The wind of change (the original text)

Harold Macmillan

When, on 3 February 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (1894 –1986) addressed a supposedly informal gathering of the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town, at a “luncheon”, he delivered a speech he had already given a month earlier in Accra. Barring a few changes. These changes alone catapulted the speech into another rhetorical dimension: it performed politics.

Indeed, the speech delivered in Cape Town had an international impact its antecedent delivery in Accra could not, and did not have. It raised the Liberation movements' hopes for a steadfast support by Britain. It was a precipitating agent for a surge of revolt, and the repression that followed: the Sharpeville massacre took place shortly afterwards. It was the prologue to thirty years of emergency, until F.W. de Klerk’s speech at the same Parliament in February 1990, and the liberation of Nelson Mandela.

Macmillan’s speech is an essential, if paradoxical moment in South Africa’s rhetorical foundation.

The version presented here is the exact transcription of Macmillan’s own original typescript used by him to deliver his speech, together with hand written notes and corrections. It offers a unique insight in the rhetorical processes of speech delivery, and evinces a care for kairos that should never elude politicians faced with seizing up the moment and performing politics through rhetoric.

Philippe-Joseph Salazar - University of Cape Town

Primary source

Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister’s Speech at the joint meeting of both Houses of Parliament in Cape Town (typescript, first page signed by Macmillan, 56 sheets, 12cm x 14cm, bound and accompanied by a letter from the High Commission to a “colonel Shearer”, dated 1 March 1960, forwarding the typescript at Macmillan's request).

There is no record of the speech in Hansard (the official, verbatim records of parliamentary debates) as it was not part of formal proceedings, but given at an American style luncheon. However on the typescript title page, bearing Macmillan’s signature, the occasion is correctly termed a “joint meeting of both Houses of Parliament”. This expression caused some confusion afterwards: a joint “meeting” is not a formal, joint “sitting” of Parliament, and for that reason not recorded on Hansard.

The commonly used, yet again erroneous title “Winds (plural) of change” appears on the cover of the booklet. A bookbinder’s error, presumably.

We gratefully acknowledge the kind help provided by Mr Sadeck Casoojee, Librarian, Rare and Historical Information Services Section of the Parliamentary Information Centre, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town. The volume shelf number is: 825.91 MACM.
Secondary sources


Key

All handwritten changes that Harold Macmillan made to the original typewritten speech are marked with letters in superscript; the letter “p” indicates the use of a pencil, and “f”, that of a fountain pen. Italics are used for insertions. The frequent occurrence of the typed “ = ” symbol is unfortunately a mystery. All numbers which appear are the original page numbers, which oddly only begin to appear at page three.

It is a great privilege
to be invited
to address the Members
of both Houses of Parliament
in the Union of South Africa.

= 

It is a unique privilege to do so
in 1960,
just half a century
after the Parliament of the Union
came to birth.

I am most grateful to you allp
for giving me this opportunity.

And I am especially grateful
to your Prime Minister,
who invited me to visit your country and arranged for me to address you here today.

My tour of Africa certain different parts of Africa the first ever made by a British Prime Minister in office – is now, alas, near reaching its end.

But it is fitting that it should culminate in the Union Parliament here in Cape Town – in this historic city so long Europe’s gateway to the Indian Ocean and to the East.

In the Union, as in all the other countries I have visited, my stay has been of course all too short.

I wish it had been possible for me to spend longer here, so as to see more of your beautiful country and to get to know more of your people.

3.

But in the past week I have travelled...
many hundreds of miles
and met many people
    in from all walks of life.

I have been able to get
    at least some idea
        of the great beauty
            of your countryside,
                with its farms and its forests,
mountains and rivers,
and the clear skies
and wide horizons of the veldt.

I have also seen some of your great
and thriving cities.

I am most grateful to your Government
    for all the trouble they have taken
        in making the arrangements
            which have enabled me
                to see so much
                    in so short a time.

Some of the younger members of my staff
    have told me
        that it has been a heavy programme.

But I can assure you
    that my wife and I
        have enjoyed every moment.

4.

Moreover,
    we have been deeply moved
        by the warmth of our welcome.

