

Vision and Mission: To Restore and Work on a Narrative About South Africa and the Netherlands for Our (Grand)Children and Future Generations

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ABSTRACT

This article shows a contrast between the morality of South Africa and the Netherlands. The latest example is the courtcase before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The Netherlands is conspicuously keeping its distance. This may be explained by the neo-colonial attitude of the Netherlands during the period when it colonised, enslaved, looted and pillaged South Africa, imposed indentured labour and established apartheid. This article attempts to initiate a new narrative that transcends this sickening history, a narrative intended for South African and Dutch great-grandchildren. We see this narrative as a start for rewriting history, but also for writing children's books and creating restorative art expressions.

Keywords: Vision and mission, Decolonizing, International Redress, Developing new moral standards.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa has shown a moral compass by denouncing Israel for genocide against the Palestinians. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague imposed provisional measures on Israel on Friday 26 January 2024: "Israel must take all possible measures to avoid genocide. It must also ensure that the Israeli military does not commit acts of genocide. At the same time, Israel must prevent and punish incitement to genocide and take measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. In each case, the ICJ judges agreed almost unanimously on the measures to be taken. However, the Court does not oblige Israel to stop the war, which was the main issue for South Africa."

But ICJ President Joan E. Donoghue, who read out the judgment, stressed that the measures imposed by the Court are legally binding. Israel must also report back to the court within a month.

Although the Netherlands, through Prime Minister Mark Rutte, told the VVD congress on 27 January that it felt bound by the ICJ rulings, the Dutch government is suspending payments to UNRWA. The announcement said: "The Netherlands is freezing further payments to UNRWA,

following the example of other Western countries. UNRWA said: "UNRWA's life-saving assistance is coming to an end following decisions by countries to cut their funding to the Agency.

Our humanitarian operation, a lifeline for 2 million people in Gaza, is collapsing. I am shocked that such decisions are being taken on the basis of the alleged behaviour of a few individuals, while the war continues, needs grow and famine looms. The Palestinians of Gaza did not need this extra collective punishment. It taints us all.

In short, once again the Netherlands seems to lack a moral compass, just as it did in the past with colonisation, slavery, the introduction of apartheid, forced labour and the extermination of indigenous peoples and languages in South Africa. This article is about an initiative to overcome this lack of moral compass.

APOLOGIES

On 1 July 2023, King Willem-Alexander apologised for the slavery that had been perpetuated worldwide for centuries in the name of the Dutch state. He also asked for forgiveness "for the obvious lack of action against this crime against humanity". And he concluded: 'Having acknowledged and apologised, may we work together for healing, reconciliation and recovery¹. Prime Minister Rutte had preceded him on 19 December 2023 to apologise on behalf of the cabinet for the slavery past. Not a 'global' gesture, but an apology to the enslaved and their descendants in Suriname and the Antilles².

Willem Alexander addressed South Africa during his state visit. Speaking in Pretoria on 19 October, he said:

"We share a history of colonialism, abuse of power and slavery for more than a century and a half. [We reflect on this with humility, so no excuses³]."

In his written address to the royal couple, President Ramaphosa referred to the words of 1 July 2023: "In this regard, Your Majesty, I wish to acknowledge the apology you made for your country's role in the slave trade, including in South Africa. This was an important step in promoting reconciliation, restoration and the healing of old wounds⁴. But he did not utter those words on 19 October 2023⁵.

The fact that monarchs, presidents and prime ministers in 2023 are dealing with this past is due to the tireless and longstanding efforts of descendants, activists, journalists, historians and

¹ <https://www.koninklijkhuis.nl/documenten/toespraken/2023/07/01/toespraak-van-koning-willem-alexander-tijdens-de-nationale-herdenking-slavernijverleden-2023>

² <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2022/12/19/toespraak-minister-president-rutte-over-het-slavernijverleden>

³ <https://www.koninklijkhuis.nl/documenten/toespraken/2023/10/19/statement-van-koning-willem-alexander-met-president-cyril-ramaphosa-tijdens-het-staatsbezoek-aan-zuid-afrika>

⁴ <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/opening-remarks-president-cyril-ramaphosa-official-talks-king-willem-alexander-occasion-netherlands-state-visit%2C-union-buildings%2C-pretoria>

⁵ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2494718-koninklijk-paar-door-boze-menigte-demonstranten-bij-museum-kaapstad>

(other) scholars to put the history of the slave trade, slavery and other forms of forced labour on the (inter)national agenda.

