

The practice of *Ubuntu* with regard to amaMfengu among amaXhosa as depicted in S. E. K. Mqhayi's *Ityala Lamawele*.

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Abstract

This article examines the practice of *Ubuntu* by the traditional amaXhosa towards amaMfengu who came to them as strangers and refugees during the nineteenth century. This is achieved by considering the light shared in Mqhayi's historical novel *Ityala Lamawele*, which illustrates the response of this nation towards the arrival of amaMfengu. More evidence of this response is sought from various historical sources. The manner in which these newcomers were embraced and assimilated into the nation of amaXhosa forms the bulk of this discourse. An explanation of the concept of *ubuntu* is included in this research. A historical background of amaMfengu will be provided in the discussion. This article is also intended to contribute towards the promotion of African Renaissance and Pan Africanism in current and future generations. **Keywrds:** *Ubuntu*, amaXhosa, amaMfengu, refugees, strangers, S. E. K. Mqhayi, *Ityala Lamawele*, Gcalekaland.

Introduction

While Mqhayi depicts the coming and acceptance of amaMfengu among amaXhosa in *Ityala Lamawele* (1981), so far no study has been conducted analysing this text, determining whether amaXhosa demonstrated *Ubuntu* to strangers among them. Saule (1998), who discusses *Ubuntu* in Mqhayi's essays bases his discourse on the newspaper *Umteteli Wabantu*. He makes no reference to *Ityala Lamawele* at all. This article will then close the gap that exists in the study of Mqhayi's literary works and isiXhosa literature. As xenophobia has been experienced during the last few years (2005 – 2015) in South Africa, it is vital to reveal how the treatment of the traditional amaXhosa to amaMfengu is portrayed in Mqhayi's narrative. This will determine whether these people are friendly towards strangers in their midst. It will also contribute towards promoting African Renaissance and Pan Africanism regarding the positive attitude towards strangers among amaXhosa, in particular, and Africans in general.

The concept of *Ubuntu*

The noun *Ubuntu* is found in various phonological forms with the same semantic value in the different African languages of South Africa. IsiXhosa, isiZulu and isiNdebele have it in the above form. SiSwati spells it as *bunfu*. In Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho sa Borwa and Setswana it is spelt as *botho*. In Xitsonga it is *vumuntu* while it is *uhuthu* in Tshivenda. Kamwangamalu (1999, 25) reveals that this term is found in African languages outside of South Africa as well.

While this expression is found in various patterns in different languages, this study uses the isiXhosa version; *Ubuntu*, as the discussion analyses a text from this tongue. Among Africans *Ubuntu* is a significant quality of life. It emphasises the essence of being human. While the concept is not simple to define, this article attempts its definition below. The difficult in defining the term is shared by Sebidi (1988) as:

Defining an idea like “*ubuntu*” is akin to trying to give a definition of “time”. Everybody seems to know what “time” is until they are asked to define it or detail its essential characteristics without which “time” could not be “time”. This is based on the notion that *ubuntu* is something abstract, [a] non-perceptible quality or attribute of human acts the presence or absence of which can only be intuited by a human mind.

The term *Ubuntu* originates from the noun *umntu* where *um-* (a or the) is the prefix and *-ntu* (human) is the stem. *Umntu* generally means a human being. *Ubuntu* is then coined with the prefix *ubu-* (being) and the stem *-ntu* (human). *Ubuntu* therefore refers to humanness or being human.

The meaning of *Ubuntu* is also extended to refer to positive qualities of human beings. These are the characteristics of kindness, generosity, humaneness, hospitality, and so on. For instance, reference to having *Ubuntu* expresses that the person has some of these attributes. This idea is further confirmed by Tutu, in Mboti (2015, 127), as:

When we want to give high praise to someone we say, “*Yu, u nobuntu*”;(sic) “Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu.” Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, “My humanity is *caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours*.”

Tutu further explains *Ubuntu* as:

It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humanness, gentleness, and hospitality, putting yourself on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

(Gathogo 2008, 43)

The last part of this quotation implies the interdependence of human beings. No one can live and succeed without the support of others.

