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## **BETWEEN AUTHORITARIANISM AND FASCISM**

If you understand how the Azanian people yearned for liberation, justice and equality; you would appreciate why the post-1994 corruption in the form of State Capture amounts to a state of being from the frying pan to the fire for the Azanians. The feeling or real experience of betrayal is informed by the sacrifices the Azanian masses made. Those sacrifices include torture, imprisonment and loss of lives.



The selflessness of the masses was based on the firm belief that their sacrifices would be compensated by the attainment of liberation, democracy and justice. Never in their lives did the revolutionary masses expect that their sacrifices would be undermined by grand scale corruption in the context of an authoritarian State that is fast degenerating towards fascism.

If fascism is understood to be “a form of right-wing and authoritarian State characterised by dictatorial power and forcible suppression of the opposition” under the spell of a dictator, we can say South Africa was probably diverted from that path by the removal of ANC’s Jacob Zuma. He had all the marks of a smiling and

singing dictator with his total disregard for the Constitution, law and morality.

The level of conflation of Party and State in South Africa can at best be characterised as authoritarianism where power is centralised in the ruling party through the State. Once a country degenerates into a single-party dominated democracy, multiparty democracy is thrown out of the window. Yet the South African Constitution guarantees a multiparty-based constitutional democracy.

There are signs of fascism in the constant undermining of the rule of law by the leaders of the ruling party, which saw its leaders violating the Constitution and sidestepping the might of the law. We still see some of the ruling party’s leaders that are on the wrong side of the law still added in the Party List despite their leadership and ethical shortcomings. All this was made possible by the deliberate destruction of State institutions like the Scorpions; the undermining of the Public Protector; the abuse of power where parliament degenerated into majoritarianism and blindly defended the Executive instead of making it accountable.

The ruling party’s model of “cadre deployment” came into play where the Boards and CEO’s of the State-Owned Enterprises were handpicked party loyalists who would help milk those SOEs dry of resources.

When you thought the ruling party might have learnt something about the freedom and independence of the media in a constitutional democracy, last month ANC

## ONE MORE AFRIKAN DICTATOR BITES THE DUST

leader Fikile Mbalula reportedly summoned the editors of the SABC, which is supposed to be the public broadcaster according to its constitutional mandate. He is said to have waggled his fingers at what he perceived to be an uncharacteristically low election media coverage. If the media reports were anything to by, we had fascism in its raw form.

Just this week the youth wing of the ruling party violently disrupted the launch of a book by a South African journalist Pieter-Louis Myburgh. The book chronicles a web of activities, which allegedly places the ruling party's Secretary General Ace Magashule at the centre of State Capture corruption. Instead of respecting the freedom of speech which is protected by the Bill of Rights in South Africa, the ruling party's youth burned the book copies and vowed to ensure it enjoyed no distribution. The country had suddenly gone back to apartheid times where thousands of books were banned and burned to keep them away from Black people.

AZAPO promotes a free political discourse where the people would have been encouraged to read the book and respond accordingly either in written material form or public debates. In the instance where the ruling party felt that the rights of its leader were violated, the affected leader has every right to approach the courts of the land and either interdict the publishing of the book or discontinue its distribution. He could even sue the book writer for defamation or something.

The burning of books is yet another fascist manifestation that is often marked by the burning of public libraries in the townships and villages. There is no doubt that the young people seemed to have learned a lot from their leader Jessie Duarte who recently attacked and abused a young Black journalist for daring to ask her difficult questions.

The fascist culture of suppressing political dissent and divergent views can unfortunately be seen in the nature of protests where tyres would be burned and streets barricaded in the townships in a manner that intimidates any possible different view or move. That is a sub-culture of self-hatred that society must treat with generous doses of Black Consciousness.

On 11 April 2019 the Sudanese army overthrew longstanding dictator Omar al-Bashir (75) to cheers from the masses that have been protesting for the stepping down of the dictator since December 2018. In the latter quarter of 2018 the people took to the streets to protest against the worsening costs of living and poor governance by the dictator and his fascist government.

The uprisings intensified in 2019 causing a reaction of a State of Emergency by the fascist government on 22 February 2019. In panic, al-Bashir also dissolved the national and regional governments. He replaced them with military and intelligence service operatives.

Al-Bashir tried to appease the determined protesters on 8 March 2019 by announcing that all women that protested against his government would be released from jail. That was not enough to diminish the resolve of the people to see the back of a dictator who was indicted by the controversial International Criminal Court to answer to crimes against humanity and genocide in the Darfur region where he is accused of having murdered between 200 000 and 400 000 people. His fascist government's propaganda sells the lie that they murdered only about 10 000 as if that would have lessened their genocidal crimes.

On 6 April the demonstrations went into higher gear, and it became clear that the attempted violent clamp-down by the security forces could no longer be sustained. It is at that point that a sudden and inexplicable change of heart by the army was seen. By 10 April the army moved in and started to shield the demonstrators from the security forces, and removed dictator al-Bashir in a coup by 11 April amid cheers from the masses. The military said it will remain in control for at least two years to oversee a "transition of power" to civilian rule.

It seems the masses learned something from the 2010 Arab Spring where there were sweeping uprisings by the masses in the Arab world. The anti-government uprisings began in Tunisia to Libya, Egypt, Yemen,

Syria and Bahrain. Sustained street revolts also hit Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Sudan and other Arabised Afrikan countries.

We know the dubious role of the army, which suddenly joined the uprisings on the side of the masses in countries like Egypt. We also know that the armies' apparent staging of coups against the dictators they had all along defended and entrenched into power reproduced a situation where the fascism was maintained by the armies despite the seeming coups against the dictators.



