P. O.*, December 4, 1909). This form of political struggle shaped the formation of political modernity in South Africa for approximately five decades, until UMKHONTO WE SIZWE in 1960 initiated a

new form of struggle commensurate with the needs of the oppressed people of this recently liberated country.

One of the great contributions of *A. P. O.* to the intellectual culture of South Africa in the modern era was to have facilitated the emergence of a brilliant thinker like Harold Cressy, who had he lived beyond his 27 years would in all certainty have become a major intellectual. Solomon T. Plaatje held him in very high esteem that 1911, five years before his death, published an essay by him ("Sweating of our Coloured Teachers", August 19) as well as writing a short biographical sketch of him ("First Coloured B. A.", February 18) in *Tsala ea Becoana*. Cressy's two contributions to *A. P. O.* in 1911 were on two issues which preoccupied all the serious thinkers among the New Africans: the vital importance of education as an entry-way into modernity, and the lessons African Americans within United States modernity had for Africans and Coloureds in the construction of South African modernity. In his extraordinary essay, "The Necessity of Education", which was originally a lecture given in a forum arranged by the African Political Organization, he wrote: "Education is a subject with which you are all acquainted. No other subject is so frequently on the public lips; and a political speech, without a reference to education, is incomplete, and a *rara avis* []. There can be no doubt, however, that the importance of the subject merits the time and attention lavished on it. To the Coloured people, who are today the bottom dog, the subject is of special significance; and our leaders are alive to the fact. . . The first question that naturally presents itself to us is: What is education? Parents, teachers, ministers of religion, all frequently have the word on their lips, and use it so glibly that one naturally expects a ready answer to this simple question. As a matter of fact, a comprehensive answer is difficult to obtain. One of the oldest works on education is the *Republic* of Plato, and in spite of their antiquity, Plato's remarks are always worthy of respect. His conception is that it is the 'turning of the eye of the soul to the light', that is, fixing one's attention on the highest and best things of one's environment. The truth of this conception does not require exposition; it is manifest. You have only to compare the educated man with the uneducated to see how true it is. The former occupies his mind with the higher and more important concerns of life, in contrast with the latter, whose guiding principles in life seem to be 'eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die'. The uneducated man takes delight in trifles; he is unable to appreciate the beauties of his surroundings, and he is ignorant of the higher purposes of his existence. He is born, lives, and dies little better than an animal. The educated man, on the other hand, associates himself with the good and the beautiful, and accordingly comes to exhibit these characteristics in his thoughts and actions" (July 29, 1911). In other words, education is the essence of enlightenment itself.

The other lecture, "On the Rise of the American Negro as a Landowner", unfortunately 80% of which is no longer legible in the old pages of *A. P. O.*, seems to have traced the contrastive differential form of the emergence of race consciousness between the New Negroes and the New Africans (March 25, 1911). The spectacular nature of Harold Cressy's thinking as well as his sudden, tragic early death, recalls that of Anton Muziwakhe Lembede, which was to happen thirty years later. By a strange coincidence, just two months before Lembede's tragic death, *The Torch*, the newspaper of the Non-European Unity Movement reported a tribute to Harold Cressy by Dr. G. H. Gool, his disciple and an important intellectual of that time (Anonymous, "The Non-European Teacher: Harold Cressy---Pioneer", May 19, 1947). What this essay by Harold Cressy profoundly reflected was the inestimable influence of New Negro artistic and intellectual achievements on the *modern* New African artistic and intellectual aspirations. The importance of the New Negro attainments seems to have been self-evident to *A. P. O.*, if one can judge from the reprinting of articles of Booker T. Washington ("The Negro and the 'Solid South'", February 12 and March 12, 1910; "Durham, North Carolina: A City of Negro Enterprise", June 3 and 17, 1911; "First International Congress on the Negro", June 1, 1912: and two short pieces, "Booker Washington's Advice", October 22, 1910; "Mr. Booker Washington on Race Problems", November 5, 1910): W. E. B. Du Bois ("The Souls of White Folk", October 8, 1910; "Marrying of Black Folk", Christmas Number 1910): and two articles discrediting Marcus Garvey, "His Excellency The Honourable Marcus Garvey Provisional President of the Continent of Africa", February 11, 1922; "The Hon. Marcus Garvey, President of Africa", February 25, 1922). With these reprints, *A. P. O.* was following in the tradition established by F. Z. S. Peregrino in *South African Spectator*, which was to be continued extensively in the 1920s and in the 1930s by *Umteteli wa Bantu*.

F. Z. S. Peregrino, perhaps because he was a 'foreigner' from Ghana, was in the forefront in pushing the ideological perspective that modernity must be made to articulate the principles of black unity, across national, cultural and historical boundaries. The existant copies of *South African Spectator* are an abundance evidence of this. In order to press for the unifying forms of modernity across the black world, Peregrino gave wide coverage to ETHIOPIANISM, the movement of undependent black churches in South Africa which had broken away from white churches, and PAN-AFRICANISM, the philosophy of decolonization and unity of the black world. No other newspaper in the years 1901-02 (unfortunately the only years in which the copies of *South African Spectator* have survived) had a profounder understanding of the forces (political and philosophical) which could bring the black world closer together. To complement ETHIOPIANISM and PAN-AFRICANISM, Peregrino gave extensive coverage to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, especially its bishops in South Africa. What *Imvo Zabantsundu* had accidentally stumbled to in the 1880s, the exemplary importance of African

Americans to Africans in South Africa, *South African Spectator* systematically and consciously put forth as its ideological position, the New Africans should take note of what the New Negroes were undertaking or had achieved.