For Broodryk *Ubuntu* is:

a spiritual foundation of the world-view of African people; it is a determining factor in... [the] formation of perceptions... of African society about what is good or bad behaviour.

(Mnyaka and Motlhabi 2005, 218)

“Spiritual foundation” implies that *Ubuntu* is innate within a human being or society. It is a religious factor that is built within the system of an individual. While the attributes of *Ubuntu* may be manifested in an individual, they can be qualities of society as well. When all or the majority of the individuals in a society practise it, it becomes a societal quality. This means that the entire society of human beings may possess its characteristics. In fact, considering the above statement by Broodryk, *Ubuntu* is a quality of the “African society”.

Mboti (2015, 130) interprets Metz as “regarding *Ubuntu* as a quality hardwired with notions of social, human, communal and collective good”. Metz (2007, 338) states: “An action is right just insofar as it promotes shared identity among people grounded on good-will; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and tends to encourage the opposites of division and ill-will”. Metz (2007, 336) also shares:

One has a relationship of good-will insofar as one: wishes another person well (conation); believes that another person is worthy of help (cognition); aims to help another person (intention); acts so to help another person (volition); acts for the other's sake (motivation); and, finally, feels good upon the knowledge that another person has benefitted and feels bad upon learning s/he has been harmed (affection).

The phrases “good-will” and “another person” are dominating in Metz’s view of *Ubuntu*. Metz then views this phenomenon as doing and having feelings of “good-will” towards other people. This promotes mutual support and responsibility towards one another in society. It also affirms the African philosophy of *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people).

Saule (1998, 11) enhances social good-will when he views *Ubuntu* as “highlighted as an agent or one of the means of community building ...” He then cites Cowley who states that “any act that destroys the community, any anti-social behaviour cannot, in anyway be described as *Ubuntu*”.

For Rukuni (2007, 142) *Ubuntu* “... is a way of life. For most Afrikan people and people of Afrikan origin” it “is a time-tested way of building yourself as a person and human being”. It “is also the time-tested way of building family and family processes.”

From the above explanation it may be deduced that, apart from referring to humanness, *Ubuntu* also implies qualities of good-will, compassion, humaneness, kindness, generosity and hospitality, which human beings demonstrate towards others. It is then interesting that this concept is a philosophy of life among Africans. No wonder then the hospitable response of amaXhosa towards amaMfengu, as it is discussed below.

A historical background of amaMfengu

'AmaMfengu' is a term that was used to refer to people who came to the land of amaXhosa, fleeing from attacks during the Mfecane wars (during the early 1800's). This idea is supported by Peires (1981, 105) who describes the "Mfengu" as "refugees from the Mfecane". Peires (1981, 87 - 88) further provides an explanation of amaMfengu by stating that many of Matiwane's followers:

Stayed among the Thembu and the Xhosa where they swelled the ranks of other refugees to form the people known collectively as Mfengu (from the verb *ukumfenguza*, 'to wander about seeking service'). The most important of these people were the Bhele, the Hlubi, the Zizi and the Ntlangwini.

Matiwane was the chief of amaNgwane who pursued amaHlubi across the Drakensburg Mountains during the Mfecane upheavals, with the aim of incorporating them to his chiefdom (Maylan, 1986, 55). Some amaHlubi then became part of the

group later referred to as amaMfengu among amaXhosa. Johnson (2004, 50) refers to this community as “some of the Hlubi submitted to Matiwane, but others moved south, becoming the first component of what became known as the Mfengu or, as the whites called them, the Fingoes”. Moving southwards from the Drakensburg would be approaching the land of amaXhosa and related nations. Maylan (1986, 61) reports: “The most well-known northern Nguni refugees to migrate southwards were the Mfengu”. He further describes these people as “comprising people of diverse origins” and the “Hlubi who fled to the south after being defeated by the Ngwane in 1820” and were joined by the Bhele and Zizi chiefdoms to attach themselves to amaXhosa in the Southern Nguni territory and Gcalekaland.

