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Clamour over Zimbabwe reveals continuing racial prejudice in SA

FOR SOME TIME now, there has been a fairly high level of agitation among some South Africans about the issue of Zimbabwe. Indeed some politicians took the decision some time ago to use this question to make their careers and advance the fortunes of their parties.

After a short study of our politics, a visitor from Mars might assume that Zimbabwe is a province of South Africa. With this understanding, the visitor would come to know that some South Africans are concerned that their country is wrongly handling such matters as land reform, the economy, the rule of law and the independence of the press and the judiciary in its province of Zimbabwe.

She would also come to realise that in large measure, the agitation about these questions is driven by a seemingly deep-seated concern that the misfortunes that had befallen the province of Zimbabwe were likely to spill over into or occur in the other provinces of South Africa. Naturally, given the volume of voices about these matters in the other provinces, the

**LETTER
FROM THE**



PRESIDENT

Martian visitor would conclude that the South African government might have to change the policies it was pursuing in the specific province of Zimbabwe. In particular, the visitor would have noted that what was demanded of the South African government was that it should denounce and take all necessary steps to crush the provincial government of Zimbabwe.

Imagine the situation, later, when the Martian visitor comes to realise that Zimbabwe is not a province of South Africa but an independent state, with its own government, democratically elected by the people of Zimbabwe. The visitor would then begin to wonder about why some South Africans seemed so convinced that Zimbabwe was affected by some infectious disease that was bound to cross the Limpopo River border and infect South Africa.

Being familiar with the situation in Europe, the visitor would wonder why the same was not said about the Republic of Ireland relative to Northern Ireland, or Greece, relative to Macedonia. For example, the Republic of Ireland progressed towards the outstanding economic success it enjoys today, while Northern Ireland was immersed in an apparently unstoppable violent conflict that claimed many lives and obliged the British government to deploy large numbers of security forces to bring about peace. What has happened to the economy of the Republic of Ireland would suggest that those who invested in the Republic at the height of the 'troubles' in the North, were not concerned about 'contagion' or the 'Northern Ireland factor'.

Looking around South Africa, the Martian visitor would see no evidence of any worrying trends about land, the economy, the rule of law and the independence of the press and the judiciary. Taking this together with her European experiences, the visitor would be most puzzled as to why some South Africans seem so convinced that the future of their country depends on what happens in Zimbabwe and what their government does about Zimbabwe, rather than what the people of Zimbabwe do about their own country.

The point that our visitor would have missed, never having been exposed to racism, is that both Zimbabwe and South Africa have black African governments. It is this that provokes fears among white South Africans about 'contagion' and the 'Zimbabwe factor'. Consistent with their reading of the situation in Zimbabwe, they fear that, 'as is the wont of black African governments', the South African government will also act 'as to the manner born' with regard to such issues as property rights and the rule of law.

Last year, the leader of the New National Party, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, was honest enough to say in the National Assembly that this was the reason his party demanded of the President of South Africa that he should denounce President Mugabe and the rest of the government of Zimbabwe. He said that the white minority in South Africa feared that what was happening in Zimbabwe would happen in South Africa. This minority, which for centuries had seen itself as a European outpost surrounded by threatening and savage African hordes, wanted to be reassured that it was safe.

What was happening in South Africa, guaranteeing that safety, was not sufficient. The President had to denounce the government of Zimbabwe in the strongest terms, preach a message that South Africa was different from Zimbabwe and the rest of Africa and impose sanctions against Zimbabwe. Of course, in addition to the fact of black African governments, the other critical link between Zimbabwe and South Africa is that they both have relatively sizeable national white minorities. Thus it is not difficult for white South Africa to borrow the slogan from the trade unions, relative to the link between itself and white Zimbabwe - an injury to one is an injury to all!

Add to this the fact that the white minority in South Africa had worked itself into a frenzy of fear about and hatred of Mugabe of Zimbabwe, before that country's independence, in much the same way that it had educated itself to fear and loathe an ANC composed of 'terrorists and communists'. The response to the events in Zimbabwe has confirmed what many of us suspected, that the negative stereotype of black people in many white minds is firmly implanted in these minds.