Wherever we have gone,
    in town or country,
we have been received
    with a spirit of friendship
and affection
which has warmed our hearts.
And we value this the more
because we know
that is an expression
of your goodwill,
not just to ourselves,
but to all the people of Britain.

It is,
as I have said,
a special privilege for me
to be here in 1960,
when you are celebrating what I might call
the golden wedding of the Union.

5.
At such a time
it is natural and right
that you should pause
to take stock of your position –
to look back
at what you have achieved,
and to look forward
to what lies ahead.

In the fifty years of their nationhood
the people of South Africa
have built a strong economy
founded on a healthy agriculture
and thriving
and resilient industries.

During my visit
I have been able
to see something
of your mining industry

on which the prosperity
of your country
is so firmly based.

6.

I have seen your Iron and Steel Corporation
and visited your Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
at Pretoria.

These two bodies
in their different ways
are symbols of a lively,
forward-looking
and expanding economy.

I have seen the great city of Durban
with its wonderful port,
and the skyscrapers of Johannesburg standing where,
seventy years ago,
there was nothing but the open veldt.

I have seen too
the fine cities of Pretoria
and Bloemfontein.

7.

This afternoon I shall hope to see something
of your wine-growing industry,
which so far I have only admired
as a consumer.

No one could fail to be impressed with
by\textsuperscript{f} the immense material progress
which has been achieved.

That all this has been accomplished
in so short a time
is a striking testimony
to the initiative\textsuperscript{f},
energy
and skill\textsuperscript{f}
of your people.

=  

We in Britain
are proud of the contribution
we have made
to this remarkable
achievement.

Much of it has been financed
by British capital.

8.

According to a the\textsuperscript{f} recent survey
made by the Union Government,
nearly two-thirds
of the overseas investment
outstanding in the Union
at the end of 1956
was British. That is after two long wars
that had bled our economy white.\textsuperscript{i}

But that is not all.

We have developed trade between us
to our common advantage,

and our economies are now
largely interdependent.
You export to us
raw materials and food –
and,
of course,
gold–

and we in return
send you consumer goods
and capital equipment.

We take a third of all your exports
and we supply a third of all your imports.

9.

This broad traditional pattern
of investment and trade
has been maintained
in spite of the changes brought
by the development
of our two economies.

It gives me great encouragement
to reflect
that the economies
of both our countries,
while 
expanding rapidly,
have yet remained interdependent
and capable
of sustaining one another.

If you travel round this country
by train,
you will travel
on South African rails
made by ISCOR;

but
if you prefer to fly
you can do so go in a British Viscount.

10.

Here is true partnership:
living proof
of the interdependence
between nations.

Britain has always been
your best customer

and
as your new industries develop
we believe we can be
your best partners too.

= 

In addition to building
this strong economy
within your own borders,
you have also played your part
as an independent nation
in the world affairs.

= 

11.

As a soldier in the First World War,
and as a Minister
in Sir Winston Churchill’s
Government
in the Second,

I know personally
the value the contribution
which your forces made
to victory
in the cause of freedom.
I know something too
of the inspiration
which General Smuts brought to us
in Britain
in our darkest hours.
Again,
in the Korean crisis,
you played your full part.
Thus,
in the testing times of war on
and its aggression
your statesmen & your soldiers
have made their influence felt
far beyond
the African continent.
12.
In the period of reconstruction
when Dr. Malan was your Prime Minister
your resources greatly assisted
the recovery
of the sterling area
In the post-war world
Now
in the no less difficult tasks
of today peace, your leaders in industry,
commerce
and finance
continue to be prominent
in world affairs.
Today,
your readiness
to provide technical assistance
to the less well-developed parts
of Africa
is of immense help
to the countries which receive it;

It is also a source of strength
to your friends
in the Commonwealth

and elsewhere
in the Western world.

You are collaborating
in the work of the Commission
for Technical Cooperation
in Africa
South of the Sahara

and,
now,
in the United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Your Minister of External Affairs
intends to visit Ghana
later this year.

All this proves your determination

as the most advanced
industrial country
of the continent

to play your part
in the new Africa of today.

14.

