



## **COLLAPSE OF DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOLS**

In the past few weeks we have witnessed the trending of video footages on social media depicting incidents of violence in the schools across the country, particularly in the Black schools. The worst of these was the killing of a learner by a fellow learner in the Eastern Cape, and the killing of a teacher by a learner in a Dinokana School.



The collapse of discipline in schools is an indication of a failing system of education. This is evident when you hear how the education authorities and schools responded to what happened, particularly in Dinokana. Some people feel outlawing corporal punishment is to blame, whereas the Department of Basic Education puts the blame on schools for not enforcing policy of removing problematic children from schools.

What the Department is not taking into consideration is that, while on paper education is uniform, the challenges faced by a teacher in a Black school are completely different from those in a former model C

school. It is easier to apply policy in the Model C setup than in the township schools where there is a breakdown of social fabric by design. This is where drugs and alcohol were systematically introduced and imposed to compromise the social life of the Black community and the future of the children. Accordingly, applying policy in the townships may mean creating an unfriendly and dangerous environment for a teacher. This grip of fear has tended to result in schools drafting codes of conduct for the sake of compliance.

The Department should take most of the blame for what is happening in schools, as they apply policies uniformly without considering the diverse socio-economic conditions existing in the different areas. An example is their policy on staffing. Despite the fact that former Model C schools are able to supplement their staff allocation by creating School Governing Body Posts, the department requires the same practice and performance from schools that are completely under-resourced in terms of staffing. This results in over-worked teachers who, because of the developing stress, end up stepping on the toes of learners who are also from very depressing socio-economic environments.

It is the Black schools that needed to have been provided with therapists and social workers who would be reporting daily at the school to assess learner behaviour and provide educators with the necessary support. Most of the conflicts between the learners and the teachers are the results of both stakeholders coming from depressed and under-resourced communities, which are expected to implement world-class education methods such as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), to mention but one. The system as is at the moment, puts the spotlight on the Black teachers many of

whom are products of the infamous Bantu Education system. Any behaviour that is considered improper will result in the teacher being summoned to the disciplinary unit by the Department. And in many instances, teachers end up being severely punished. This results in teachers cautioning one another against caring and responsibility. This leads to the total collapse of discipline.

Sadly, the Black schools are deprived of the skills of educated and resourced parents. Such parents tend to ship their children away from the Black schools into the white suburbs schools that are better organised and resourced. This is also compounded by generations of oppression where people had no say in their destiny and well-being, but were forced to accept a situation where those in authority decided what was best for them. Participatory democracy is still a foreign concept and there seems to be no conscious effort on the part of powers-that-be to develop and inculcate a sense of active citizenry as that would breed a posse of citizens who would challenge them on their errant ways. It is in the interest of the corrupt and self-seeking captured authorities to rule over a subservient citizenry. It is no wonder to often hear a number of parents abdicating the responsibility to inculcate discipline in their children by always threatening to report their misbehaving kids to their teachers. Besides, the troublesome students that are expelled by the former Model C schools tended to be absorbed by the township and village schools.

## THE POWER OF THE VOTER

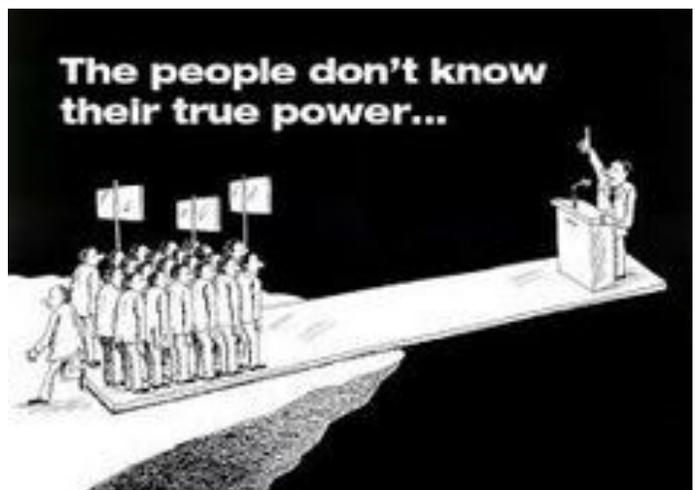
The revelations to the Zondo Commission that is probing what has become known as State Capture underscore the importance of the power of the voter. It is not sheer coincidence that the 4 major commercial banks decided to close the accounts of the Gupta-linked companies in 2016, the period that saw the ruling party losing the control of 3 major metros, including Johannesburg and Tshwane where the capital city is located.