It is a missed opportunity, however, that Dutch dignitaries focus almost exclusively on 'Atlantic slavery' and its consequences, and only provide funding for this purpose. Let's look beyond this narrow focus and include others whose ancestors were victims of the system of slavery that was maintained for centuries in the name of the Dutch state.

We focus on the Dutch colonisation of South Africa and its aftermath. This is a story of the slave trade, slavery and indentured labour, followed by institutionalised apartheid, a 'historical consequence' of this colonialism and the centuries-long appropriation of land and people for the 'own' Dutch and British benefit.

The enslaved population of the Cape Colony was very diverse. The main areas of origin were Mozambique, Madagascar and the surrounding islands, and to a lesser extent Angola and Guinea. People from what is now India, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and the Indonesian archipelago, and even some from southern China⁶, were also traded. In the words of Fred de Vries:

"More than sixty thousand slaves were brought to South Africa, especially between 1652 and 1795, when the VOC ruled here after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck. Half came from Madagascar and a third from Asia, mainly India and Indonesia. They built the Cape's buildings, picked the Cape's grapes and provided for posterity. As Dutch Governor J.W. Janssens said in 1804: "Without slavery, all property and the colony would wither, [for] all the industry of this country exists by the grace of the existence of slaves"."

President Jacob Zuma put it more succinctly in 2015 when he said: "You must not forget that a man called Jan van Riebeeck arrived here on 6 April 1652; and that was the beginning of all the country's problems⁸.

The Dutch used South Africa for their material expansionism. The Dutch expelled the indigenous people, with their own customs and languages (see Appendix 1), from the area called the Cape of Good Hope, which later became Cape Town⁹. South Africa was an important stopover on the way to the Asian continent, which was partly colonised by the Dutch for about 350 years. Recent research suggests that enslaved people were also transported from or via Cape Town to the Americas and the Caribbean, as shown by the preliminary results of the research project 'Exploring the Slave Trade in Asia'¹⁰.

⁶ Eunice Visser, *Die Kaapse slawe. 'n Kultuurhistoriese perspektief* (Pretoria, Protea Boekhuis, 2022), pp. 37-52.

⁷ Fred de Vries, 'Masters en bastaards', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 16 december 2015; <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/masters-en-bastaards>

⁸ Niels Posthumus, *Alle problemen begonnen met Van Riebeeck. Wat Nederlanders niet weten over hun rol in Zuid-Afrika* (2021).

⁹ <https://ap.lc/dEaug>

¹⁰ <https://esta.iisg.nl/en-voor-het-kaartmateriaal-gebaseerd-op-deze-geaggregeerde-database>
<https://exploringslavetradeinasia.com/maps.php>.

The South Africa House in Amsterdam and its partners (Expats & Immigrants B.V., free.palestine.nl and Restorative Justice the Netherlands) want to work from the perspective of Transitional Justice and the International Redress Movement to begin healing, reconciliation and recovery, to create a narrative that acknowledges this terrible past and looks forward with hope to the (shared) future of the children and grandchildren of South Africa and the Netherlands. We want to do this in unity with South Africans and the Dutch.

This narrative looks first at the past in South Africa and the Netherlands. It recounts the painful history of Dutch material expansionism in South Africa, with a focus on contemporary apartheid and poverty in South Africa. It then outlines a new perspective that offers the prospect of recovery, equal citizenship and possibly even reconciliation. A third part of this perspective outlines the process-based lines of inquiry that will be distinguished. These could include South African and Dutch scholars rewriting the history of suffering, children's books with a South African and, separately or not, a Dutch perspective, meetings of artists to (learn to) appreciate the common cultural heritage, and committees of South Africans and Dutch to oversee these recovery processes.