As I have travelled through the Union,
I have found everywhere,
as I expected,
a deep preoccupation
with what is happening
in the rest
of the African continent.
I understand and sympathise
   with your interests
   in these events
   and your anxiety about them.

15. and 16.

Ever since the break-up
   of the Roman Empire
   one of the constant facts
   of political life in Europe
   has been the emergence
   of independent nations.

They have come into existence
   over the centuries
   in different shapes\textsuperscript{shapes},
   with different forms\textsuperscript{kinds} of government.

But all have been inspired
   with a keen feeling of nationalism,
   which has grown
   as the nations have grown.

17.

In the twentieth century,
   and especially since the end of the
   war,
   the processes
   which gave birth
   to the nation states of Europe
   have been repeated all over the world.

We have seen the awakening
   of national consciousness
   in peoples
   who have for centuries
   lived in dependence
   on some other power.
Fifteen years ago
this movement spread
through Asia.

Many countries there,
of different races and civilisations,
pressed their claim
to an independent national life.

Today
the same thing is happening
in Africa.

18.

And the most striking of all the impressions
that I have formed
since I left London
a month ago
is of the strength of this African national
consciousness.

In different places
It may take different forms.

But it is happening everywhere.

The wind of change is blowing
through this continent,

Whether we like it or not,
This growth of national
consciousness
is a political fact.

We must all accept it as a fact.

Our national policies
must take account of it.
Of course
  you understand this
    as well as better than\textsuperscript{f} anyone,

  you are sprung from Europe,
  the home of nationalism.

And here in Africa
  you have yourselves
    created a new nation.

Indeed
  In the history of our times
    yours will be recorded
      as the first
        of the African nationalists.

And this tide of national consciousness
  which is now rising in Africa
    is a fact for which you and we

  and the other nations
    of the Western world
      are ultimately responsible.

For its causes are to be found
  in the achievements
    of Western civilisation

  in the\textsuperscript{f} pushing forward of\textsuperscript{f}
    the frontiers of knowledge,

  in the\textsuperscript{f} applying of science to\textsuperscript{f}
    in\textsuperscript{f} the service of human needs,

  in the\textsuperscript{f} expanding of food production,

  in the\textsuperscript{f} speeding and multiplying
    of the means of communication
    and,
perhaps above all, and more than anything else
in the spread of education.

As I have said,
the growth of national consciousness
in Africa
is a political fact
and we must accept it as such.

21.
This means I would judge that we must come to terms
with it.
I sincerely believe that,
if we cannot do so,
we may imperil the precarious balance
of East and West
on which the peace of the world
depends.

The world today
is divided into three great groups.

First,
there are what we call
the Western Powers.

You in South Africa
and we in Britain
belong to this group,

together with our friends and allies
in the other parts
of the Commonwealth,

in the United States of America
and in Europe.
We call it the Freeworld.\footnote{habit}

Secondly, there are the Communists; Russia and her satellites in Europe, and China, whose population over the next decade or so will rise to the level of one thousand million, will have risen by the end of the next ten years to the staggering total of 800 million people.\footnote{habit}

Thirdly, there are those parts of the world whose people are at present uncommitted either to Communism or to our Western ideas.

In this context we think first of Asia and then of Africa.

As I see it, the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West.

Will they be drawn into the Communist camp? Or will the great experiments in self-government that are now being made
in Asia and Africa,
especially within the Commonwealth,
prove so successful,
and by their example
so compelling,
that the balance will come down
in favour of freedom
and order
and justice?
The struggle is joined,
and it is a struggle
for the minds of men.
What is now on trial
is much more than our military strength
or our diplomatic
and administrative skill.
It is our way of life.

24.
The uncommitted nations
want to see before they choose.
What we can show them
to help them choose right?

= Each of the independent members
of the Commonwealth
must answer that question
for itself.

It is a basic principle
of our modern Commonwealth
that we respect each other’s
sovereignty
in matters of internal policy.
At the same time we must recognise that,
in this shrinking world in which we live today,
the internal policies of one nation may have effects outside it.

25.

We may sometimes be tempted to say to each other:

“Mind your own business”.

But in these days

I would myself expand the old saying so that it runs

“Mind your own business, of course, but mind how it affects my business, too.”

Let me If I may be very frank with you, my friends.