Peregrino celebrated the (oppositional) philosophies of African modernities (ETHIOPIANISM and PAN-AFRICANISM) and their relevant institutional representative forms (AME Church and Free Masonry Lodge) through biographical sketches and by printing speeches and lectures by leading members of the New Africans and the New Negroes. This policy of printing various presentations was a way for *South African Spectator* to disseminate 'black' ideologies of modernity throughout the country. One of the most important of these biographical sketches was of Mangane Maake Mokone, the founder of ETHIOPIANISM, which was in all probability written by Peregrino himself: "The Rev. M. M. Mokone is one of the best known among the Native ministers of religion in South Africa, as well as one of the most deservedly popular, and he possesses a history, too, the interesting and instructive nature of which will, as is usually the case, be perhaps better appreciated by coming generations than by the present. The great African Methodist Episcopal Church which has recently been planted on these shores, and which, unless all signs fail, is certain to become so important a factor in the civilization and enlightenment of the Natives of South Africa, owes much to the subject of this brief sketch. Ever modest, he will be the last man to claim public distinction, but it is nevertheless true that it owing to Mr. Mokone's efforts that the introduction into this country of the A. M. E. Church became possible" ("The Father of the Church: A Popular Native Minister", September 7, 1901). Another biographical sketch on Levi Jenkins Coppins, the first African American representative of AME Church in South Africa, in all probability also by Peregrino, emphasizes the bond between the two people: "This church [AME] was given birth in the Quaker City of Philadelphia, in America. It was unheralded by pomp and pageantry, no great dignitary laid the foundation, its corner stone was humility, and the unaffected and simple piety of those early pioneers, and it was consecrated with the tears of an afflicted and a despised people. Yet today that church wields an influence in that country which is transcended by no other religious organisation. The seed sown by those few simple people and watered by their bitter tears of affliction have borne fruit, and today the spectacle is presented of a church with a membership of seven hundred thousands souls, and upwards of one million adherents, with nearly five thousand ministers. As we propose in the near future to present a detailed account of the progress of this church to our readers, we will not do more on this occasion than to introduce to our readers the man who comes among us as the first Bishop of the A. M. E. Church in Africa" ("Right Rev. Levi Jenkins Coppins, D. D.: A Prince of the Church", February 23, 1901). The adversity in which both churches came into being, and their fundamental aim of alleviating the suffering

of black people, especially from white oppression and racism, was what constituted a bondage between them.

Concerning PAN-AFRICANISM, besides publishing its edicts, objectives and aims of the Pan-African Society, *South African Spectator* now and then gave reports on the peregrinations all over the world of H. Sylvester-Williams, the founder of the PAN-AFRICANISM as an organization in 1900 in London ("Secretary Williams in Jamaica, W. I.", May 18, 1901). It reported on the doings of Edward Blyden on matters of education and Islamism in West Africa, particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone ("Islamism on the West Coast of Africa: Dr. Blyden A Director-General of Islamic Education", December 7, 1901). A measure of how seriously F. Z. S. Peregrino took PAN-AFRICANISM and ETHIOPIANISM as political forces of black unity in the modern age, his longest essay, if we can judge from the copies of the newspaper which have survived, undertook, as a justification of this ideological position, a survey of the history of black people from antiquity beginning with the Egyptian civilization and the Ethiopian civilization, through Scipio Africanus and Hannibal, to the Santo Domingo (Hatian) revolution and Alexander Dumas, as a unified historical process ("Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon", February 9 and 23, March 23, April 6, May 4, June 1 and 15, July 27, August 3, 1901). In effect Peregrino was arguing for the position that it was not only the exigencies of the present that compelled black unity, the very logic of the history of African people, wherever they were to be found in any part of the world, indicated its very necessity. It is perhaps because he was a 'foreign' New African that Peregrino found its compelling nature in the movement of South African history. The 'native' New Africans seem not to have been as ideological sensitive as the Ghanian was on this matter.

Of the intellectual importance and moral seriousness of Peregrino and the *South African Spectator*, the New African intelligentsia had not the slightest doubt. A political and intellectual portrait of him appeared in *Izwi la Bantu*, most probably written by Allan Kirkland Soga, rather than by Walter Rubusana, both of whom were the publishers of the newspaper. This is what Soga chose to highlight: "Some twelve months ago there arrived in this country a gentleman of wide experience and of strong personality whose presence in our midst should be welcomed as a distinct gain to the colored community of South Africa. . . But although Mr. Peregrino first 'lived and moved and had his being' in Africa, at a comparatively early age he was sent to England for the purpose of education, and resided there until about ten years ago, when he crossed the seas to America. In the latter country his energetic nature soon found an outlet, for being possessed of a journalistic training he there started a paper called the *Spectator*, which speedily attracted wide attention, evoked much favourable comment, and brought the subject of our sketch into direct contact with many of the most

prominent, cultured, and able of America's citizens. At the outbreak of the war [the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902], however, Peregrino turned his thoughts to South Africa, and anticipating that when peace has been proclaimed and the whole country is under the British flag, progress and prosperity are bound to follow, he made up his mind to come here to devote his pen and brain to the service of the native people, and to establish a newspaper which would look after their interests, and make public, without fear or favour, injustice or oppression wherever such existed" (this was reprinted in *South African Spectator*, October 5, 1901). Since Peregrino came directly to South Africa after attending the First Pan-Congress Congress in London (1900), it seems plausible to speculate that he came with a specific aim, although he never even once announced it, of implanting PAN-AFRICANISM into the body politic of South Africa. From the relatively wide coverage of PAN-AFRICANISM in his newspaper, it seems clear that he believed that this ideology was the foremost African philosophy of modernity.