THE INDIGENOUS AND CONTEMPORARY POPULATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA¹¹

The first people with whom Europeans came into contact in southern Africa in the seventeenth century were the Khoisan. The Khoi (or Khoe) and San each had their own culture, language and customs for many thousands of years. The San lived more inland as hunters, while the Khoi lived closer to the coast and made their living from pastoralism and agriculture. A small group of San still live in the Kalahari Desert today. If they won't tell you about their traditions, you can at least learn about them from the many rock paintings they have left in caves.

The Khoi had the most intense contact with the European settlers who, from around 1750, appropriated land, agricultural produce, cattle and 'labour'. The Khoi always resisted these illegal practices. In the centuries that followed, many small and large wars were fought and many lives were lost. Then as now, most of the Khoi live in the western part of South Africa.

Both the original inhabitants, the Khoi and the San, have been discriminated against, disadvantaged and considered inferior by the white inhabitants of what is now South Africa over the centuries.

Bantu Natives

Three-quarters of South Africa's population are Bantu, a group of people who speak a Bantu language, such as Swahili. The Bantu began the greatest wave of migration in history in the year 1000, during which they split into the Western Bantu and the Eastern Bantu. Many of the latter ended up in South Africa, where they split into smaller groups. This gave rise to peoples such as the Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana and Shona. The Zulu live mainly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Despite their bloody history, the Zulu are proud of their culture - especially in Zululand, in the eastern part of KwaZulu-Natal. Their language, IsiZulu, is one of South Africa's 11 official

¹¹ For a recent overview of these populations and the stories of their descendants, see Patric Tariq Mellet, *The lie of 1652. A decolonised history of land* (2020). Equally informative and insightful is Mellet's website, Camissa People: <https://camissapeople.wordpress.com/about-2/>.

languages. For example, the first verse of the national anthem is in Xhosa, the second in Sesotho, the third in Afrikaans and the fourth in English.

The Xhosa now live mainly in the Eastern Cape. In the rural areas of the province, they still maintain their ancient traditions, but in the towns the Xhosa have adopted western culture. By the way, did you know that Nelson Mandela is Xhosa¹²?

SOUTH AFRICA: COLONISATION AND SLAVERY

When people think of South Africa, they often think of Dutch colonisation. Less well known, according to Bart de Graaff in *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, is that the Dutch held about 60,000 people in slavery between 1758 and 1795¹³. In another article in *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, Bart de Graaff addresses the call for an apology for the slavery past. The message to the Netherlands is: 'The Dutch must pay! For all the crimes committed in the former Cape Colony. Including slavery.

"The Dutch apology for slavery in Surinam and the Caribbean also strengthens the desire for reparations among South African descendants. Historian and journalist Bart de Graaff talks to activists in Cape Town. Ek dink ons moet miskien koppe bymekaar sit om kyk of die Nederlandse regering nie iets moois, iets konkreets wil bieden nie'.[...]

Zenzile Khoisan, born Charles Jackson, is a writer, journalist and radio presenter. For many years he has campaigned for the rights of South Africa's original inhabitants: the Khoi-Khoi and San, formerly called 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen' by the settlers. On behalf of the victims of Dutch colonialism, Chief! Garu demands the return of traditional tribal lands in South Africa and seeks a revaluation of ancient, pre-Christian religious practices. Finally, he wants plans to revive extinct indigenous languages such as Xiri and! Ora¹⁴."