Accordingly, we had thought that many of our white compatriots will entertain doubts for a long time as to whether 'the South African miracle', centred on the notion of a 'rainbow nation', will be sustained. The price they demand we pay to ensure that they continue to believe in 'the miracle', is that we prove, relative to Zimbabwe, that we do not conform to their stereotype of black Africans.

Accordingly, we must act to guarantee the property rights of the white Zimbabweans. We must also act to ensure that the law is upheld both to protect both the property and the freedoms of the Zimbabwe property owners. Thus will we convince them that we are committed to the guarantee of the property rights of white South Africans. And thus we will demonstrate that we are determined to protect the property and the freedoms of the white, South African property owners. Only in this way would the South African white minority be assured that in ours, they have an atypical black African government that would not behave as such governments have behaved, in the view and according to the norms of that white minority.

As the Martian visitor would have learnt more about our country by now, she would be struck by the ironies that arise from this situation. One of these, among many, is that the ANC represents the section of our population that has been by far the worst victim of the denial of and contempt for property rights. Another, among many, is that the ANC represents the section of our population that has been by far the worst victim of disregard and contempt for the rule of law.

Yet another, among many, is the fact that today South Africa has a constitution and laws that protect property rights, because members and supporters of the ANC engaged in struggle and paid the supreme price in a struggle to realise and entrench these rights for all South Africans. Another irony, among others, is the fact that today South Africa has a constitution and laws that protect the rule of law, because members and supporters of the ANC engaged in struggle and paid the supreme price in a struggle to bring into being a law-governed society, in the interest of all South Africans.

Many of our people died, suffered torture, imprisonment, banishment and exile in the course of a difficult struggle for the rule of law, the independence of the press and the judiciary, property rights, a prosperous economy that would benefit all our people, democracy and human rights. The cruel irony, among others, is that the same people against whom we waged this struggle, the people who killed, tortured, imprisoned, banished and exiled those who fought for property rights and the rule of law for all, are the most strident in demanding that we prove our democratic credentials. Those who oppressed and opposed us must, of course, be seen and accepted as the vigilant defenders of democracy, property rights and the rule of law.

Having come to understand our situation better, the visitor from Mars would begin to realise how much the negative white stereotype of black people informs the South African discourse about Zimbabwe. She would begin to see how everyday we have to tolerate the insult that because we are black and African, we have to demonstrate that we are not about to seize white property, deny whites their democratic rights or violate the law, to threaten white interests.



She would see how necessary it is that we must respond to the insult in a measured way, so that we do not feed the stereotype that a vigorous response to insult, described as criticism, demonstrates a typical black African intolerance of critical views. She would come to understand that the response to the events in Zimbabwe expected of us is one that should address white South African fears rather than the interests of the people of Zimbabwe, both black and white.

She would see that what is required of us is that we must accept that some within white South African society are convinced that we are savages and that we must therefore do everything in our power to prove that we are not savages, to the satisfaction of white South Africa. The visitor would also see the utility to some, of generating fear about events in Zimbabwe to convince white South Africans of 'the black danger/die swart gevaar' that confronts them in South Africa, represented by the ANC.

On 5 May 2000, I spoke at the opening of the Zimbabwe Trade Fair in Bulawayo, in the presence of President Mugabe and many of his government colleagues. On that occasion I said:

"It would be best that (the land question) is dealt with in a co-operative and non-confrontational manner among all the people of this sister country, both black and white, reflecting the achievement of national consensus on this issue, encompassing all Zimbabweans.

"Accordingly, we trust that ways and means will be found to end the conflict that has erupted in some areas of Zimbabwe, occasioned by the still unresolved land question in this country. Peace, stability, democracy and social progress in Zimbabwe are as important for yourselves as they are for the rest of the region."

Less than a week ago, a few of our Ministers met their Zimbabwe counterparts to promote this perspective. President Mugabe and I will also meet to consider the proposals of the Ministers as we pursue the objectives of peace, stability, democracy and social progress for Zimbabwe, South Africa and the rest of our region.

We will do this not because we have to prove our credentials to anybody, but because the peoples of our countries and region fought a hard and protracted struggle so that they can enjoy peace, stability, democracy and social progress. I trust that by the time our visitor from Mars takes leave of us, she would have come to understand that, in terms of political boundaries, Zimbabwe is not a province of South Africa.

She would also have come to understand that a white stereotype of black Africans has turned Zimbabwe and South Africa into one country. Accordingly the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the world markets will, on occasion, respond as though Zimbabwe was a province of South Africa.