Business people calculate risks. During apartheid, the white monopoly capital actively worked with the apartheid regime. Did they care about ethics? Not at

all. It was okay to do business and prop up the apartheid regime for as long as they were benefiting and making huge profits. And when the political power shifted from the Nats to the ANC, most businesses, including the commercial banks, adjusted and worked closely with the new political order.

It is this close relationship that developed between the banks and the ruling party that empowered senior ANC leaders to seek meetings with top executives of the banks to try to force the banks to reverse their decisions to close the bank accounts of the Gupta-linked companies. Sadly, for the ANC, the banks had made an assessment that showed that the political dominance of the ANC-led government was declining, hence the outcome of the Local Government Elections that saw a DA-led coalition running 3 Metros.

Given the rising popularity of the opposition, the banks were emboldened and felt that they could stand up to the ANC. They could see that the voters were increasingly against the dominance of the ANC; and this shift gave the banks the courage to suddenly insist on “ethical conduct”.

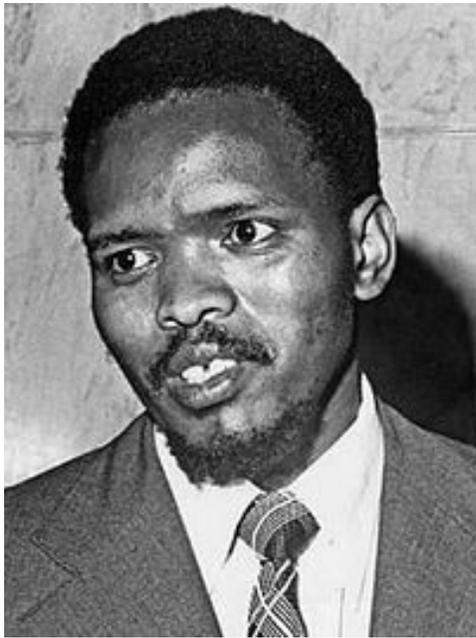


Equally, the voters were central in forcing the ANC to move against its then President Jacob Zuma. Before the outcome of the Local Government Elections the ANC was generally united behind Zuma, which explains why many attempts to remove him through the no-confidence vote failed. In fact, some of Zuma's most vocal critics were his arch-defenders in the past. But when they realised that he was costing their party votes, they dumped him.

The moral of the story is that the people get the government they deserve. We can only be oppressed to the extent that we allow the system to oppress us. As voters, we have the power to force the government to be responsive to our needs as citizens. All that we need to do as voters, is to use our vote wisely. The power is in our hands.

## BIKO DOES HAVE A POLITICAL HOME

Some within our ranks have raised concerns about the Black Consciousness renegades who have suddenly become the best champions of the cause they have deserted, to paraphrase one of our brightest stars, Cde Muntu ka Myeza. These murmurs followed a series of events, some of which were addressed by people who are outside our Movement, to commemorate the murder of Bantu Biko this month.



Before we pronounce on the correctness or otherwise of the commemoration of Biko by non-BC adherents, we should set the record straight. There is an obvious attempt by some people to divorce Biko from his Movement, the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). When Biko was murdered on 12 September 1977, he was the Honourary President of the Black People's Convention (BPC). BPC was banned on 19 October 1977, shortly after his death. AZAPO was formed about 6 months later on 28 April of 1978, as a replacement of the BPC. This is just a historical fact.

Since 1978, AZAPO has, without fail, ensured that the name of Biko and his ideas are not forgotten by our people throughout Azania and even abroad. In order to reinforce the struggle and accelerate our efforts to be free, the AZAPO leadership instructed Cde Mosibudi Mangena who had just been released from Robben Island where he had served 5 years to skip the country to help consolidate and advance our exiled wing, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA), and later our armed wing, the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA).