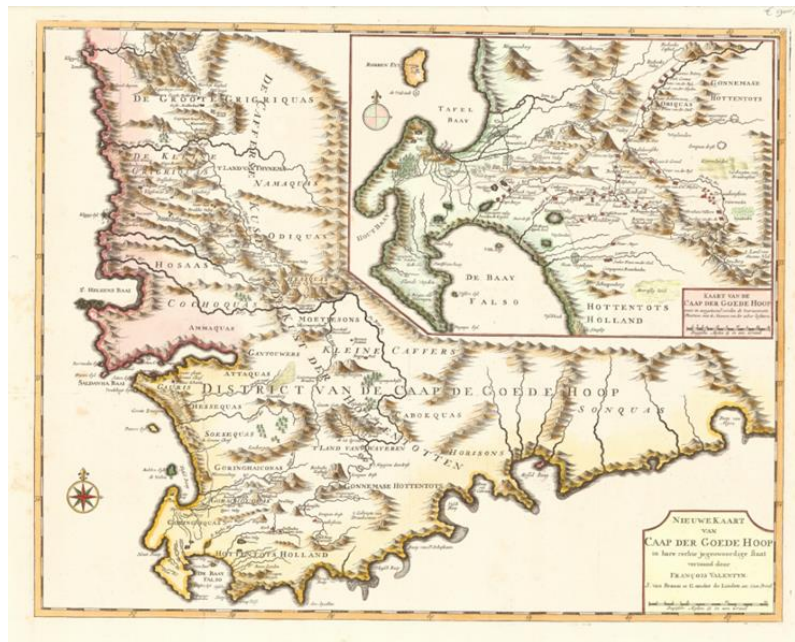
Khoisan and Slaves

What do the Khoisan activists' demands mean for the debate about South Africa's Dutch slavery past? In short, nothing. Under the rule of the United East India Company (1652-1795), the colonists were explicitly forbidden to enslave the indigenous people of the Cape. Although the Khoisan were treated and abused as slaves by the rural settlers, they were formally free. The situation was very different for the slaves from Asia and East Africa who were transported to the Cape Colony from 1652. Within a generation, these unfree people had lost their mother tongue and, with the exception of Muslim slaves - their religion. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, slaves and their descendants, together with the descendants of the original inhabitants of the Cape Colony, became the amorphous group of 'Coloureds'.

¹² <https://ap.lc/xLoeF>

¹³ Bart de Graaff, 'De vergeten slavernij aan de Kaap', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, 10 januari 2022: <https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/slavernij-aan-de-kaap/>

¹⁴ Bart de Graaff, 'Ook in Zuid-Afrika klinkt roep om excuses', in: *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, 20 maart 2023: <https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/ook-in-zuid-afrika-klinkt-roep-om-excuses/>. Zie ook Anne-Lot Hoek, 'Ook in Zuid-Afrika wacht de koning het koloniale verleden', in: *NRC*, 14 oktober 2023; digitaal 12 oktober 2023: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/10/12/ook-in-zuid-afrika-wacht-de-koning-het-koloniale-verleden-a4177017>



Picture 1: Cape of Good Hope map

Now, some two hundred years later, it is almost impossible to tell the difference between brown people of Khoisan descent and those whose ancestors were mainly enslaved. Only the surnames sometimes give a clue: Seekoei, Padmaker, Papier, Yzerbek and Taaibosch are typical Khoisan names; among the descendants of slaves, names like Titus, Fortuijn, Solomon, Januarie and Bali dominate. A different case is the number of names ending in 'booi', such as Witbooi, Swartbooi, Vaalbooi and Kleinbooi. At first glance, these appear to be slave names, but they are not. During VOC rule at the Cape, slaves were addressed by their owners as *jong* or *jongen*. The Khoisan, who were a step above slaves on the social ladder, did not want to be called that. They preferred the word booi - why is not clear - and so a new surname, with or without prefixes, was born.

Recognition

The establishment of a Dutch Awareness-Raising Fund, which will mainly finance educational projects to commemorate and come to terms with the slavery past, does not satisfy radical Khoisan activists. But among the more moderate, there is hope that at least some of the Dutch apology will trickle down to South Africa.

Nico Botha: 'Ek thinks the Dutch government's acknowledgement is important. Without being opportunistic, I think we need to sit down and see if the Dutch government wants to offer something nice, something concrete.

This could be specially developed teaching materials for use in South African schools. Making archival material from the Dutch East India Company period (more) accessible is also an option. Finally, a third possibility is to help set up and carry out a survey on the origins of surnames in the brown community. Such research could be a form of identity-finding for the descendants of slaves in South Africa, but certainly also for the Khoisan¹⁵.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

SLAVERY IN CAPE TOWN

How Slavery Came to South Africa¹⁶

The Dutch at the Cape are "very unwilling to do the dirty work", Jan van Riebeeck wrote home in 1655. He does not seem to have meant this in a reproachful way, but was aware of the consequences of this attitude. After all, the vegetable gardens did not automatically become fodder for their colleagues. The cost of the new refreshment station had risen considerably, and complaints from the Netherlands were pouring in. So, the dirty work in Cape Town would have to be done by others at low cost, and it irritated Van Riebeeck and company that the 'Hottentots' were not eager to do this work for their new neighbours either.