Hopefully, because she would be unencumbered by prejudice, the visitor from Mars would also know that, in our country, the guarantors and principal beneficiaries of the rule of law, the right to property and democratic rights, are those who laid down their lives to bring about the rule of law, respect for property rights and democracy. These democrats fought against the dictatorship of white minority domination and privilege, and ensured that we are bound by a constitutional and law-governed obligation to bring about equality, non-racism, non-sexism and a united rainbow nation.

At the same time as we continue our own struggle to realise these objectives in our own country, we will do everything we can to assist the people of Zimbabwe to achieve this same outcome, regardless of contrary demands, whether they emanate from South Africa, Zimbabwe or Mars.

Thabo Mbeki.



LAND RESTITUTION

Constitution rules in Lydenburg land case

THE EXPROPRIATION notice served on Lydenburg farmer Willem Pretorius for the farm Boomplaats was the result of due legal process consistent with the South African Constitution. It was neither a 'land grab' nor a violation of any rights, as some have suggested.

Pretorius was served with a notice of expropriation on 13 March for land due to be returned to the Dinkwanyane community under the government's restitution programme after Pretorius refused government's final offer for the farm.

The government this week withdrew the expropriation notice to allow for further negotiations on the price. Minister of Agriculture Land Affairs Thoko Didiza instructed the Land Claims Commission to enter into further discussions with Pretorius in order to reach an amicable outcome.

At issue is the amount government should pay Pretorius for his farm. The farmer is insisting government should pay R2.1 million, but government says this price does not reflect the true value of the property, nor does it take into account the state assistance Pretorius received to acquire the farm.

The Dinkwanyane community bought the farm Boomplaats in the Lydenburg District for the amount of £50,000 Sterling in 1906 and held the land in terms of registered title. The community also had interests on the land in terms of customary law.

The land was later classified as a so-called 'Black-spot' from which the black owners were to be moved. After prolonged negotiations involving the now defunct Department of Native Affairs, the members of the community were forcibly removed between 1957 and 1961. The property was expropriated and transferred to the state.

Willem Pretorius bought 1,270.9042 hectares, which was part of the farm, from the state in 1982 for the amount of R119,000. Karel Joubert owns the other part of the farm. Pretorius paid R94 per hectare, while the two other landowners adjacent to his farm paid for R266 and R338 per hectare respectively, also in 1982. Pretorius acquired two loans with low interest for a period of 25 years from the state. His interest rates were five and eight percent per annum respectively.

Government policy on compensation to current landowners for land restitution is to use the market value of their farms, taking into consideration the purchase price and the value of any assistance provided by the state.

The original valuer determined the market value of the Boomplaats farm as R2.1 million. However, the valuer did not take into account either the purchase price or the value of the 'soft loans' Pretorius received when acquiring the property. A second independent valuer had to be appointed after evidence was uncovered that Pretorius did indeed receive two soft loans from the state.

The second valuer concluded the farm was worth R1.5m. Statistics on comparable sales within the vicinity are in line with conclusions by the second valuer. The second valuer noted also that Pretorius paid less than

MORE INFORMATION:

- [Constitution of South Africa, 1996, Section 25 \(3\)](#)
- [Information on restitution process, Department of Land Affairs](#)

market value when purchasing the farm in 1982, and market-related interest rates in South Africa never reached either five or eight percent during this period. Interest rates in South Africa are much closer to 16 percent.

The second valuer used a formula developed by Judge Geldenhuys of the Land Claims Court to determine the value of the disputed farm. This formula emanates from section 25(3) of the Constitution. After applying the formula, which subtracts the amount saved in repayment of the soft loans, the amount of R848,485 was offered to Pretorius.

However Pretorius still insists on R2.1 million. Any suggestion that the state should not take into consideration the issues of purchase price and soft loans would go against the requirements of the Constitution.

The restitution process is subject to the rule of law. The expropriation procedure gives the person expropriated the opportunity to approach the Land Claims Court for determination of the justness and equity of compensation.

To date a total of 12,120 claims have been settled virtually through negotiation. Of this a total of 97 claims have been settled through the Land Claims Court. The Boomplaats claim is only the second expropriation case to date.