The fleeing of amaHlubi southwards from across the Drakensburg should account for the presence of the chiefdoms of amaHlubi in the districts of Matatiele, Mount Fletcher and parts of Mount Frere south of this mountain range. The “southern Nguni territory” is where amaXhosa with other nations such as abaThembu, amaMpondo, amaMpondomise, and amaBomvana are mostly found and known as the Southern Nguni (Oaks, 1995, 64). Gcalekaland is where the Palace of the kingdom of amaXhosa is based. It was named after Chief Gcaleka who reigned from 1775 to 1778 (Ibid.).

Sparks (2003, 100) also records that amaMfengu were the people who fled southwest from the Zulu *impis*. Moving southwest-wards from Zululand would also be reaching the land of amaXhosa and associated people. Soga (1989, 8) also affirms that amaMfengu were mostly composed of amaHlubi, amaBhele and amaZizi. Describing their arrival among amaXhosa, he points out that these people, on being asked where

they came from, responded that “*Siyamfenguza*” (We are in a destitute state), meaning they were taking flight, refugees, those who wander about, hence the label amaMfengu (9).

From the above explanation it is clear that amaMfengu were running for their lives as the war was rife. This is why they were “in a destitute state”. They needed assistance as they were homeless and in famine.

Analysis

Mqhayi’s *Ityala Lamawele* (1981) illustrates the coming of amaMfengu to the land of amaXhosa. In the narrative, messengers from Chief Somlilo (one of the petty chiefs in the kingdom of amaXhosa) of Nqabarha come to King Hintsa’s Great Place to report the arrival of amaMfengu and their destitute state. Hintsa’s response is:

*“Maze nibagcine abo bantu; ngabakokwethu, ngabakokwenu nani.
Bapheni into etyiwayo batye, niphose amadlavu bambathe, nibaphathe
ngenceba, beve ukuba anisiso eso sizwe sibachithileyo; ningadlali
ngabo”*

(“You should take care of those people; they belong with us, they belong with you too. Give them food to eat, help them with clothes to dress up,

treat them with mercy, for them to feel that you are not the nation that chased them away; do not fool around with them”).

It is practice among amaXhosa for a minor chief to solicit the decision of the king when there are strange behaviours, movements and people in his land. The minor chief does not decide on his own about the situation, unless in circumstances of emergency. The final decision has to come from the king as the overlord. That is why Somlilo is presented to have sent messengers to King Hintsá to report the arrival of refugees in his land. He expects the emperor, as the supreme ruler of Xhosaland, to decide the fate of these immigrants. The refugees' approaching Somlilo affirms the words of Maylan (1986, 61) that “they approached petty chiefs”.

Hintsá's kind welcoming of amaMfengu is suggested in the order for them to be taken care of. This is an instruction that these refugees should not be ill-treated, but given a kind consideration. The first person plural possessive “*ngabakokwethu*” (they are our people) reflects how Hintsá, even before seeing these escapees, identifies with them. He regards them as belonging with him and considers them as his brothers and sisters. Hintsá encourages the agents to do the same as he uses the second person plural possessive “*ngabakokwenu nani*” (they are yours too). With this utterance he is instilling in the dispatchers that these foreigners belong with them as well. Therefore, they should also identify with them as their kinsmen, as people of the same clan should be considered. This conduct is elaborated upon by the command to give them food, clothes, treat them with mercy and not fool around with them.

The giving of food to these displaced persons is similar to what Khwane, another chief of amaXhosa, who founded the sub-group of amaGqunukhwebe (Ngani, 1947, 7 – 8; Atkinson and Dazela, 1992, 5 – 7; Peires, 1981, 25 – 26), ordered his people to do to amaGqunuqhwa (the Griquas) who came among his people as refugees. Even before meeting these people, Khwane is presented ordering a councillor by the name of Mnqarhwana to give them meat to eat (Ngani, 1985:69).

Hintsza might be giving the above charge as the messengers have declared that these people “are broken asunder by poverty and scattering”. The giving of food to these strangers confirms Monica Wilson’s claim that “strangers among the Xhosa need not be in apprehension about meat and drink” (Shack and Skinner, 1979, 56). Saule (1998, 12) affirms this idea by saying: “In any Xhosa household a stranger ... is treated cordially, given water to wash, food to eat and a place to sleep”.

Providing amaMfengu with the items listed above is in line with Saule’s (1998, 12) assertion that: “It is *Ubuntu* for those who have to share with those who do not have”. In the above manner then Hintsza motivates his subjects to share what they have with these desperate people.