For the Dutch merchants, the problem was less complicated. They saw a lucrative alternative. Johan Maurits van Nassau's Brazilian sugar plantations were doing very well. Here, too, there had been a lot of dirty work since 1635. Once again, the beauty of nature failed to inspire Europeans to work. The answer to the labour problem was slavery.

So, in 1658 the first black workers arrived in South Africa from a hijacked Portuguese ship, followed by the organised importation of slaves from Guinea, Madagascar, India and the Indonesian archipelago.

If The Church Says So...

The economic benefits prompted the Dutch High Lords States General to officially encourage the slave trade in 1635. This seems not to have been entirely without moral scruples. But both pastors and merchants developed sufficient justifications to continue the slave trade.

For example, the biblical story of Cham served as an effective justification. This story describes the curse on Cham's descendants and is easy to project onto other black people. These views would lead to entrenched racism.

Who Would Put His Sister in Metal Chains as A Slave?

Another successful argument to ease consciences and take full advantage of slavery came from the influential Dutch clergy, who told the pious Dutch that slavery was an opportunity not only for the traders but also for the slaves themselves. The blacks would be taught the true faith - Protestantism. The slave owners would, as it were, launch the slaves into heaven. But with the conversion, the slaves became Protestant brothers and sisters. And who will now put his sister in metal chains as a slave?

So, the Dutch cut themselves in half by drawing a line between pagan and Christian. If a slave converted to the true faith, he had to be freed. To escape the terrible fate of being a slave for life, many Africans joined together to convert. And these were a little too many new brothers and sisters for the VOC people. There was still work to be done. They decided to introduce measures to slow things down.

These Slaves Don't Want Freedom

In 1685, marriages between Dutch people and freed slaves were forbidden. So, the class distinction between Christians and heathens slowly shifted to whites and blacks. The whites

¹⁶ https://kaapstadmagazine.nl/geschiedenis-zuid-afrika/slavernij-in-kaapstad/125_22_17840

regarded the black as a being of a different nature from man. A creature that was strangely happy in conditions where the white man would be terribly unhappy. Pure racism took root. A preacher from Coevorden explained why slavery was not a bad thing.

"These men are also naturalised, so if they are set at liberty or lovingly cherished, they will not be virtuous and know how to govern themselves; but if one dwells continually with putrefaction in their loins, and one bastion the selves without mercy, then one can expect good services from deselfe".

Amen to that.

God's approval of brutal slavery was also evident in the Bookkeeper. When people prayed for 'the blessing of Godt-Almaghtigh upon the Trafique Zeevaert and Commercie', the profits were a clear sign of 'a blessed business'.

Abolition of Slavery

Holland was one of the last countries to abolish slavery. Both merchants and ministers were firmly behind the slave trade. Eventually, crumbling power forced the Dutch to give in and abolish slavery. When, around 1814, England agreed to return the Dutch colonies - which it had 'administered' under French rule - only on condition that the Dutch agreed to fight the slave trade, the Dutch had no choice but to do so.

By 1806, the Dutch were to have handed over the Cape Colony to England permanently. In 1807, England abolished the slave trade in the territories it ruled. It was only a few years later that thing changed for the enslaved. The British introduced a few more rights for the slaves. The 9-hour day became a reality in 1831, followed by the abolition of slavery in 1834.

Angry at the low compensation they were receiving as slave owners, the 'Boeren' packed their bags. This exodus of 'Boeren' is known as the Great Migration. Seeking freedom and new land, they decided to continue the policies of their Dutch ancestors elsewhere. Without the metal chains of slavery, but in squalid conditions, they maintained what they saw as the proper relationship between master and servant outside the Cape. The black proletariat had the choice of dying or remaining at the whites' disposal as cheap labour.

