

WHITENESS  
AFRIKAANS  
AFRIKANERS

*Addressing Post-Apartheid Legacies,  
Privileges and Burdens*

# Whiteness, Afrikaans, Afrikaners

*Addressing Post-Apartheid Legacies,  
Privileges and Burdens*

# Contents

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## Contributors

### Kgalema Motlanthe

Kgalema Petrus Motlanthe was born to a working-class family on 19 July 1949 in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg. He was elected President of the Republic of South Africa on 25 September 2008 and served until 9 May 2009.

After his retirement as President, Motlanthe was appointed by President Jacob Zuma to serve as the Deputy President and occupied that position from 11 May 2009 until 24 May 2014. As Deputy President, Motlanthe performed various functions, including the following:

- leader of government business in the National Assembly
- leader of the Anti-Poverty Programme
- chairperson of the Energy Advisory Council
- chairperson of the Human Resource Development Council
- chairperson of the South African National Aids Council
- chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

In the 1970s, while working for the Johannesburg City Council, he was recruited into Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the then armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). He was part of a unit tasked

# Preface

In August 2015, the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) published the outcome of its research project on social cohesion entitled *Nation Formation and Social Cohesion: An Enquiry into the Hopes and Aspirations of South Africans*. In the preface to that publication, we asked the questions:

*Besides geography, as well as economic and political systems, to what extent do South Africa's people constitute a nation? Do the erstwhile colonial settlers – who, unlike in most other parts of the postcolonial world, have decided in large numbers to make the country their permanent home – deserve equal recognition as members of the emergent nation?*

However, in retrospect we noted a gap in that publication – the absence of the voices of white South Africans. Therefore, as a further probing of this vexed topic (perhaps more vexed now as we reel under the recent blows of an apparent resurgence of crude public manifestations of racism and a hardening of attitudes on both sides of the racial divide), MISTRA, in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), convened a round-table in November 2015 at the Women's Gaol on Constitution Hill with the title 'Whites,

Afrikaans, Afrikaners: Addressing Post-Apartheid Legacies, Privileges and Burdens’.

As was expected, the discourse at the round-table was rigorous. We are therefore pleased to publish in this volume the varied and provoking presentations at the event, including the keynote address by former President Kgalema Motlanthe and inputs from Melissa Steyn, Andries Nel, Mary Burton, Christi van der Westhuizen, Lynette Steenveld, Bobby Godsell, Dirk Hermann (of Solidarity), Ernst Roets (of AfriForum), Xhanti Payi, Mathatha Tsedu, Pieter Duvenage, Hein Willemse and Nico Koopman. Closing remarks were given by Achille Mbembe and Mathews Phosa.

These varied inputs probe a range of issues about whiteness in general and about the place of Afrikaners and the Afrikaans language in democratic South Africa. Perhaps the key lesson to come out of this discourse is that there is no homogeneity of views on these issues among white South Africans in general and Afrikaners in particular. In fact, at the round-table, and in these pages, one finds a multifaceted effort to scrub energetically at the boundaries that apartheid South Africa imposed on us all.

We express our profound appreciation to the authors and to all the participants at the round-table and to the FES and NIHSS for making this discourse possible. We have, as far as possible, tried to reproduce the timbre of the event itself.

Joel Netshitenzhe  
Executive Director  
MISTRA

## Acknowledgements

MISTRA conveys its warm gratitude to the facilitators, speakers and participants at the round-table on which this publication is based, not just for their participation, but for the courage with which they tackled a fraught topic.

We, in particular, thank the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) for partnering us in this project, and for their generous financial support to it.

We also extend thanks to Barry Gilder, who edited this publication; to the staff of MISTRA, who helped to make the event a great success; and to Jacana Media for the copy edit, design, layout and production of this book.

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