Hintsza is concerned about the feelings of these fugitives as well, as he states: “... for them to feel that you are not the nation that chased them away”. People who are chased away in warfare normally have feelings of fear, rejection, and being outcasts.

This is how amaMfengu could have experienced when they were fleeing from the nations that pursued them. Even when they arrived among amaXhosa, they might have had a feeling that they would be rejected, chased away and probably ill-treated and killed. On the contrary, Hintsa allays their fears by ordering that they be dealt with mercifully. This attitude would be expected to make them feel loved, accepted and belonging with the new acquaintances. All this proves Hintsa and his subjects to be good-hearted people.

Various historians confirm the kind reception of amaMfengu by amaXhosa. Soga (1989, 9 - 10) gives this account:

Lo mfo kaKhawuta uwumemile wonke umzi wasemaXhoseni, wathetha esingise kwizidweshu namaphakathi wenje nje, "Phulaphulani mawaba nezithwala-ndwe. Aba bantu ke iintombi zabo zizekeni ukuze nibe banye, nidibane, nokuze nabo bangemki, buphele ubumfengu..."

(This son of Khawuta invited the entire nation of amaXhosa, spoke to the dignitaries and councillors as, "Listen you great ones. Marry the daughters of these people so that you become one, unified and for them also not to leave, and the refugee status to end...)

The son of Khawuta referred to above is Hintsa. Marriage is one of the most valuable institutions among amaXhosa. Marrying a girl from a certain family is an indication that the groom and his parents love the household of the bride. By marrying the girl they express their willingness to accept, not only her, but her entire family as relatives. From the time of the matrimony the two families become united. It is for this reason that Hintsa bids his people to wed the daughters of amaMfengu so that amaXhosa and this nation become one and unified. This oneness and unity imply that these formerly different nations would become one community.

The phrase *nokuze nabo bangemki* (so that they also do not leave) points to Hintsa's wish that amaMfengu would remain part of his nation. This is further strengthened by the words: "for the refugee status to end". This pronouncement reveals that amaMfengu would not be treated as refugees forever. They would be incorporated into the nation of amaXhosa and become part of this population. They would be equal citizens together with amaXhosa without any prejudice directed at them. For this reason, even today, people belonging to amaBhele, amaZizi, amaHlubi and other clans, are combined with amaXhosa without any discrimination. Even their chiefs were allowed to maintain their leadership status. This is supported by the presence of the chiefdoms of amaBhele, amaZizi and amaHlubi as sub-groups of the larger dynasty of amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape Province. Apart from amaBhele, amaZizi and amaHlubi, there are other clans, such as ooSkhosana, ooMiya, ooNgwane and ooNdlangisa; that formed part of amaMfengu, who are also a component of amaXhosa in the province. All this is evidence of peaceful living between amaXhosa and amaMfengu as supported by the statement: "*Ubuntu* also emphasizes that irrespective of their divergent cultural and social background people should live together in peace

and in trust” (Saule 1998, 12). Hintsa then encourages his people to live in “peace and trust” with amaMfengu despite their different circumstances.

Peires (1981, 88) also gives an account of the reception of amaMfengu by amaXhosa:

The Mfengu were initially well received by the Xhosa chiefs, who always welcomed the accession of new followers. When Hintsa discovered that the Bhele had hidden their chief, Mabandla, he pointed out ‘that he was not in the habit of killing people who sought refuge in his country’. He singled out Njokweni, a noted diviner, for special favour. The young chiefs, Matomela and Mhlambiso, ate food from the same dish as his son, Sarhili. Mfengu chiefs sat on his council and participated in all important discussions. Mfengu who arrived destitute and without cattle were distributed among Hintsa’s people in the usual manner of *busa* clients. Hintsa told his people to take good care of the Mfengu and he offered them redress in his courts, but he warned them that in the last resort they had to fend for themselves: “Were you not men in your own country? Were there no forests with sticks on the Tugela? These Xhosa have bodies just the same as you. When they hit you, hit them back”.