Why Slavery Was Abolished

Partly because of their persuasive campaign to abolish slavery, the English are often seen as moralists. This does not seem entirely accurate. Partly because of the high transaction costs of crossing, the risks of kidnapping and falling prices, the slave trade had become uneconomic. In the late eighteenth century, for example, the price of sugar, pepper and tobacco fell so low that slaves on plantations in South America could not produce enough for their masters. These economic changes appear to have had a major impact on the global abolition of slavery.

Despite their disapproval of the 'Boeren', even after the abolition of slavery, the English in South Africa seem to have had the same aim as the Boers: to make the blacks do the dirty work for the whites. Through segregationist policies, blacks were forced to do unskilled work, while education and better jobs were reserved for whites.

The Black Peril

When diamonds were discovered in the new 'Boeren' territories, the British decided to invade. Once again, they condemned the 'Boeren' for their attitude to Africans. In 1900, the Dutchman Abraham Kuyper wrote of his frustration with these morally preaching, hypocritical Englishmen. They had no right to lecture the 'Boeren', he said, given their own crimes against blacks. Kuyper also believed that the English did not realise how great the 'swart danger' was in practice. After all, unlike the original inhabitants of America, those in South Africa were only increasing in number.

The Dirty Work of Post-Slavery

By 1924, the problem of an uneducated white proletariat and a shortage of farm labour had arisen. H.H. Kuyper, son of Abraham Kuyper, explains why this conundrum of supply and demand is not as simple as it seems:

"The farmer is used to being a gentleman on his property and does not want work done by Kaffirs.... The Boer has not learned a trade and will not work with or alongside a coloured man. So, on the one hand you have the difficult question of how to help these poor whites get work, and on the other hand the farmers are afraid of having workers on their farms."

'OF COURSE, RUTTE SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED SOUTH AFRICA IN SLAVERY APOLOGY'

For Zimbabwean writer Panashe Chigumadzi, who will deliver the Mandela Lecture in Amsterdam on Sunday 02 March 2023 ¹⁷, the fate of black people around the world is interconnected.

"Our political leaders must realise that our struggle is indivisible," she said.

Born in post-independence Zimbabwe, she moved to South Africa with her parents when she was three. That was in 1994, the year Nelson Mandela became president after the country's first democratic elections. Writer and academic Panashe Chigumadzi (1991) thus belongs to the so-called "born free" generation of two countries long ruled by white minority regimes, as she notes in her book *These Bones Will Rise Again* (2018).

When asked what this means for her personally, she radically disagrees with the notion. "We would grow up in a society without apartheid, an ideal liberal democracy, thanks in part to the best constitution in the world, was the idea. But that became a disillusionment," she says via zoom from her family home in Polokwane, where she stays when she is in South Africa. "Nelson Mandela went to the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1992 to show that South Africa would fit into the capitalist world order, that there would be no radical changes."

Meanwhile, Chigumadzi says there is almost no country in the world with as much inequality as South Africa.

"Unemployment is unbelievable, especially among young blacks, and the wealth gap between the rich areas of Cape Town and the surrounding black townships like Langa is ridiculous. My generation is really pushing the idea that history is over."

¹⁷ <https://www.zammagazine.com/face-forward>

You always have to look at the past. So, it makes sense that in 2015, students in Cape Town wanted to topple the statue of coloniser Cecil Rhodes in their quest to decolonise education”.

Black Lives Matter is also relevant in Nigeria because of police violence.

The interview starts two hours later than planned due to load shedding, the way South Africa distributes its power shortages among the population. Once the power is back on, Chigumadzi - bare shoulders in a green dress, long fingernails, later glasses - refers directly to that past, laughing at the "bureaucratic nightmare" that passport holders from a "former colonised country" have to endure to get a visa to an EU country. The conversation also jumps from one century to another, interspersing academic terms, literary references and statements in Xhosa and Zulu.

White Afrikaner Farmers

The history the Netherlands shares with South Africa will at least be touched on in the Mandela lecture she will give in Amsterdam on Sunday. "Cape Town, the world's most popular holiday destination, was a slave society, a port for the slave trade established by the VOC. White Afrikaner farmers made the great trek north partly because they did not want to accept the abolition of slavery by the British. It is a fallacy to think that apartheid only began in 1948, when the Nasional Party came to power".