28.

What Governments and Parliaments in the United Kingdom have done since the war in according independence to India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Malaya and Ghana, and what they will do
for Nigeria
    and other countries
    now nearing independence –
all this,
though we take full
    and sole responsibility
for it,
we do in the belief
    that it is the only way
    to establish the future
    of the Commonwealth
and of the Free World
on sound foundations.

= 27.

All this,
of course
is alas of deep and close concern
to you.
For nothing we do
in this small world
can be done in a corner
    and or remain hidden.
What we do today
in West,
    Central
    and East Africa
becomes known tomorrow
to everyone in the Union
whatever his language,
colour
or traditions.

~ 23 ~
28.

Let me Sir assure you
in all friendliness,
that we are well aware of this,
and that we have acted
and will act
with full knowledge
of the responsibility
we have to you and to all our friends.

= 

Nevertheless,
I am sure you will agree
that in our own areas
of responsibility
we must each do what we think right.

What we British think right
derives from a long experience
both of failure and success
in the management
of our own these affairs.

We have tried to learn
and apply
the lessons of both.

29.

Our judgement of right and wrong
and of justice
is rooted in the same soil as
yours—

in Christianity
and in the rule of law
as the basis
of a free society.

This experience
of our own
explains why it has been our aim,
in the countries
   for which we have borne
       responsibility,
not only to raise the material
   standards of living life,
but to create a society
   which respects the rights
       of individuals –
a society in which men are given
   the opportunity
       to grow to their full stature.
and that must in our view
   include the opportunity of
       to have an increasing share
       in political power
       and responsibility;
   a society…

30.
a society in which individual merit,
   and individual merit alone,
   is the criterion
       for a man’s advancement,
   whether political or economic.

Finally,
in countries inhabited
   by several different races,
it has been our aim
   to find means
       by which the community
       can become more of a community
and fellowship can be fostered
   between its various parts.
This problem, Sir, is by no means confined to Africa.

31.

Nor is it always a problem of a European minority.

In Malaya, for instance, though there are Indian and European minorities, Malays and Chinese make up the great bulk of the population, and the Chinese are not much fewer in numbers than the Malays.

Yet these two peoples must learn to live together in harmony and unity. and the strength & future of Malaya as a nation will depend on the different contributions which the two races can make.

32.

The attitude of the United Kingdom’s Government towards this problem was clearly expressed by the Foreign Secretary,

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, speaking at the United Nations
33.

These were his words: –

“In those territories
where different races or tribes
live side by side,

the task is to ensure
that all the people
may enjoy security and
freedom

and the chance to contribute
as individuals
to the progress
and well-being
of these countries.

“We that is the British reject the idea
of any inherent superiority
of one race over another.

“Our policy,
therefore,
is non-racial;

it offers a future
in which Africans,
Europeans,
Asians,

the peoples of the Pacific
and others with whom we are
concerned,

will all ….

34.

Will all play their full part
as citizens
   in the country
   where they live,

and in which feelings of race
   will be submerged
   in loyalty to new nations.”

I have thought you would wish me
to state plainly
   and with full candour
the policy
   for which we in Britain stand.

It may well be that,
in trying to do our duty
   as we see it,
we shall sometimes make difficulties
   for you.

If this proves to be so,
   We shall much regret it.

35.

But I know that,
even so,
you would not ask us
to flinch from doing our duty.

You too
   will do your duty
   as you see it.

I am well aware
   of the peculiar nature
   of the problems
with which you are faced here\textsuperscript{p} in the Union of South Africa\textsuperscript{p}

I know the differences between your situation and that of most of the other states in Africa.

You have here some three million people of European origin.

This country is their home,

36.

It has been their home For many generations hundreds of years.\textsuperscript{f}

They have no other.

The same true of Europeans in Central and East Africa.

Furthermore\textsuperscript{f} in most other African states those who have come to work from Europe have only come to work, to contribute their skills, perhaps to teach, but not to make a home.

The problems to which you as members of the Union Parliament have to address yourselves are very different from those which face the Parliaments of countries of with\textsuperscript{f} homogenous populations.
37.

*Of course I realise*^f^ These are complicated and baffling problems.