Important are the phrases; “Mfengu who arrived destitute” and “to take good care of the Mfengu”. The destitute nature of this nation is in line with Mqhayi’s description as: *lujaceke kakhulu yindlala, nayinkcithakalo* (greatly broken asunder by poverty and

scattering around) (Mqhayi, 1981, 43 – 44). It is for this state that these people needed to be taken good care of.

The utterance that “Xhosa chiefs ... always welcomed the accession of new followers” reflects that it was habitual for amaXhosa to welcome newcomers among them. The benevolent treatment of amaMfengu, then was a gesture of the generous culture of these people. Other instances of amaXhosa’s affectionate welcoming of strangers include that of amaGqunuqhwa (the Griquas) under the leadership of Khwane as illustrated by Ngani (1985), confirmed by Ngani (1947, 7–8) and commented on by Mtumane (1992). Mqhayi (1981) also demonstrates how generously the Europeans were made to feel at home by amaXhosa under King Hintsa, as confirmed by Oakes (1995, 68). It was unfortunate that this new community turned against amaXhosa by colonising, oppressing, and dispossessing them of their land.

King Hintsa’s pointing out “that he was not in the habit of killing people who sought refuge in his country” reveals his sympathy and empathy with such people. Understanding the predicament of these runaways, he would rather assist them in whatever way he could. The use of the noun “habit” implies that it was the custom of this monarch not to harm people who were in need of his assistance. This is illustrated by his not pursuing amaMfengu but treating them with kindness as expressed in Mqhayi’s text.

The mention of Njokweni and Mabandla as part of these guests confirms that these people were the forebears of the current sub-nations of amaXhosa ruled by chiefs who bear these family names. Njokweni's chieftainship of amaZizi is situated around Peddie while that of Mabandla's amaBhele is found around Alice, both in the Eastern Cape Province.

Eating food from the same dish (at the same time) is practised among the traditional amaXhosa. Those who do so are considered as of the same age group or rank in the different stages of life. It also promotes friendship and unity among those who engage in it. Individuals of different age groups and/or enemies seldom eat from the same dish. Partaking "food from the same dish" by Matomela and Mhlambiso (who were the minor chiefs of amaMfengu) together with Hintsa's son, Sarhili, reveals that these were regarded as of the same status. Hintsa might have encouraged it to promote friendship and unity between these minor chiefs and his son. These petty chiefs were then seen as on the same standing with Sarhili, who was the prince in Hintsa's sovereignty.

Important also is that "Mfengu chiefs sat on" Hintsa's "council." In the traditional government of amaXhosa the council formulates laws and makes important decisions. The inclusion of these chiefs to participate in this cabinet then means that they were recognised and played a pivotal role in the formulation of laws and making of significant decisions in Hintsa's administration. That is how liberal and receptive the king was to these immigrants. Hintsa's liberal nature is also proven by his distributing amaMfengu "as *busa* (serving) clients" among his people and redressing them in his courts so that they could work to have their own cattle. The idea behind this action is

that amaMfengu should eventually “fend for themselves”. It is encouraging that these people were not given cattle as hand-outs but had to work for them. This reflects how amaXhosa promoted the earning of wealth rather than having it given as a present or hand-out.

While Mqhayi narrates the favourable reception of amaMfengu by amaXhosa, it is also worthwhile to reiterate that, to this day, descendants of Mabandla, Njokweni, Matomela and Mhlambiso serve as chiefs of their subjects in different parts of the Eastern Cape Province, where the centre of the monarchy of amaXhosa is situated. For instance, as it has already been alluded to earlier, Mabandla’s amaBhele have their chiefdom around Alice while Njokweni’s amaZizi are reigned from around Peddie. Mhlambiso’s amaHlubi, who are popularly known as amaNgqikambo, have their traditional seat around Middledrift whereas Matomela also has his chieftainship around Peddie.