Perhaps what was so compelling about F. Z. S. Peregrino to the 'native' New Africans was his embodiment of both Europeanism and Americanism without displacing his singular Africanness. In this, he was similar to Pixley ka Isaka Seme. He was also one of the best exemplifications of the fundamental principle to which all the New Africans subscribed, that education represented the best entry-way into modernity. Another source of his impact is that perhaps better than anyone in South Africa, he had a deeper knowledge of African American culture and the project of the New Negroes in modernity, the very things the New Africans were desiring to emulate. His other singular distinction is that his report on the founding of the ANC in January 1912, which appeared in Solomon T. Plaatje's newspaper *Tsala ea Becoana* barely two months later, is one of South Africa's historic documents. We shall have occasion to refer to it below. The achievement and impact of Peregrino in South Africa was to prefigure that of his compatriot, James Aggrey of Africa, whose spectacular entrance into South Africa in 1921, two years after Peregrino's death, was still talked about three decades later by those who had witnessed it, such as H. I. E. Dhlomo and R. V. Seloape Thema. The subsequent political conservatism and reactionary posture of Peregrino cannot obviate his extraordinary contribution to South Africa. He was the best exemplification of PAN-AFRICANISM in the real sense. This seems to have been the appraisal of Allan Kirkland Soga.

In as much as Allan Kirkland Soga had earlier written an intellectual portrait of the Ghanaian, Peregrino reciprocated the gesture by writing his estimation of the South African: "One of the most intelligent and practical men that it has been our good fortune to meet since our arrival on these shores is Mr. A. Kerkland (sic) Soga, the able editor of *Izwi Labantu* or 'The Voice of the People', a paper which is published at East London in Kafir [Xhosa] and English, and which enjoys the

largest circulation of any newspaper among the numerous Natives in South Africa. Mr. Soga, who is spending a couple of weeks in this city [Cape Town] on journalistic business is a singularly well-equipped man, who wields a fucile pen, and speaks English grammatically and without accent. Indeed, it was with some surprise that we heard him address and converse in this office with a visitor in Kafir for somehow we had concluded that he spoke only in English. The *Izwi*, under Mr. Soga's editorship, is doing great work in shedding light in the dark places, correcting misrepresentations, and challenging and confusing the vilifier of the black man" ("Mr. A. Kerkland Soga", *South African Spectator*, March 8, 1902). It would seem that what brought Soga and Peregrino intellectually and politically closer to each was PAN-AFRICANISM.

Before coming to South Africa, it would seem that Peregrino had expected to meet Soga and Rubusana at the First Pan-African Congress in London, to which both the editors had been invited. For financial reasons, they were not able to attend. Soga's political alignment with Pan-Africanism was deep. This was to be evident in his column, "The Cult of Race Leadership", in *Umteteli wa Bantu* in the 1920s. But what could have been more Pan-Africanist than the title of his lost book-length manuscript: *The Problem of the Social and Political Regeneration of Africa* (this author in 1997 made a formal request to the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. to search for it after reading a copy of the February 1904 African American magazine *The Colored American Magazine* that the manuscript might have been copyrighted with this institution: Sarah A. Allen, "Mr. Alan Kirkland Soga". After months of exhaustive search, the Library of Congress could not find any traces of it). Given this intellectual orientation of Allan Kirkland Soga, one can postulate with certainty that he endorsed the following edicts of Pan-African Congress as enunciated repeatedly by Peregrino in the various copies of *South African Spectator*: "To secure to Africans and their descendants throughout the world their civil and political rights; to ameliorate to condition of our oppressed brethren in the Continents of Africa, America, and other parts of the world, by promoting efforts to secure effective legislation; to encourage our people in educational, industrial, and commercial enterprises; to foster friendly relations between Caucasian and African races; to organize a Bureau as a depository for collections of authorised productions, writings, and statistics relating to our people everywhere" ("The Pan-African Society", February 23, 1901). In many ways, beyond the parameters of *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the perspective of *Izwi Labantu* was an application of this doctrine within the specific conditions of South Africa.

This is not to imply that *Izwi Labantu* did not have serious differences with *South African Spectator* concerning the inordinate influence of Aborigines Protection Society based in London on certain black organizations and institutions subscribing to PAN-AFRICANISM; an influence the Easy London newspaper

detrimental and debilitating of the interests of the African people ("The *Izwi* and the Pan-African Society", F. Z. S. Peregrino, *South African Spectator*, May 18, 1901). Otherwise, on central issues there were similar parallels of perspective. This is evident from a letter from Peregrino to *Izwi Labantu* after his own newspaper had folded up, complaining of the lack of unity among African newspapers concerning matters of the utmost importance to black people ("Native Divisions", March 24, 1908). In a response adjacent to the Letter, the editors of the newspaper indicate that the crisis was unleashed by the control, political and ideological, the Afrikaner Bond, a white organization sworn to the destruction of African political interests, had on John Tengo Jabavu and *Imvo Zabantsundu*. *Izwi Labantu*, lamenting this profound crisis, called for the establishing a "project for the unity of the Native Press" which would be based on self-reliance and self-help. The newspaper agreed with the position of John Dube and his newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* that there should be an annual meeting of Editors of African newspapers to exchange knowledge and opinion about matters vital to African interests. What all of this would seem to indicate is that African newspapers played an instrumental role in forging the consciousness of African unity in the decade before the founding of the ANC in 1912.

Allan Kirkland Soga and Walter Rubusana through *Izwi Labantu* were in the forefront arguing that the unity of political interests of African people was imperative in order for them to institute serious political interventions in the then emergent new historical experience of modernity. This call for black unity or African unity across the board is apparent from the celebration of Booker T. Washington (November 12, 1901) to his vilification (February 4, 1908) in the newspaper when it was deemed he no longer served the interests of black people: to New Negroes in his actual political pronouncements and practices, and to the New Africans as a paragon to be emulated. The newspaper also encouraged the formation of cultural and intellectual institutions such the African Literary Association which would act as a Bureau for the forging and creation of knowledge, as Peregrino had suggested in one of his Pan-Africanist edicts (Peter Mti, "The African Literary Association", May 6, 1902). Soga and Rubusana, especially the latter, were equally active in African political associations in the Cape Province in the quest of bringing the unity of the African people.

