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## THE DIS-CHEM SAGA

Our founding father, Bantu Steve Biko, once said: "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

This is profoundly true. Last week, Dis-chem made headlines when it announced that it would no longer be hiring whites in management positions.



As it was to be expected, the defenders of white privileges led by Solidarity led the charge at Dis-chem, basically accusing the company of implementing apartheid in reverse.

Dis-chem, just like the other companies that are big on talk about transformation while actually doing very little to transform, scored a major public relations exercise. It was in the news, getting all sorts of kudos for embracing transformation. But really? Is Dis-chem really committed to transformation?

Almost three decades after the dawn of democracy, we

should not be excited when a company "threatens" to fully embrace transformation and Affirmative Action. We ought to ask the obvious question. Why has it taken the company almost 30 years to accept the reality that Africans constitute more than 80% of the population and as such the company's management structure ought to reflect that reality?

As AZAPO Voice, we are of the firm view that those who designed the colonial architecture of the economy for their benefit are least qualified to be the architects of its dismantling. Put crudely, we have been naïve to think that the beneficiaries of the system that exploited Black people to the exclusive benefit of the white tribe will suddenly become champions of transformation and share their wealth with Black people.

Let us be clear. The problem of lack of transformation in the economy is not white people. The problem is our misplaced faith in white people. Somehow, some amongst us are convinced that white people have bought into this rainbow notion and they, like the Biblical Saul, have seen the light and are prepared to be part of a crusade that will right the wrongs of apartheid and settler-colonialism. How naïve of us!

We as Black people should accept a few facts. The first one is that if there is a problem faced by Black people that should be solved, the best people to solve that problem is Black people. Once we outsource the resolution of our problems to the white tribe, we should accept that at best we are delaying the resolution of the problem and at worst we are conspiring with those who do not want the problem to be solved.

As imperfect as the April 1994 deal was, it gave Black people access to political power to determine the future of this country. Black people are a majority. Being a majority and supported by State power, we should be able to chart a future that advances interests of Black people without the co-operation of white companies.

How? The State is the biggest buyer of services and goods. The State can use its buying power to force companies to embrace transformation. But more than that, it can use its buying power to support the creation of black-owned firms where executives would not be used as window-dressers to create a transformation façade.

Had the ruling party moved to implement its conference resolution on the creation of a State pharmaceutical company, we would not be pleading with white companies to accommodate black executives in their management structures.

Sadly, these companies that refuse to fully embrace transformation have Black people as their biggest category of customers. Why is it that Black people continue to support white companies that only accept black money but reject Black people?

As Biko said, the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed!

## AZANIAN REVOLUTION ABORTED

Former Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke says the South African revolution has failed. The former Deputy President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, who served 10 years for his involvement in the liberation struggle made the statement while addressing a function organised by the South African National Editors' Forum.

Moseneke lamented the state of corruption that cost billions of rands and the fact that virtually all State departments at national, provincial and local levels were unable to perform their basic tasks.

The comments made by Moseneke, who helped to craft South Africa's democratic Constitution, revives AZAPO's position when AZAPO shunned the first all-

race election in 1994, arguing that the sell-out Kemp-ton Park deal would not deliver real liberation and land to the dispossessed people. AZAPO's position was that the Azanian revolution had been aborted by secret deals reached between a section of the liberation movement and the apartheid regime. AZAPO has been vindicated. The white tribe that owned the land before April 1994 still own the land post the dawn of democracy. The descendants of the European settlers who controlled more than 90% of the economy during apartheid still control the wealth in a democracy. Black people still do not have land. Black people are still trapped in poverty. Poverty still has a Black face. It is Black people who do not have access to quality health and quality education. It is Black people who do not have basic services such as water and sanitation.



But to be honest, some of the painful wounds afflicting Black people are fresh and inflicted by members of the ruling elite. Greed has transformed comrades of yesteryear into ruthless hyenas who can even murder fellow comrades in pursuit of amassing wealth. Corruption has become institutionalised. Thieves use their money to buy votes to assume the ultimate positions in government.

The revolution has been hijacked. Instead of chasing criminals, law-abiding citizens are on the run, running away from criminals who wield State power. The morally up-right who expose corruption are silenced through the mighty power of guns.

Much as the situation is depressing, revolutionaries

should re-group and rescue the Azanian revolution. We have no other country. We do not carry two passports and as such it is incumbent upon us to rescue the revolution and make this country work, to the benefit of Black people .