Our members, whether they were in the camps in Libya or in Dukwe, or in Harare; or in the townships of Ebhayi or in Langa; or Mahwelereng or Thohoyandou or Lenyenye, or Ga-Radingoana in Sekhukhune; or Soweto or Bekkersdal or Maokeng or Thabong and everywhere our members were found, we commemorated Biko and kept his political legacy alive. This came at a great cost to AZAPO and its members. Some of our members were burnt to death and their homes set alight for defending BC and the name of Biko.

We reject the attempt to make Biko just a fashion icon without a political home. While Biko is an international icon for mental liberation, he is equally a revered leader of AZAPO. We have no problem that more and more people have gone through the Damascus experience, and seem to have seen the light to embrace Biko. All we ask is that they should not remove Biko from his political organisation and home.

But perhaps more importantly, we ask that they should not just remember his death without living his ideas. For if they embraced the true BC, they would love and respect Black people. And when they do that, there shall be no more tragedies like Life Esidimeni and Marikana Massacre. They would no longer steal from the public purse to deny Black people from getting clean running water and good quality healthcare. They would increase the speed of getting Black people out of mikhukhu, thus restoring the dignity of our people. Only then will the sudden but belated embracing of Biko have a meaning. For now, it remains hollow.

## BLACK HOMELESSNESS THROUGH EVICTIONS BY BANKS

Homelessness of Black people was a regular condition that was backed up by apartheid laws and court rules in South Africa. By the time children returned from school, and parents returned from work (if they had a job), they would find their furniture and clothes thrown outside the house if they missed to pay rent for 2 or 3 consecutive months in the townships. You can imagine the shame, trauma and misery that was visited upon that Black family. That would result in some family displacement and disruption that sent the family members in different directions for shelter and survival. That was the abnormal life of a Black family that had become normal.



Black farmers and farmworkers were equally not spared this humiliation and ignominy of being evicted, at the whim of white people, from their dwellings and in places where they have worked and lived in for decades. It is disturbing to note that 24 years into democracy and under the rule of a supposedly Black political organisation, evictions of Black farmers are still rife on the farms occupied by white people. They are forcefully separated from the graves of their forebears.

There is another way in which the homelessness and the defrauding of Black people has been perpetrated by the commercial banks monopolised by white people under the collusion of the courts. On 22 March 2018 the North Gauteng High Court dismissed a challenge against the constitutionality of some court rules that allows the home of a debtor (owing person) to be sold without a reserve price. A reserve price is the

stipulated lowest acceptable price by the seller for a good being auctioned. The implication of the absence of a reserve price is that a bank can obtain a court order and sell the house (asset) at a ridiculously low price with a view of recouping what is owed to it by the debtor. The bank does not take into account what the debtor has been paying for all the years, and the difference that the debtor will still have to pay to the bank after the house is sold for next to nothing.

In the 22 March 2018 North Gauteng High Court judgment, the case involved Given Nkwane who obtained a home loan from Standard Bank in 2011 for an amount of R380 000. He had a mortgage bond registered in favour of the bank. The bank as the holder of the mortgage bond is entitled to sell the mortgaged house in order to settle the amount in arrears and still expect the homeless debtor to still pay the difference he owes the bank regardless of the lost huge amounts of money he has thus far paid to the bank. In 2013 Nkwane unsuccessfully approached the bank for a debt review. He resorted to rehabilitation where he would pay substantially less in his instalments. He still struggled to pay his instalments. The bank successfully instituted legal proceedings against Nkwane for an execution warrant. Standard Bank sold the R380 000 house that Nkwane had been paying for years for an unbelievably low R40 000. Of importance to note is that the insurable value of the house was nearly R500 000 at the time the bank threw it away to the white syndicates at R40 000.

Despite the 2017 gazetted law amendment of the court rules that made it difficult for repossessed homes to be sold at a pittance, the Nkwane judgement found that the law amendment did not render the previous court rules irrational or unconstitutional.

However, a full bench of the South Gauteng High Court ruled on 13 September 2018 that repossessed homes may no longer be sold at auction without a reserve price, which is a minimum price for which something may be sold. If the auction bidding is below the reserve price, the home will not be sold. Also, the ruling stated that the mortgaged bond may be reinstated once the arrears have been settled. AZAPO welcomes these developments, even though much more still needs to happen in favour of the homeowners.