By the time Isaac Bud-M'belle wrote *Kafir Scholar's Companion* in 1903 (Lovedale Press), a book dedicated to John Tengo Jabavu as a pioneer in the publication of African newspapers, he could not avoid acknowledging the importance of newspapers in the consolidation of African cultures in the modern age. The acknowledgement begins with *Isigidimi sama Xosa* and *Imvo Zabantsundu* to *Izwi Labantu*, *Ipepa lo Hlanga* and *South Africa Spectator*. It is in fact Bud-M'belle who has given authoritative sanction to the appraisal in this essay of the role of

newspapers in the construction of African modernities in the early years of the twentieth century.

When *South African Spectator* supposedly folded up in 1912 (no copies seem to have survived beyond 1902, the first two years of its existence), and likewise *Izwi Labantu* in 1909, Solomon T. Plaatje's *Tsala ea Becoana* in 1909 was more than capable of continuing the tradition, perhaps far exceeding what perhaps would have been the expectations of its two predecessors. The moment of the publication of this newspaper coincided with one of the active periods in the New African intervention in the making of African modernities. Given that Plaatje was a great intellectual in his own right, he made it a forum for the most outstanding intellectuals of his generation: Booker T. Washington, Dr. Edward Blyden, Harold Cressy, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, F. Z. S. Peregrino, and his own reflections on nature of modernity. We have already seen Plaatje's preoccupation with Cressy, expecting him to be a major intellectual Cressy was giving expectations to become. *Tsala ea Becoana* reprinted a short article which originally appeared in *Imvo Zabantsundu* about the doings and influences of Booker T. Washington: "Dr. Booker Washington urges his students when they get a house of their own to have a bath room in the house, so that the body of every member of the family can be washed every morning and made fresh and vigorous. He urges also that they should have an attractive and comfortable dining-room with plenty of air and sun shine in it, so that when the family meets at meal times, they will do so in a clean and orderly manner. Now these things mean clean bodies and clean food, both of which are necessary to health. The Negroes in America are striving hard to secure comfortable and convenient houses. Such homes are also healthy. Do we in South Africa understand the importance of good houses" ("Native Health Society Notes", December 17, 1910). It is extraordinary that both Solomon T. Plaatje and John Tengo Jabavu found Washington's philosophy of the healthiness of the mind and cleanliness of the body as necessary requisites for a harmonious existence in modernity so crucial that they would publicise it in their newspapers. Could a greater proof be needed that the lessons from the New Negro experience in United States modernity had been felt essential by the New Africans in the intervention of their South African modernity! This testifies to the indelible impact Washington's **Up From Slavery** had on these two early pioneers of South African modernity. We shall see in a moment its overwhelming impact on a major New African intellectual of the next generation, R. V. Selope Thema.

In another instance, Solomon T. Plaatje reprinted an article which had appeared in a newspaper in Washington, D. C., *The Bee*, about an International Conference on Africa Booker T. Washington was planning for at Tuskegee in January of 1912: "The purpose of this conference will be to bring together not only students of colonial and racial questions, but more particularly those who, either as

missionaries, teachers or government officials, are actually engaged in any way in practical and constructive work which seeks to build up Africa by educating and improving the character and condition of the native peoples" ("International Conference on Africa", February 11, 1911). Booker T. Washington himself wrote directly to Solomon T. Plaatje asking him to publicize his upcoming Conference in his newspaper: "Such a Conference as this will offer the opportunity for those engaged in any kind of service in Africa, or the countries above-mentioned, to become more intimately acquainted with the work and the problems of Africa and these other countries. Such a meeting will be valuable and helpful, also, in so far as it will give opportunity for a general interchange of ideas in organising and systematising the work of education of the Native peoples in Africa and elsewhere and the preparation of teachers for that work. Wider knowledge of the work that each is doing should open means of co-operation that do not now exist" (Booker T. Washington, "International Conference", July 15, 1911). The position of Booker T. Washington on the inestimable importance of education in facilitating an entrance into modernity profoundly reinforced what the New Africans had already observed. As for the Conference itself, it became a sham and fiasco because Washington would not allow a real "interchange of ideas" to take place, barring the African voices of decolonization and ETHIOPIANISM from participating, allowing only white missionaries and representatives of colonial governments to represent the Other. Booker T. Washington's reactionary politics and conservative nature manifested itself in its worst form. The condemnation of posterity initiated by W. E. B. Du Bois is well known.

In a very surprising and uncharacteristic piece, written in the vein of the reactionary and submissive politics of Booker T. Washington, rather than in the enlightened politics of his great friend Alexander Crummell, let alone in the radical tradition of Du Bois, the *great* Edward W. Blyden, intervening a year after the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, argues in effect that Africans in South Africa should accept and submit themselves to imperial domination, since it is supposedly a natural course of things: "The present writer belongs to the class, but it is gradually increasing in the light of science and experience. This class does not believe that there is any impending conflict between whites and blacks in South Africa, or that any such conflict is inevitable. It views with deep regret the sentiment which forebodes ill for the future relations of the races in that sub-continent, or attributes to the blacks the antagonist or insurgent feeling implied in the swaggering utterance 'Africa for the Africans'. No enlightened African shares this feeling. Every properly educated African believes that while there may be England for the English, Germany for the Germans, France for the Frenchmen, Russia for the Russian, etc., etc., etc., there can be no Africa for the African in the political sense meant. The African for various reasons, as Miss Kingsley has pointed out, needs the Oberhoheit of the European. He is not a man of this world. He is spiritual, and needs guidance and direction in temporal

things. . . European is guardian, the African is ward. But that they should be happy together and useful to each other the guardian must understand his ward. . . Those who are sufficiently interested in the negro to misunderstand him think that he can by the ordinary European training be assimilated in character and sympathy to the white man, and to be so assimilated as to work in harmony with his teacher. . . The same thing will occur in the history of any college designed for the education of the negro in South Africa under the usual system. The results produced will be those produced in America, the creation of monsters---rebels against white authority and contemptuous of Negro ideals. The negro trained by the white man on the white man's lines will never find the truth for his race. . . Is the work, then hopeless? No. France has long since found out how to do it, England and Germany are now on the way to find out the proper method. They are sending experts to study the African in his home and find out how and why in his natural state he has lived and thriven so long in spite of a thousand disintegrating influences" ("Dr. Edward W. Blyden: Sierra Leone", April 1, 1911). What is one to make of this astonishing document from Blyden!