The label “amaNgqikambo”, referring to Mhlambiso’s people, stems from the fact that their chiefdom is situated on the land of Chief Ngqika whose subjects are called amaNgqika. The administration of these people (and all amaMfengu) is generally believed to have originated from a mythical place called eMbo whose location is suspected to be somewhere around the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Mtumane (2004, 13) alludes to this when he states: “Mbo and Tugela are believed to be where the chieftainship of amaHlubi had its earliest existence”. This label then is derived by combining the terms amaNgqika and eMbo. These people are actually regarded as amaNgqika from eMbo, hence the branding amaNgqikambo. This name reflects that

although these people have been assimilated into the community of amaXhosa under Ngqika, they have not abandoned their association with their earlier origins from eMbo. It fosters the keeping of their remote history so that even younger generations will always be mindful of the roots of their forefathers.

Notable also is Peires' reporting Hintsá's inciting amaMfengu to fight back should amaXhosa hit them. He does so by asking and declaring: "Were there no forests with sticks on the Tugela? These Xhosa have bodies just the same as you. When they hit you, hit them back'." Sticks are generally used for fighting. Hintsá's question about sticks then is a means of finding out if amaMfengu were able to use these weapons. Should they, they are then encouraged to utilise them to defend themselves when the new acquaintances hit them. The remark about "same bodies" is prompting that these guests should not fear amaXhosa as the latter would also feel the pain of being beaten up. All this is an indication that Hintsá did not accept any form of abuse to be directed at these strangers. With this announcement he meant that amaMfengu should not allow amaXhosa to mistreat them as he allowed them to defend themselves. This further implies that should a case be brought to him to judge, where umXhosa and iMfengu had fought, Hintsá would not favour the former at the expense of the latter. He would be impartial in dealing with such issues. The non-tolerance of abuse towards these foreigners is also emphasised by the instruction "do not fool around with them." Fooling around with amaMfengu would indicate their not being considered as kinsmen, hence Hintsá emphasises that it must not happen. This is in line with the aversion that *Ubuntu* is "an idea of ... a relationship which should transcend all prejudices" (Saule, 1998, 11). It also supports Tutu's idea that a person with *Ubuntu* "is diminished when others are humiliated or ... tortured or oppressed".

Peires (1981, 224 – 224) cites Shrewsbury as stating:

The several Kaffer chiefs, even anxious to augment their power and influence by an increase of dependents, gave them a favourable reception. To some parties, they made grants of land and enriched them with cattle, permitting them to live by themselves, under a subordinate chief of their own country, while others were so distributed and mingled among the Kaffers, that in another generation they will be one people.

Mqhayi illustrates the favourable reception of these refugees by presenting the order of the king to his people to look well after them, give them food, clothe and treat them mercifully so that they feel that amaXhosa “are not the nation that chased them away”. This has been discussed in more detail already in this study.

From the foregoing excerpt, note should be taken of the generosity of amaXhosa who are reported to have “made grants of land” to amaMfengu and “enriched them with cattle”. Granting these people with land would make sure that they could build houses to stay in and cultivate it for the production of food for their families.

The enriching of amaMfengu with cattle marks the generous practice of the traditional amaXhosa as Saule (1998, 11) asserts:

It is *Ubuntu* for a person with many cattle to give some to those who have none to keep and to develop themselves. In this way it is believed that the cattle of the giver would multiply and as such that person would then become richer.

AmaXhosa then demonstrate this gesture believing that it is a blessing to give to those who have not. This is in line with the biblical principle that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts, 20: 35). Cattle are used for spanning when land is cultivated and drawing loads of whatever human beings need. They also produce milk and meat (when slaughtered) for people to be fed and for cultural rituals. Enriching amaMfengu with cattle would ascertain that they would be able to fulfil these needs. Also, of significance is “permitting” amaMfengu “to live by themselves”. These newcomers were then not expected to lead a life of persistent dependence on their hosts. AmaXhosa would also not impose themselves on their livelihood as they (amaMfengu) were allowed the freedom of lifestyle. That is why they would still be ruled by “a subordinate chief of their own country.” This would allow them to carry on with their cultural practices and methods of leadership. It would also make them not to feel being in a strange land.

The hospitality of amaXhosa is also evident in them not stripping the immigrant chiefs of their status but allowing them to lead their people as they would do back home. These chiefs would be given a status equal to that of amaXhosa chiefs serving under

King Hintsa. This was done to fulfil the long-term goal “that in another generation” amaXhosa, together with amaMfengu “will be one people”. This oneness is expressed by Hintsa’s bidding amaXhosa to marry the daughters of these immigrants, as discussed earlier already. This indicates that the host nation had no intention of treating these people with any form of discrimination in their territory. This is the reason, even today, descendants of amaMfengu proudly regard themselves as amaXhosa completely and no one queries that.