## WE REMEMBER GADDAFI

Last Thursday, October 20th, marked the capture and brutal murder of revolutionary leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Gaddafi who rose to power in Libya in a bloodless coup that removed King Idris on September 1, 1969 was murdered by rebels of the Libyan revolution who were assisted by western countries that had identified Gaddafi as a threat that should be permanently removed from the surface of the earth.

Gaddafi was not just a support of the Azanian revolution. He was committed to the Azanian revolution so much that his administration trained our army, the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA) at a time when many African governments only gave moral support to our struggle.

He was a true revolutionary who was against imperialism, colonialism and Zionism. He was a great leader to his country and to the Afrikan continent.

After taking power, Gaddafi launched an agricultural revolution because he wanted his country to have food security and not to import food. Noting that his country was largely a desert, he started a huge project, the Great Man-made River. In addition to turning the desert into arable land that produced food, Gaddafi started far-reaching social programs in education and in health. The provision of education and health were free under his administration.

As part of ensuring that the resources of Libya are used for the benefit of the population and not foreign forces and the colonialists, Gaddafi deported Italians, who were part of the colonial architecture. He nationalised the oil and used the revenue to support social programs that increased the quality of life of the Libyan people.

Gaddafi was a revolutionary theoretician who had a

bigger dream of dismantling imperialism. Noting that the US dollar was the most effective tool to keep the United States economy strong, Gaddafi proposed that his oil and the oil produced in other countries should be paid in gold and not in paper money. He was against the idea that America was giving Afrikans "paper" in ex-change for a real asset, oil.



It was this proposal that sealed the fate of Gaddafi. The West backed rebels engineered his downfall and ultimate brutal killing.

His brutal murder did not only rob Afrika of one of its most loyal sons but triggered political and social instability in Libya, a country which was stable and enjoyed economic prosperity. Today thousands of Libyan people are forced to risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea on unsafe and rickety boats in search of a better life in Europe after their country has been reduced to anarchy .

## CLASS OF 2022

This week thousands of Grade 12 learners start their final examinations throughout the country. We wish them well.

They are the lucky ones. Just half of the learners who started Grade 1 with them 12 years ago, will not be sitting for the matric examination. The majority of those who drop out of school before reaching Grade 12 are black learners, mainly from poor and working-class backgrounds.

Those who are forced to drop out of school are less

likely to find a job as they will be most likely to be unskilled. Because they would swell the ranks of the unemployed, some of them will become a burden to the State as they will require social grants. Others may find themselves trapped in poverty and trying to survive in the underworld of substance abuse and crime.



The high number of drop-outs is too huge to reduce it to indolence. A democratic State should take a more active role to ensure that a higher number of our young people complete their studies so that they can become active and helpful members of society.

As for the lucky ones who have defied the odds and remain in school for at least 12 years, our wish is that they perform well so that they can stand a better chance of furthering their education at tertiary institutions.

Although a university degree or a national diploma can no longer guarantee one a job, armed with a particular qualification, one has a fighting chance of getting a job. When one has a qualification, one has a skill. If one cannot be absorbed into the labour market, one can use one's skill to earn an income.

It is in this regard that we wish all the Grade 12s well in their final examinations. They have already achieved a lot by being able to sit in the examination room.

## AZAPO FIGHTS FOR GOGO MBHELE

AZAPO Voice is disheartened to see landlessness still criminalised in AZANIA 28 years into democracy. Take

for instance the story of 82-year-old Gogo Thokozile Mbhele of Maokeng, Moqhaka Municipality in the Free State Province, who was arrested in March 2022, for building her mkhukhu on a vacant unfenced piece of land belonging to the local municipality.



Gogo Thokozile Mbhele who had applied for a house and has been on a waiting list for over 20 years could wait no more and decided to erect her mkhukhu as her home on the vacant land. The State's chilling response was to choose to treat a landless and homeless law-abiding senior citizen like a common criminal and humiliated her by placing her in the back of the police van and later in the accused box inside a packed to capacity court room where she was to be tried.

In light of AZAPO's commitment to fight for the restoration of the dignity of Black people, AZAPO got involved and dispatched its leadership and a local platoon to protest against this dastardly act. This prompted the municipality to offer Gogo Mbhele temporary shelter up until they can give her and the other community members permanent homes.

Further to this AZAPO submitted representations to the NPA petitioning them to withdraw the charges against Gogo Mbhele. As of the 20th of October 2022, we understand that the petition has received favourable consideration and the charges against Gogo Mbhele will be rescinded.