WORLD TB DAY

South Africans must unite to fight tuberculosis

AS WORLD Tuberculosis Day is observed on 24 March, the ANC is calling on its structures, NGOs, CBOs, trade unions and religious and other organisations to promote awareness of tuberculosis in all communities.

South Africa has among the worst rates of tuberculosis (TB) in the world. Tuberculosis is one of the major causes of mortality and morbidity in many parts of the world. Many countries have reached a state of endemic balance where the number of people who are treated or die from TB are replaced by an equal number of new TB infections.

In 1997 there it was estimated there were 2.2 billion reported cases of tuberculosis worldwide. Between 1995 and 1996, case notifications increased in four out of six World Health Organisation (WHO) regions. In South Africa it is estimated TB kills almost 1 000 people every month. About two thirds of the population is infected with the TB germ but only one in ten will be sick with TB as most peoples' immune system are strong enough to protect them.

Tuberculosis is spread when people who have infectious TB cough up bacteria out of their lungs. Others around them inhale these droplets which remain suspended in the air. Once on appropriate treatment however, infectious people are no longer at risk of passing the TB germ onto others. People who have weakened immune systems are more likely to fall ill with TB. Immune systems are weakened by poor nutrition, stress, HIV/Aids and other illnesses.

The symptoms of TB include coughing for more than 3 weeks, weight loss, loss of appetite, night sweats, tiredness, chest pain and coughing up of blood. People with these symptoms should go to the nearest clinic and

MORE INFORMATION:

- [Fact Sheet on Tuberculosis, World Health Organisation](#)
- [The Stop TB Initiative](#)

have themselves checked for TB. Depending upon results, a chest x-ray and sputum tests may also be done.

Tuberculosis can be cured. Tuberculosis patients have to take treatment 5 days a week for a period of 6 to 8 months depending upon the severity of the disease. On appropriate treatment TB patients are not infective. The goal of the National TB Control Programme is to achieve at least 85 percent cure rates among new infectious cases.

OPPOSITION STRATEGY

'We will oppose delivery,' DA tells South Africa

EXPECT the Democratic Alliance to obstruct and delay delivery for at least the next three years. Where this is not possible, expect them to rubbish, belittle or undermine any transformation efforts of the ANC in government.

The DA has itself acknowledged this as the basis of their programme when they released to the media their key strategy for the next election in 2004. Their message for the 2004 campaign is that the DA will deliver what the ANC has failed to deliver.

The success of this message depends on a lack of delivery, or at the very least, the perception of a lack of delivery. It stands to reason that in the pursuit of their electoral objectives the DA will do whatever they can to block delivery and undermine the achievements of the ANC government.

This is not a new approach. It is merely the first time the Democratic Alliance has so openly acknowledged it. The component parts of the DA have a long record of resisting transformation and shouting down the kind of delivery that has made a difference to the lives of ordinary South Africans.

Some of the transformative legislation in the area of labour opposed by one or more of the components of the Democratic Alliance include the:

- Labour Relations Act,
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act,
- Mine Health and Safety Act,
- Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act,
- Employment Equity Act.

These pieces form the foundations of the stable and non-discriminatory labour system South Africa has in place today.

In health, components of the DA opposed the:

- Medicines and Related Substances Act,
- Pharmacy Amendment Act,
- Medical, Dental and Support Health Services Act.

These laws regulate costs and distribution of medicine throughout our communities, through opening the market to less expensive, generic and parallel imported drugs, to ensuring that medical schemes cannot

discriminate along race, gender, or other unconstitutional lines; and guaranteeing standards and quality in all health services.

In education, the members of the DA opposed the:

- South African Qualifications Authority,
- Education Laws Amendment Act,
- Employment of Educators Act;
- and various other measures aimed at ensuring equality and improving the quality of our education system.

Parties in the DA also opposed the Welfare Laws Amendment Act, replacing the old Welfare grants, which applied to whites and Coloureds only, with child support grants that would reach into all corners of our society.

On the issues of land, components of the DA opposed the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, which prevents rural people from being expelled from the land they have lived and worked on for many years. They also opposed the National Empowerment Fund, established as a vehicle to promote the economic empowerment of previously-disadvantaged communities.

The members of the Democratic Alliance can be expected in the next three years to continue this campaign to stall delivery and block transformation. Over this period the DA will confirm its position as South Africa's anti-delivery party.