Because of his extreme racial ideology of the purity of the races, Blyden argues that the very quest of the African people in South Africa to acquire education as a means of entrance to modernity, is synonymous with their divesting themselves of the 'Africanness'. Secondly, at the very moment the African people were attempting to construct African nationalism as a means of overthrowing imperialism, through the founding of the ANC in 1912, he argues the unattainability of such a project by black people, yet he postulates it as attainable endeavor by European people. Thirdly, contradicting the very aim of his great adventure from St. Thomas Island to Africa, alleviating the suffering of the African people, Blyden sees nothing wrong with the European hegemonic control of Africa. Fourthly, unaware of the importance of African Americans, especially of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, as paragons for the construction of modernity, Blyden condemns the intelligentsia of both people as 'potentially 'monsters' created by the respective white people in both of the countries. Opposing the establishing Fort Hare, which was to come into being in 1916, Edward Blyden unfortunately never lived to see that this institution was eventually to produce a Nelson Mandela, Z. K. Mathews, A. C. Jordan, to name just a few, who were eventually to change the history of South Africa. Given these tragic views, it is perhaps not accidental that Edward W. Blyden never had any influence on the African intelligentsia in South Africa. One would have expected him to have had an influence on such figures as Solomon T. Plaatje, R. V. Selope Thema, H. Selby Msimang and other of their generation.

In the same year of 1911 that Edward W. Blyden wrote his contradictory reflections, as though a direct response to him, Solomon T. Plaatje gave a forum in *Tsala ea Becoana* to Pixley ka Isaka Seme and F. Z. S. Peregrino to articulate

their project of the unity of the African people through nationalism in the making of African modernities. One of the most historic documents in South African political history published in the newspaper was a call by Seme for the formation of the ANC (then known as the South African Native Congress) as the real 'Native Union': "There is to-day among all races and men a general desire for progress, and for co-operation, because co-operation will facilitate and secure that progress. This spirit is due no doubt to the great triumph of Christianity which teaches men everywhere that in this world they have a common duty to perform both towards God and towards one another. It is natural, therefore, that there should arise even within and among us this striving, this self-conscious movement, and sighing for Union. We are the last among all the nations of the earth to discover the priceless jewels of co-operation, and for this reason the great gifts of civilisation are least known among us to-day. I repeat, co-operation is the key and the watchword which opens the door, the everlasting door which leads into progress and all national success. The greatest success shall come when man shall have learned to co-operate, not only with his own kith and kin but with all peoples and with all life" ("Native Union", October 28, 1911). Pixley ka Isaka Seme was in effect announcing to the African people that the imperatives of modernity necessitated their coming together as a historical force of cooperation imbued with the principle of progress, the ideology of Christianity, and identification with the achievements of civilization.

Seme followed this pronouncement a few months later with a Notice of the agenda of the upcoming First Meeting of the South African Native Congress, which took place on January 8, 1912; he outlined the major issues that had to be considered in order to bring about this realization as well as other topics of general interest ("South African Native Congress: Notice", December 23, 1911). F. Z. S. Peregrino, who with the demise of his own *South African Spectator* seems to have been a regular contributor to *Tsala ea Becoana*, wrote one of the first major considerations of this historic cooperation and meeting: "Speculation is rife, and much misunderstanding perhaps obtain, and misrepresentations have been made with regard to this movement, its aims, and objects. Perhaps the fact that owing to a mistake the Press was not efficiently represented at the gathering at Bloemfontein on January 8, 1912, and therefore a full report of the proceedings was not given the public; perhaps that fact has much to do with the attendant misunderstandings, and so the suspiciously disposed saw in an influential gathering of natives nothing but danger, and sinister designs were charged. . . The initiator of this movement, P. ka Isaka Seme, of Jesus College, Oxford, and a B. A. of Columbia University, U.S. America, is without a doubt a man with a mission, and much in earnest. His plans appear to have been thoroughly well thought out. He combines educational abilities of the highest order with the calmness of temperament, correctness of demeanor, and all those qualities which proclaim the man whose association has been among the cultured and refined

order, and unlike those of superficial training, he is disinclined to obtrude his personality nor to accept that credit which is doubtless due to him for the conception of the scheme and for its progress thus far. A brief outline of this organisation may be now in order and probably prove acceptable. The South African Native National Congress is nothing less than a Native Parliament. A Union Parliament too, it is for it seeks to bring together the scattered forces into one fold, and to amalgamate the many weak associations into one strong body instead of a hundred small efforts, each trying feebly for recognition, one sound, solid body recognised as the real voice of the people, in full touch with the pulse of the native throughout South Africa, and who having no sinister motives or object, and nothing to conceal, are ready at all times to take up openly all grievances of the people, and submit to Government for redress. It will, moreover, be of invaluable service to the Government, since through it the views and opinion of the natives on any given question may be at all times authoritatively obtained" ("The S. A. Native National Congress: What It Is", March 16, 1912). It is with extraordinary insight that Peregrino equated the formation of this political body as the founding of an African Parliament. Peregrino's report and evaluation was followed by a long anonymously written report in *Tsala ea Batho* (as of June 1912 Plaatje changes the name of *Tsala ea Becoana* to this new name) on the meeting of the Orange Free State Native Congress on some of the critical issues undertaken in Bloemfontein concerning the cementation of African unity ("Native Congress", June 8, 1912). This superb literary piece betrays the stylistic features of Plaatje.