It would be surprising if your interpretation of your duty did not sometimes produce very different results from ours, in terms of Government policies and actions.

38.

As a fellow member of the Commonwealth it is our earnest desire to give South Africa our support and encouragement. but I hope you won’t mind my saying frankly that there are some aspects of your policies which make it impossible for us to do this without being false to our own deep convictions about the political destinies of free men to which in our own territories we are trying to give effect.
38. (a)

I think *that* as friends
to face together –

without seeking to apportion credit for blame –

the fact that
In the world of today
This difference of outlook
lies between us.

= 

I said that I was speaking as a friend.

I can also claim
to be speaking as a relation.

39.

For we Scots
    can claim family connections
    with both the great
    European sections
    of your population
not only with
    the English-speaking people
but with the Afrikaans-speaking
    as well.

This is a point
    which hardly needs
in Cape Town
    where you can see every day
the statue of that great Scotsman,
Andrew Murray.

His work
    in the Dutch Reformed Church,
in the Cape,
and the work of his son
in the Orange Free State,
was among the Afrikaans-speaking people.

There always has been
a very close connection
between the Church of Scotland
and the Church of the
Netherlands.

40.

The Synod of Dort
plays the same great part
in the history of both each.

Many aspirants to the Ministry of Scotland,
especially in the 17th and 18th centuries,
went to pursue their theological studies
in the Netherlands.

I think Scotland can claim to have repaid its debt
in South Africa.
I am thinking particularly of the Scots
in the Orange Free State,
not only the younger Andrew Murray,
but also the Robertsons,
the Frasers,
the McDonalds,
families which have been called
“The Free State Clans”
who became burghers
of the old Free State
and whose descendants still play their part there.
41.

But,

though I count myself a Scot,
my mother was an American,

And the United States
provides a valuable illustration
of one of the main points
which I have been trying to make
In my remarks today.

However the population of America,
like yours,
is a blend of many different strains.

And,

over the years,

most of those
who have gone to North America
have gone there
in order to escape conditions
in Europe
which they found intolerable.

42.

The Pilgrim Fathers
Were fleeing from persecution as Puritans –
and the Marylanders from persecution as Roman Catholics.

Throughout the 19th century
a stream of immigrants
flowed across the Atlantic
from the old world to the new
to escape from the poverty
in their homelands.

And in the 20th century
the United States
have provided asylum
for the victims
of political oppression
in Europe.

Thus,
for the majority of its inhabitants,
America has been a place of refuge –
a place to which people went
because they wanted to get away from Europe.

43.

It is not surprising, therefore,
that for many years
a main objective
of American statesmen,
supported by the American public,
was to isolate themselves from Europe;
and,
with their great material strength
and the vast resources open to them,
this might have seemed an attractive and a practicable course.

Nevertheless, Since my lifetime
in the two great wars of this century, they have found themselves unable to stand aside.
Twice their manpower in arms
    has streamed back
        across the Atlantic
    to shed its blood
        in those European struggles
            from which their ancestors
                thought they could escape
    by emigrating to the new world.

And when the second war was over,
    they were forced to recognise
        that
    in the small world of today,
    isolationism is out of date
        and offers no assurance
            of security.

The fact is that
    in this modern world
        no country,
        not even the greatest,
    can live for itself alone.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, at a time
    when the whole of the civilised world
        was comprised within the confines
            of the Roman Empire,
    St. Paul proclaimed
        one of the great truths of history:

        “we are all members
            one of another”.

During this twentieth century this
    that eternal truth
        has taken on a new
and exciting significance.

It has always been impossible
for the individual man
to live in isolation
from his fellows –
in the home,
the tribe,
the village,
or the city.

46.

Today it is impossible
for nations to live in isolation
from one another.

What Dr. John Donne said
of individual men
three hundred years ago
is true today
of my country,
your country,
and all of every countries† of the world:

“All man’s death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankind.

“And therefore never send to know
for whom the bell tolls:
it tolls for thee”.

All nations now are interdependent
one upon another.

46. 47p

This is generally recognised
throughout the Western World.

I hope in due course
the countries of the *Communist* world

may will recognise it too.