Prime Minister Rutte should "of course" have mentioned South Africa in his apology for slavery, she says. "The Netherlands must take responsibility for one of the worst forms of racial injustice in our history. *Ityala aliboli*, a crime does not spoil, is a Xhosa proverb. But we also ask: *Nixolisa ngani*, what are you apologising for? If you want to repair a relationship like that, you have to offer something, not just words.

Chigumadzi says it would be presumptuous to determine what the Afro-Surinamese community, for example, needs. Reparations, she says, can take many forms. "In any case, you have to look carefully at what the people you have caused suffering are asking for, you can't go into such a process on your own terms. And Rutte seemed to have done just that by issuing the apology in December, earlier than some of those involved had wanted.



Picture 2: Namibian opposition denounces German decision around 'genocide' in 1904-1908

She does not expect the Netherlands to ever offer reparations for slavery. "I am not naïve". The British did not do it in the Caribbean - Prime Minister Cameron only expressed 'deep regret' - and the Germans only offered 'development aid' to Namibia, not reparations. Individual countries don't get it done. In 2001 there was the UN conference on racism in Durban, where Caribbean countries demanded reparations. African countries were pressured not to support them.

A Sacrifice

Chigumadzi stresses that those who want reconciliation must make a sacrifice for it, and that includes whites in post-apartheid South Africa. In an article in *The Guardian* on the African philosophy of ubuntu, she cited land reform as an example.

"And then not on a voluntary basis, but really radical restitution, the return of land to the original population. In South Africa, 72 per cent of arable land is still owned by white South Africans, who make up 9 per cent of the population. I wrote: 'You can be part of the community, the abantu, but then you have to give up things based on what that community expects. It is not about the colour of your skin, it is about ethics. The editors were inundated with letters from white South Africans. They were shocked.'"

In Zimbabwe, Chigumadzi's other home, the 2000-2002 nationalisation of white farmers' land without financial compensation led to chaos and economic malaise from which the country is still recovering. "I don't support the way it was done under Robert Mugabe, there are so many ways to think about land reform," says Chigumadzi. "But I will always support it. The opposition at the time did not have a good response to the land grabs, they did not come up with a good alternative in this area. They were not helped by the fact that the white farmers were openly supporting them, while they themselves were not ready for restitution."

The future of ordinary people, of social movements, depends on the space we can create for the radical movements we need in the current world order.

The Zimbabwean army forced autocrat Mugabe, who had ruled for 37 years, to step down in late 2017 during the "coup - which should not be called a coup". Chigumadzi wrote about it in her partly autobiographical *These Bones Will Rise Again*. The title refers to the last words of freedom fighter Mbuya Nehanda, who was executed by the British in 1898. Nehanda was also a medium who passed on advice from the ancestors. "Ghosts from the past are saying something about the future through someone in the present," Chigumadzi explained, proving once again that "the past is never over".

"Just recently they erected a big statue of them in Harare."

The removal of Mugabe is another example.

"People thought: as long as Mugabe is gone, everything will be fine. The ruling party, Zanu-PF, took advantage of that. President Mnangagwa told the world that a new wind was blowing and everyone could come and do business. But the same people were in power and the political culture had not changed. It soon became clear that those who did not do Zanu-PF's bidding would be shot in the back."

Military Dictatorship

Chigumadze, who has often written critically about repression in Zimbabwe, is gloomy about the near future of the country, which is due to hold elections this summer. "Zimbabwe is a democracy in name only, in reality it is a military dictatorship. And those who come to power through the barrel of a gun do not want to give it up. I understand how tough the opposition is, how critics are dismembered and intimidated. I am also very inspired by all those people who continue to fight, even though they fear for their lives. But in this situation, there can never be fair and free elections and Zanu-PF will remain in power.

The repression led to the hashtag #ZimbabweansLivesMatter in 2020, similar to the Black Lives Matter movement. Chigumadzi has done a lot of research on international solidarity among black people around the world. In a recent article in the *Boston Review*, she quotes US anti-racism activist Malcolm X, who spoke about racism in Mississippi in the 1960s:

"As long as we think we have to solve Mississippi before we can deal with the Congo, we will never solve Mississippi."