As part of his participation in this historic moment of unity among the African people, Peregrino seems to have travelled to particular areas of the country mediating disputes at the local level. One instance of this was his intervening in the conflict between the Barolong and the Pitsane people. In a report, in all probability written by Plaatje himself, he writes of a meeting in which Peregrino and Chief Silas Molema addressed the Barolong people about the conciliatory efforts being undertaken (Anonymous, "Native Affairs: Mass Meeting of the Barolong: Address by Mr. Peregrino", *Tsala ea Becoana*, May 4, 1912). Peregrino seems to have had a close relationship with Chief Silas Molema of the Barolong, because Plaatje states that whenever the Chief was in Cape Town concerning government matters he stayed at the house of the Ghanian. The importance of Chief Silas Molema can be indicated it was he who financed both Plaatje's *Tsala ea Becoana* and *Tsala ea Batho*. There is no reason for doubting that also Plaatje when he was in Cape Town on whatever business, in all probability he also stayed with Peregrino. In fact in 1902 the two of them founded the first Native Press Association which unfortunately lasted for about a year. The Association attempted to unify the interests of African newspapers. The connection between Peregrino and Plaatje was part of the New African intellectual circle.

F. Z. S. Peregrino had a deeper understanding and knowledge of African traditional societies than he is usually given recognition for by South African historians of this era: "There is a marked change and a great improvement among the Barolong people since the death of their late lamented Chief, and the accession of the present one. To one who, like the writer, has been acquainted with them during practically the whole period of Chieftainship, and as a frequent visitor, the present change can only be described as extraordinary. The Barolong, or, to give them their full title, the Bora-Tsibi-Baralong, have their Stadt in Mafeking about one and a quarter miles distant---from the Town Hall. During the past many complaints were made with regard to the local government of this location, complaints which were by no means unfounded. They were attributed to negligence and misruling on the part of the predecessor of the present Chief. However, there is no use in crying over spilt milk. The rule of the present Chief has, though covering a comparatively short period, been marked by a change. Cleanliness and orderliness prevail to an extent which was previously unknown. At a gathering consisting of every Chief and man of note, together with all the adult male population, the writer addressed them for about two hours, and could not discern the least sign of drunkenness on the part of anyone. The stern and strict rules, the attitude of the new Chief, supported by such men as Chiefs Silas, Joshua, Molema, Styrenand Lefenye, have already wrought a surprising improvement in the general conditions of the tribe" ("The Barolongs: Impression of Khama: Curse of Liquor", September 2, 1911). What intrigued, buoyed, enthralled Peregrino were the accommodations, adjustments, adaptations African traditional societies were making to the hegemonic order of modernity. To him, as was true of Pixley ka Isaka Seme, John Dube, Solomon T. Plaatje, Walter Rubusana, the Chiefs were critical agents in facilitating this possible transition, whereas to R. V. Seloape Thema and H. I. E. Dhlomo, they were the most obdurate obstacles preventing the unconditional triumph of modernity, which the latter two clamored for.

Before considering Solomon T. Plaatje's direct reflections on the arrival and making of modernity in South Africa, it is important to note the high esteem, concerning intellectual and political matters, in which he was held by the other members of the New African intelligentsia. One measure of his intellect is indicated by the extraordinary way he made *Tsala ea Becoana* (*Tsala ea Batho*) in its few years of existence (1909-15) one of the greatest South African newspapers in the twentieth century. When he transformed *Tsala ea Becoana* in 1912 from being an English/Tswana into *Tsala ea Batho*, he added sections in Sotho/Xhosa/Pedi: Plaatje was undoubtedly and profoundly in tune with the tremendous transformations modernity was effecting. The level of achievement becomes nearly incomparable when it is recalled that his newspaper was practically a one-man enterprise. The occasion of Seme's nomination in 1915 of Plaatje as Chief Executive/President of the ANC, an invitation the great Barolong intellectual

refused, enables us to get a glimpse of his profile held by the other New Africans: "Let him beware who seeks to divide us. in this way the Zulu will be taught to overcome the prejudice of his caste, and in the way all the other tribes will be similarly affected. For instance the Xosa will be taught to look to a Mosotho leader for certain matters and the Pondos to look to a certain Fingo for certain matters, and so on. And in this way our Congress will afford a training college for inter-tribal leadership. . . I have proposed the nomination of SOLOMON PLAATJE as the next President of the Congress because and on account of his own special merit and fitness for the position. Solomon Plaatje combines rare and incomparable organising and administrative abilities which make him most fit to take up the position at the present time. He is for many years and organiser of the Bechuanaland Protectorates. He has fought for the constitutional rights of our people, not only in the Protectorates, but also in Cape Colony, the Free State and Transvaal as well, and this long before we had this Congress. The most brilliant record of his most busy life is too well known. For the present, let me ask all affiliated branches and members to consider the incomparable claims of the Bechuana leader to lead our Congress for the ensuing term. We Zulus have already had our turn. Let us learn to follow the lead of another nation. This will prove whether or not that union is strength" ("One and Indivisible", *Tsala ea Batho*, July 17, 1915). By the time of this deservedly extraordinary praise by the foremost political leader of African modernity, Plaatje, the year before, had already written a series of essays that have become intellectual milestones in the encounter between New African intellectual imagination and the instruments for the construction of African modernities.

More than any other other member of the New African intellectuals, Solomon T, Plaatje was profoundly aware that the construction of African modernities was a process of the political emancipation of the African people. For him the principal aim of African modernities had to be the production and acquisition of knowledge whose applicability would be emancipatory in the sense of overthrowing hegemonic European political structures. This was a lesson Plaatje imparted to H. I. E. Dhlomo. This explains why Plaatje from the founding of the ANC in 1912 to the mid-1920s was the organization's most formidable intellectual driving force, an achievement Dhlomo was to replicate from the moment of the founding Youth League in 1943 to his death in 1956. For Plaatje, it was the politics of enlightenment, rather than cultural production or nationalism, that should be the guiding instrument in the realization of African modernities. Dhlomo from the middle part of his career in the 1930s thought that cultural production (hence his spectacular theorizations of African theatrical forms at this time) should be the informing logic of these modernities; but in the 1940s he shifted this to African nationalism, and by the end of his life in the next decade, it was also the politics of enlightenment. What was fundamental to both their projects was the continuous production of knowledge. This was the reason of

their great essays, Plaatje particularly in *Tsala ea Batho* from 1912 to 1915, and Dhlomo in *Ilanga lase Natal* in the 1940s and in the 1950s. This obsession with the production of knowledge explains why their very first essays on the role of towns and cities in the realization of modernities, written nearly twenty years apart, Plaatje on King Williamstown (1911) and Dhlomo on Alice (1930), were about epistemological spaces and institutional modes that made Xhosa cultural renaissance possible in the late nineteenth century.