With that lesson from history, the Sudanese people have turned around and resumed their demonstrations against the army, and demanding that power be transferred to civilian rule with immediate effect. The masses are saying the military council that has imposed itself on Sudan is part and parcel of dictator al-Bashir's fascist government. They think that the fascist government is out to dilute the militancy of the masses by giving false hope that al-Bashir and his fascism have been overthrown, when in fact fascism only changed its form while the substance remained the same.

For those who may not have known, Sudan is an extremely important part of the classical history of antiquity in Afrika. It was part of that great Nubian and Khemitian (Egyptian) great history of Afrikan civilisation where the great Pyramids were built 2500BCE years ago. All that great Afrikan history of antiquity has been Arabised and Islamised almost beyond recognition.

Al-Bashir represented the continuation of the subtle colonisation of Afrika. He rose to power through a coup he staged as a Sudanese army brigadier in 1989. Al-Bashir's negotiation to end the Second Sudanese

Civil war led to a referendum in the south, which led to the separation of Sudan into the North and South.

## THE STRUGGLE IS AGAINST COLONIALISM AND LAND DISPOSSESSION

Last Saturday, April 6, marked the arrival of convicted fraudster Jan van Riebeeck and his gang of Dutchmen to our shores in the Cape.

There has been a lot of apartheid State-sponsored propaganda designed to mislead people about the events surrounding the arrival of the European settlers. One of the most peddled lie is that when the Europeans landed in the Cape, there were no people and as such Afrikans cannot accuse the settlers of robbing them of their land.

Whatever the repeated lies, we should at least credit the settlers for recording the date of their arrival. They could have manufactured a lie that they always have been in this part of Afrika. So, there is no dispute that they landed in the Cape and that their arrival was not by design but accidental because they were actually on their way to the East where their company, the Dutch East India Company had been importing spices.

6 April 1652 marked the beginning of land dispossession of the indigenous people and the setting up of a European colony in Afrika. That was the beginning of the conflict over land which was stolen from the indigenous people by the European settlers.

Over the years, the descendants of the European settlers enslaved Afrikans, intensified the land theft, stock theft and also took control of the wealth of the country, including its precious minerals. The land-dispossessed Afrikans, led by their traditional leaders, fought countless wars of resistance. Because European settlers had superior weapons in the form of guns while Afrikans were still using spears, the outcome of the wars was predictable. European settlers were victorious. In fact, the last recorded war of resistance by Afrikans was led by Bhambatha ka Mancinza in 1906.

The historic mission of the liberation movement,



starting with the African National Congress (ANC) and later the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), was to repossess the land. The struggle was basically against colonialism.

But we should never underestimate the power of the dominant and ruling class. Through tools of indoctrination, including formal and informal education, religion and later the media, the struggle of Afrikan people for land and against colonial rule was sanitized. While ordinary colonisers use brutal force to control the colonised, efficient colonisers target the mind and go further to assimilate the indigenous people into the colonial structures.

With the process of assimilation in full swing, colonialism assumes relative acceptability and is seen as civilisation. The results of this process is that the culture of the coloniser becomes the dominant culture. The language of the coloniser becomes the dominant language. So is the religion.

The anti-colonial language is toned down. Little wonder that some among us refer to colonialism of Azania as 'colonialism of a special type', where the coloniser and the colonised live in the same geographic location. Colonialism is colonialism, period.

At a time when colonialism has had such a devastating effect to such an extent that Afrikans not only want to sound like Europeans but they also want to look like Europeans, as we see with people using skin lightening products to reduce their melanin content and also wearing weaves, AZAPO has an important role to provide a potent anti-colonial force that first and foremost remind Black people in general that the original script for the struggle was anti-colonial in content and form.

The anti-colonial struggle has been diluted, partly because many of the leading revolutionaries are themselves victims of colonialism. And because of this, some in the broad liberation movement have reduced our struggle for ending colonialism and the repossession of the land to a struggle for human rights. The focus shifts to racial equality – access to the same toilets and access to the same public buses and access

to beaches.

In the context of semi-occupied Azania, the focus is on remedial policies such as Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). While these policies have good intentions, they reinforce the coloniality. The colonised, who by virtue of getting colonial education, is perceived by the coloniser as having graduated from the "savage" status of the colonised to a "civilised" position, generally reserved for the colonising class. And as a reward for this transformation, the colonised is given co-management of the colonial system and he becomes its greatest defender.

When young people, inspired by Black Consciousness, call for the decolonisation of education, it is the "civilised" colonised section of the population who would be the mouth-piece of colonialism, asking: "What do they mean by colonial education? Education is education". It would be the "civilised" colonised who would be complaining about falling standards if traditional white institutions are under the control of Black professionals.

When the progressive amongst us want to remove the statues and symbols of colonialism, it is the mentally colonised who argue that those statues are part of "our" collective history. These are the people who are extremely hostile to renaming South Africa to Azania.

But the worst is when the "civilised" colonised assumes leadership in the State and implements the exact programs that were designed to keep Afrikans poor, ignorant and in conflict with one another so that the plunder of the continent should continue. Virtually all Afrika, except West Sahara, is no longer under colonial rule. But that does not mean that the colonial project has died. It may not be fashionable, but AZAPO has to continue to be the conscience of the nation. AZAPO must continue to tell the uncomfortable truth that our struggle might have delivered a vote but the struggle against colonialism and for the repossession of the land has not yet been won.

Those who want to erase colonialism from our struggle agenda should not be allowed to win. AZAPO can be trusted to keep the goals of the liberation struggle pure.