Due to the favourable reception of amaMfengu among amaXhosa, as explained above, Peires (1981, 224) views any assertion that amaMfengu were ill-treated by amaXhosa as “the political bias of the observer”. He refutes any claim that these people were enslaved by amaXhosa, as he shares:

Apart from G. Cory (1910 – 1939) 3: 133, no historian, not even Theal, has believed Missionary Ayliff’s politically motivated claim that the Mfengu were in any sense slaves of the Xhosa. The Mfengu themselves emphatically reject this view.

(Peires, 1981, 225)

It should be noted that amaMfengu were not assimilated forcefully into the nation of amaXhosa. They were simply offered accommodation and embraced within this community. As mentioned earlier in this discourse, their chiefs were also not stripped of their positions but allowed to continue leading their people as a section of the host

population. The above discussion then reflects how amaMfengu were protected and encouraged to defend themselves among amaXhosa. For this reason Nyamende (2010, 10) interprets Soga as suggesting “that Hintsa and his people used justice to protect the Mfengu people”.

Conclusion

This article has examined Mqhayi’s depiction of the attitude of the traditional amaXhosa towards strangers (amaMfengu) who came to their territory. Mqhayi illustrates how these immigrants were embraced by amaXhosa. While Hintsa was the one giving instructions on how the foreigners should be welcomed, the minor chiefs and their subjects, were the ones to implement the orders. This research has established that amaMfengu were received with humaneness and hospitality as they were provided with all the requirements they needed and humanely assimilated into the nation of amaXhosa.

The acceptance of the foreign nationals and giving them citizenship reveals that with amaXhosa the idea of citizenship is not limited to one’s original national state. One can attain residence in a country away from one’s roots. In line with the opinion of “a citizen pilgrim”, the traditional amaXhosa demonstrated their understanding that “someone may be on a journey to a country to be established in the future in accordance with more idealistic and normatively rich conceptions of political community” (Derek, 2002, 13). Mqhayi (1981) demonstrates this by presenting the coming of amaMfengu from other parts of the land and getting established with

hospitality in the country of amaXhosa. All this reflects how liberal the latter are with regard to citizenship and association. It also indicates how the latter adhere to the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, as it is explained and discussed in this discourse.

From amaXhosa's embracing of amaMfengu can be inferred their "hospitality, generosity, unconditional readiness to share, humaneness, gentleness, compassion" and willingness to "be human together" with other people. This conduct also made amaXhosa vulnerable as amaMfengu, later, turned against them by collaborating with the Europeans in fighting them. In this manner these guests betrayed the generous reception they were given by their hosts. Their collaboration with the Europeans against amaXhosa is confirmed by Maylan (1986, 97) who records that during the frontier wars "The Xhosa could not ... count on the support of the Mfengu, who ... openly collaborated with the colonial forces". This situation confirms the words of Scott (1976, 33) that in practising *Ubuntu* "the ones you helped" may become "your enemies". Even so, this does not stop the traditional amaXhosa from practising *Ubuntu*. The discussion in this article proves Mqhayi's knowledge of the history and culture of *Ubuntu* with his people.

To promote and maintain the compassionate treatment of foreigners among South Africans, members of society need to be encouraged to read books that reflect the kind attitude of the traditional amaXhosa towards amaMfengu and other nations who came to their territory. Knowledgeable elderly people also need to be consulted to share stories of this nature to younger generations. All this will assist the current breed to learn from the ways of their forefathers. The reemphasis of the African philosophy

of *Ubuntu* can be a solution to the problem of xenophobia. It may also contribute towards the advancement of the African Renaissance and Pan Africanism, as Africans need to emancipate themselves from the chains of colonialism and apartheid.

It is also of essence that authors write more books reflecting the generous nature of the locals to foreigners. Furthermore, it is of import for researchers to conduct more analyses of texts that reveal this affectionate nature of amaXhosa in particular, and Africans in general.

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