The proximity Solomon T. Plaatje posed between enlightenment politics, in effect the politics of resistance, which the founding of the ANC was one of its greatest realizations, and the making of African modernities, is evident in one of his essays on the impact of the Native Land Act of 1913, a diabolical act that was to preoccupy much of his intellectual energies at this time: "Surely it is time that the European races of this country should realise their position and responsibilities in regard to the people inhabiting it. No country in any age has prospered by oppression or suppression of any people within its borders. Emancipation is the theme and practice of all civilised peoples; first for themselves and then for all others who may be in any way suffering burdens interfering with their full development as nations or peoples. The native races of this country are developing rapidly, and freeing themselves from superstition and tribal rule, and seeking enlightenment by education and training in handicrafts, to a large extent influenced by Europeans, and European civilisation. This upward growth is more rapid among them than among a considerable section of the white population around them. The natives are the original occupants of this country; this applies to a very large part of South Africa, at any rate" ("The Native Land Bill", Anonymous, May 17, 1913; reprinted from *Diamond Fields Advertiser*). The emancipatory politics of modernity were to find their fullest expression in the ANC resistance to this Act. But since this politics of enlightenment was largely concentrated in particular cities and towns, it is important to examine Plaatje's dialectical conception between city and modernity.

In the first of the essays Plaatje views King Williamstown as the social space in which the old and the new intersected in a symbolic way: it is here the last great Xhosa Paramount Chief Hintza was defeated, and it is here also that John Tengo Jabavu launched *Imvo Zabantsundu* in 1884. He argues that racial prejudice is against the economic imperatives of modernity: "You will not need to be told of the impracticability of segregation if you will but come here and see for yourself the flood of black peasantry from surrounding locations pouring into the streets; we see the natives walking up and down the thoroughfares, staring at the shop windows, meeting and gossiping with friends, bartering with white men, and purchasing provisions: and you will be satisfied that, should segregation ever become an accomplished fact, fully four-fifths of the merchants would leave King Williamstown by way of the Bankruptcy Court" ("King Williamstown", October

14, 1911; reprint from *Pretoria News*). Given that first professional occupation Plaatje had in the late nineteenth-century was as a Court interpreter in his home town of Kimberley, it is not surprising that he was enthralled with the judicial structure of this town at the center of the rebirth of Xhosa culture. In another essay a few months later on the impact of French Evangelical Mission in Basutoland, Plaatje emphasizes the importance of knowledge in the spread of enlightenment in Southern Africa: "We also visited Morija, the 80 years old missionary town, belonging to the French Mission, which has played such an important part in the civilisation of Basutoland and the history of South Africa. It has for many years been one of South Africa's great native seats of learning. Native teachers have gone forth from here to teach and preach the Gospel to their countrymen in various parts of South Africa. They are found as far north as Central Africa, where, by taming the savages, they have acted as harbingers of the trader and administrator. It is doubtful if the inhabitants of Livingstone and Elisabethville ever recognise their indebtedness to this French Missionary Station, at the foot of the mountain ranges of the Switzerland of South Africa. . . ." ("Basutoland: Characteristics of the Country: Reminiscences of a Recent Visit", May 11, 1912; reprint from *Diamond Fields Advertiser*). It was in this town that the *Leselinyana* newspaper as well as the works of Thomas Mofolo were published by the French Missionaries.

It was as a member of the South African Native National Congress (later ANC) deputation to England in 1914 to protest the Natives Land Act of 1913, that Solomon T. Plaatje had an opportunity for the first time to witness a great imperial metropolitan city: London. In this city, Plaatje marvels at its world renown institutions: Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham, the English Courts and the Paddington Station. He leaves one with a deep impression of the enormity and complexity of the metropolitan space: "Yesterday four of us tried to count the vehicles that formed the train of moving beings near the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England. It was a poser, but, if we were not far out, something like 58 vehicles passed us every minute, which worked out at something like a bus, a car, a carriage or other conveyance every second. The population of this city is 7,000,000 in round figures. There are said to be over 8,000 public houses, and 3,000 tea rooms; the number of City and Metropolitan Police is nearly 20,000; within a radius of 12 of Charing Cross there are nearly 100 railway stations; London's inhabitants consume yearly 2,000,000 bags of wheat; 150,000 tons of fish; 850,000 oxen, 4,000,000 sheep, calves, and pigs; and 9,000,000 head of poultry and game. London is said to contain more Roman Catholics than Rome; more Jews than Palestine; more Irishmen than Belfast; more Scotch than Aberdeen; more Welsh than Cardiff. London has 59 members of Parliament. That's London in a nut-shell" ("The Native Deputation: Last Week of the Voyage: The Arrival in Great Britain; First Impressions of a Native Visitor", *Tsala ea Batho*, July 11, 1914; reprint from *Diamond Fields Advertiser*. In a superb collection of the

writings of Plaatje published a few months back, Brian Willan, his biographer and the world's leading authority on Plaatje, has inexplicably cut this historic essay by one-third: "Native Congress Mission to London", in *Sol Plaatje: Selected Writings*, (ed.) Brian Willan, Witwatersrand University Press and Ohio University Press, Athens, 1997, pp.174-184). Writing in the era of the New African Renaissance, Solomon T. Plaatje was to impart a passion for foreign metropolitan cities to a generation of Sophiatown Renaissance writers writing 40 years later: Lewis Nkosi on Paris, New York City and Rio de Janeiro; Nat Nakasa on New York City; and Ezekiel Mphahlele also on New York City and Ibadan.