Picture: Kidnapping, rape, murder: every form of violence is on the rise in South Africa

During the struggle against apartheid, there was a great deal of solidarity between citizens in Africa and the African diaspora. That is gone, Chigumadzi notes with regret. "It ended with Mandela's inauguration in 1994, while anti-black violence and poverty continued in Africa and the US. The murder of Georg Floyd in 2020 happened in the same year as the mass protests in Nigeria against the brutality of the SARS police. This makes Black Lives Matter relevant to Nigeria. But in practice, people do not look across borders. "They respond to problems at home by pushing the 'other', black people with different passports, out of the country. Look at the xenophobic violence in South Africa.

This only makes Chigumadzi, "above all a pan-Africanist", more radical. "The point is that our political leaders must realise that our struggle is indivisible. This is not a political slogan; it is a fact. We must come together, in all our diversity, we must be united. This is how world politics works. The war in Ukraine also shows the importance of solidarity: NATO knows it has to support Ukraine because if it does not, there will be consequences for its members.

"Of course, there will always be forces that undermine this solidarity, including in African countries. I would also not rely too much on the leaders of our countries. The future of ordinary people, of social movements, depends on the space we can create for the radical movements we need in the current world order.

CONCLUSIONS

South Africa is one of the many blotches on the Dutch record. South Africa was used to colonise the Asian continent. Broadly speaking, this involved: a) using the indigenous population to do the 'dirty' work that the Dutch did not want to do, b) using enslaved people from Asia and East

Africa to do the 'dirty' work for the Dutch, and c) using the heavy hand of the Dutch to suppress and eliminate the indigenous South African languages and cultures.

In 1948, apartheid (racial segregation) was introduced in South Africa by the 'white' South African government, while 80% of the population was black, brown or Indian. This was preceded by discriminatory and racist legislation (between 1910-1948) by Louis Botha, Jan Smuts and James Herzorg. All this was done with an appeal to the Christian Bible. White culture was superior to other cultures and should serve as a shining example.

In Amsterdam, the Vrije Universiteit played a dark role in the rise of apartheid in South Africa. Christianity played a leading role.

"When the Nasional Party led by D.F. Malan came to power in South Africa in 1948 and apartheid was increasingly enshrined in law and made official policy, the relationship between the VU and South Africa gradually changed. The Afrikaner universities in South Africa in many cases legitimised the development of apartheid, and the powerful but secretive Afrikaner Fraternal Union was largely made up of Afrikaners who had been educated at an Afrikaner university, and the University of Potchefstroom was an important link in this chain. In this sense, Afrikaner universities and their (international) networks of intellectuals were complicit in apartheid, including the VU. However, the strong anti-apartheid movement in the Netherlands also left its mark on the VU: 'Emotions ran high' and in 1974 this led to the official severing of ties with South Africa - read the University of Potchefstroom ('vir CHO', as it was abbreviated). The honorary doctorate awarded by the VU in 1972 to the Afrikaner pastor Beyers Naudé, co-founder of the Christelyk Institute, who vehemently opposed apartheid on the basis of arguments and considerations derived from the Christian faith, was seen as 'an unequivocal support by the VU for the struggle against any form of racial discrimination in South Africa'¹⁸. "

Hopefully, it can be seen from the above that a Dutch apology and reparation to South Africa is indispensable. This must be done together with South Africans in South Africa. After all, what is needed in South Africa is honour for the ethnic groups and languages from before the colonisation and slavery of South Africa, as well as the apartheid that is still rampant.

¹⁸ 'Desmond Tutu (1931-2021), de Vrije Universiteit en Zuid-Afrika': <https://www.geheugenvandevu.nl/blog/desmond-tutu-1931-2021-de-vrije-universiteit-en-zuid-afrika>. Het hele artikel van Harry Wels, "Trots", 'eer' en 'medeplichtigheid'. De Vrije Universiteit en Zuid-Afrika' is te vinden op: https://www.geheugenvandevu.nl/application/files/1916/4052/7724/Wels_Trots_eer_en_medeplichtigheid_de_Vrije_Universiteit_en_Zuid-Afrika.pdf.