It was certainly with that thought in mind

that I took the decision

to visit Moscow

about this time last year.

Russia has been isolationist

in her time

and still has tendencies that way.

But the fact remains

that we must live in the same world

with Russia

and we must find a way of doing so.

I believe that the initiative

which we took last year

has had some success.

At any rate I am sure

That nothing but good can come

From extending contacts in trade

and through the exchange

of visitors.

48.48⁰

I certainly do not believe

in refusing to trade with people

just because you may happen to dislike the way they manage their internal affairs

at home.

Boycotts will never get you anywhere.

Here I would like to say *may I* say,

in parenthesis,
that I deprecate the attempts
    which are being made
    in Britain today

to organise a consumer boycott
    of South African goods.

It has never been the practice so far with
Of\textsuperscript{f} any Government of the United
Kingdom
including the Labour Government\textsuperscript{f}
to undertake or support campaigns
    of this kind
designed to influence
    the internal politics
    of another Commonwealth
country.

49.

I and my colleagues
    in the United Kingdom Government
deplore this proposed boycott
    and regard it as undesirable
    from every point of view.

It can only have serious effects
    on Commonwealth relations and trade,
    and lead to the ultimate detriment
    of others than those
    against whom it is aimed.

\textit{I said I was speaking of the interdependency of nations.}\textsuperscript{f}

The members of the Commonwealth
    feel particularly strongly
    the value of interdependence.

They are as independent
    as any countries\textsuperscript{f}
in this shrinking world
    can be,
but they have voluntarily agreed
to work together.

48-50
They recognise that there may be
differences between them, us,
in their institutions
or in their internal policies,
and membership does not imply
either the wish to express a
judgement
on these matters
or the need to impose
a stifling uniformity.

It is,
I think,
a help that there has never been
question
of any rigid constitution
for the Commonwealth.

Perhaps this is because
We have got on well enough
in the United Kingdom
without a written constitution
and tend to look suspiciously at them.

51.

Whether that is so or not,
it is clear
that a rigid constitutional
framework
for the Commonwealth
would not work.
At the first of the stresses and strains
which are inevitable
in this period of history
cracks would appear in the framework
and then the whole structure
would crumble.

It is the flexibility
of our Commonwealth institutions
which gives them their strength.

52.

In conclusion,
may I say this.
I have spoken frankly
about the differences
between our two countries
in their approach
to one of the great current problems
with which each has to deal
within its own sphere
of responsibility.

These differences are well-known:
they are matters of public knowledge –
indeed,
of public controversy.

And I should have been less than honest
If,
by remaining silent on them,
I had seemed to imply
that they did not exist.

53.¹

But differences on one subject,
important though it is,
need not and should not impair
our capacity to co-operate
    with one another
in furthering
    the many practical interests
        which we share in common.

The independent members
    of the Commonwealth
do not always agree
    on every subject.

It is not a condition of their association
    that they should do so.

On the contrary,
    the strength of our Commonwealth
        lies largely in the fact that
            it is a free association
                of free and independent states
each responsible
    for ordering its own affairs

but co-operating
    in the pursuit of common aims
        and purposes
            in world affairs.

54.

Moreover,
    these differences may be transitory.

In time they may be resolved.

Our duty is to see them
    in this perspective
        in perspective
against the background
    of our long association.
Of this,
    at any rate,
I am certain.
Those of us who

by the grace of the electorate
are temporarily in charge of affairs
in my country and yours,
we fleeting transient phantoms in the great stage of history
we have no right to sweep aside
on this account
the friendship that exists
between our two countries,

55.

For that is the legacy of history.
It is not ours alone
to deal with as we wish.

To adapt a famous phrase:
“it belongs to those who are living;
    But it also belongs to those
    who are dead
    and to those who are yet unborn.

We must face the differences.

But let us try to see a little beyond them,
    down the long vista of the future.


I hope –
indeed, I am confident –
that in another 50 years
we shall look back
on the differences
that exist between us now
as mere matters of historical interest.
56.

For,
   as time passes
   and one generation
      yields to another,
   human problems change and fade.

Let us remember these truths.

Let us therefore resolve to build,
   not to destroy.

And let us remember always
   that weakness comes from division,
   strength from unity