As indicated, Solomon T. Plaatje exemplified the nature of the political intervention by a New African intellectual through newspapers columns and articles in the permanent South African political crisis, in his instance in *Tsala ea Batho*. Arguably the founder of this tradition is Allan Kirkland Soga in an open letter to Joseph Chamberlain, then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, in *The Colored American Magazine* in 1903 protesting the exclusion of the political interests of the African in the Treaty of Vereeniging of 1902, a treaty concluding the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Jordan Ngubane and H. I. E. Dhlomo, 40 years after the example of Plaatje, were to do likewise in their respective newspapers, *Inkundla ya Bantu* and *Ilanga lase Natal* (see the monograph: *The Modernity of H. I. E. Dhlomo: South Africa in the Modern World*). R. V. Seloape Thema, as editor of *Bantu World* for approximately 20 years (1932-52), refused or incapable or unable to follow this eloquent tradition, which resulted in what Jordan Ngubane considered to be one of the greatest South African intellectual tragedies of the twentieth century ("Three Famous African Journalists I Knew: Richard Victor Seloape Thema", *Inkundla ya Bantu*, Second Fortnight, July 1946). Having received his apprenticeship through the guidance of Seloape Thema in this newspaper, whom he considered a great intellectual, and given his own later extraordinary achievements, Jordan Ngubane was more than qualified to make this judgment.

The tragedy and trauma unleashed on the African people by the Natives' Land Act of 1913 is what engaged the political praxis of Solomon T. Plaatje. The enormity of the misery visited on black people is captured graphically in his classic book, *Native Life in South Africa*: "Up to now we have dealt with the history of the Land Act from its commencement, and all the speeches and official documents we have mentioned hitherto say nothing about restricting Europeans in their ownership of land. And no matter what other principles one might read into the Act, it would be found that the principles underlying it were those of extending the extension by which natives would be prohibited from investing their earnings in land whereon they could end their days in peace. . . But class legislation the Act is, for whereas in his travels about South Africa, since the passing of this Act, the author has met many a native family with their stock, turned out by the Act upon the roads. . . The squatters form a particular section

of the community specifically affected by the Land Act. . . the conclusion cannot be avoided that it is directed exclusively against the native. . . Personally we must say that if anyone had told us at the beginning of 1913, that a majority of members of the Union Parliament were capable of passing a law like the Natives' Land Act, whose object is to prevent the natives from ever rising above the position of servants to the whites, we would have regarded that person as a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. . . But the passing of the Act and its operation have rudely forced the fact upon us. . . that the complete arrest of native progress is the object aimed at. . . " (Ohio University Press, 1991, p.60 [P. S. King and Son, Ltd. London, 1916]). In his brilliant articles in *Tsala ea Batho* criticising the Natives Land Act Plaatje sought to prevent, the enslavement of African people European colonialism, the hindering of African progress by European hegemony, and establish a counter narrative of modernity.

The first direct mention of the Natives Land Act of 1913 in a newspaper by Plaatje was to register its incompatibility with social ethos of civilization and and its negation of progress realized through enlightenment: "Surely it is time that the European races of this country should realise their position and responsibilities in regard to the people inhabiting it. No country in any age has prospered by oppression or suppression of any people within its borders. Emancipation is the theme and practice of all civilised peoples; first for themselves and then for all others who may be in any way suffering burdens interfering with their full development as nations or peoples. The native races of this country are developing rapidly, and freeing themselves from superstition and tribal rule, and seeking enlightenment by education and training in handicrafts, to a very large extent influenced by Europeans and European civilisation. This upward growth is more rapid among them than among a considerable section of the white population around them. . . The natives desire, above all things, the more civilised they become, that their nationality should be respected, and that there should be no mixing of blood. . . The idea of removing the natives from their lands, for which they have paid, and which they have worked and occupied for years, in order to safeguard the interests of Europeans, and of protecting their families from the effects of nearness of native people, is in essence a denial of the very first principles of justice. The native is as secured by every human law and right in his occupation as any of his white neighbours" ("The Native Land Bill", *Tsala ea Batho*, May 17, 1913).

On the resistance of African women to being forced to carry passes: "The women each addressed the Secretary [Plaatje himself then Secretary-General of the national body] to the effect that the pass laws has driven their daughters away from home to towns where they were not required to carry passes. They complained further that the pass regulations had given facilities for policemen to criminally assault women; some policemen, both white and black, they said,

were actually undergoing years of imprisonment for indecent assaults upon women who but for the pass law, would have been beyond their reach. . . Mrs. Broodis, who has suffered some two months' imprisonment for refusing to carry a pass, described what she styles the 'beastly treatment' of women revolvers at Kroonstad gaol." ("Free State Native Grievances: Secretary for Native Affairs Meets Native Congress: Black Suffragettes in Bloemfontein", September 27, 1913). He was particularly sensitive, as in other articles, to political issues which were of particular concern to women. In this instance reporting on the deliberations of the Orange Free State Native Congress concerning the reasons of the horrendous conditions Africans were living under which were directly attributed to the Natives Land Act: "Strong sentiments were expressed when the land subject was broached, and it took the meeting till late in the evening. It transpired that many of the natives working in the towns supplemented their earnings by running stock on the arms in the districts, and the provisions of the Act, they said, would have a disturbing effect upon their means of livelihoods. They particularly resented the clauses prohibiting the renewal of contracts to plow, which they characterised as calculated to interfere with their economic independence." Plaatje concludes by stating the pros and cons at this regional Congress meeting about the possibility of Congress sending a delegation to England to protest this Act: those in favour believed in the ideology of the 'fairness' of English justice, despite the fact that in the immediate past the English had betrayed African interests, at the treaty of Vereeniging in 1903, the Union Act of 1910; those against it who correctly recognized that Britain no longer had any jurisdiction over South Africa.