



Unit #4, Ground Floor
396 Cork Avenue
Ferndale
RANDBURG
2194
info@azapo.org.za
www.azapo.org.za
Twitter: @AZAPO_News
Facebook: AZAPO
Instagram: @azapo_1978

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 9

AZAPO WEEKLY ONLINE PUBLICATION

CIRCULATE THE RAND AMONGST BLACK PEOPLE

The biggest challenge facing the country at the moment is unemployment. More than any other thing, unemployment has a dehumanising effect on people. It turns fathers into beggars. It turns self-respecting mothers into prostitution. It contributes to the high crime in the country as many young people are on survival mode.

Of course, the long-term objective of our struggle is to liberate the people and restore their dignity, repossess our land that had been stolen by the settler-colonialists and regain ownership of our natural resources and the means of production. But the immediate task must be to respond to the crisis of unemployment.



How will AZAPO resolve the calamity of unemployment? As an organisation, AZAPO is guided by the Black Consciousness ideology. It is this ideology that teaches us that we should locate the solutions of our problems within ourselves. In other words, we should resist the temptation of begging other people to solve our problems. That is why at the height of apartheid repression and intensified liberal activism, we coined the slogan:

Phansi na mabhunu astandayo! (Down with the boers who love us)

When some in the section of the liberation movement were getting funds from the liberals, we accepted that “we are on our own” and that those who are benefiting from the system were unlikely to be the champions for the destruction of the very system that ensured their white privileges.

After the dawn of democracy, the ruling party came with concepts of Affirmative Action (AA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). The former has its roots in the United States of America where it had limited success. It worked largely because those who needed to be affirmed were a minority in a largely white majority society.

As AZAPO, we had an ideological problem with the concept of BEE. BEE was proposing that white businesspeople should accommodate Blacks and give them some minority shares in their businesses. This was extremely patronising in that it moved focus from Black businesspeople starting their own businesses.

More than 20 years ago, AZAPO developed a document to respond to the unemployment of our people and to ensure that Black people had a meaningful role in the economy. The document was titled “Stretch the Rand”.

The plan for the economic empowerment of Black people was based on the fact that Black people are by far a majority in this country. We are more than 85 percent of the population and that we should use our numerical

strength to secure economic power. How do we do this? We should support Black business in a deliberate strategy. For instance, if you need a medical doctor, consult a Black doctor. And by the way, white people do this all the time. When they need a doctor, they do not even think about it. They go to a white doctor. It is only us that shun Black doctors and go and seek medical help from white doctors.

How will supporting a Black doctor contribute to job creation? If more of us give the Black doctor more business, he will grow his operation. He will look for a bigger practice and employ more doctors. He will employ more support staff.



The Stretch the Rand Campaign also urges Black people to buy goods and services from Black owned enterprises. Again, this should be a deliberate act. Currently, it is easier for many of us to buy cabbages from a white-owned retail shop than from a Black farmer selling cabbages next to the road.

Those of us who have cars should seek out Black mechanics to have their cars fixed. The State should also pass legislation to stop insurance companies to force car owners to have their cars fixed only at "accredited" dealers. These so-called accredited dealers are nothing more than a scheme designed by white business to protect their businesses against competition.

The Stretch the Rand Campaign also emphasizes on quality. It urges Black people who are providing goods and services to ensure that they offer high quality service.

Critics of the campaign may argue that ensuring that the rand circulates in the Black community may not

necessarily grow the economy and create new jobs as we will merely be shifting money from white businesses that also employ Black people to Black businesses. So, they can argue, that the net effect on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be zero. Wrong. The Stretch the Rand Campaign is not just about buying goods and services from fellow Black people. It also calls on Black people to produce things that should be supplied to the economy. There are so many things that our country imports from other countries such as China and other European countries. This country imports basic things such as toothpicks from China. We import beef from Britain. We import chicken from Brazil. We import clothes from China, India and even Bangladesh. This ultimate aim of the campaign is to ensure that we, as a people, produce things that we need. When we do limit imports, we will stop exporting jobs and we will grow the economy and, in the process, create the much-needed jobs.

Brick by brick, we will dismantle the colonial architecture of the economy. Azania shall prevail!

LET'S COLLECTIVELY CHANGE OUR SUFFERING FOR BETTER

We may be approaching the festive season, but an average person in our country is depressed. There appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel. Our country is mismanaged. There is high frequent load-shedding of up to nine hours a day. Violent crime is on the rise. Many people still do not have drinking water. Millions are still trapped in shacks. As if this is not enough, nature has increased their suffering with floods, destroying many informal settlements, especially those erected closer to the rivers. As imperfect as it was, the political stability of the country is under serious threat. There are clear signs that the ruling party may implode.

With all these negative indicators, people are justified to pose the question: is there any hope for us as a people? As AZAPO Voice, our answer to this question is a resounding YES. There is hope for our country because we are that hope. Our Black Consciousness ideology implores us never to be victims of any situation but to be the masters of our own destiny.

In the middle of these crises, let us pause and reflect on our state of depression. We may have a weak and directionless government, but we, the majority of those who voted, voted for it without duress. So, if we are indeed not happy with the government, we should embrace the reality that through a vote, the government can be replaced.

But even before we wait for a few years before we go to the polls, there are things we can do immediately to improve our lot. It is us who run police stations. What if each and every man and woman in uniform can do his or her work diligently and with honour? What if we stop dumping police dockets like we did in Mdantsane outside Monti?



What if every nurse in every public hospital or clinic can do his or her work with honour and respect for the patients? Can you imagine the change that the behaviour of the public healthcare workers can bring in improving quality of care and service if only they can change their attitude towards the patients?

What if public workers at Home Affairs can work with diligence to end the winding queues for people who are applying for IDs and Passports? What if Eskom employees do their work and service the power stations and stop the acts of sabotage? What if they stop being agents of private contractors who make billions by supplying Eskom with diesel?

What if municipal workers can fix the water infra-

structure and ensure that there is regular supply of water? What if they just stop conniving with councillors who own water trucks that are getting contracts to supply water?

What if teachers in public schools can do their work and just teach? What if they start teaching during school hours and stop the weekend private lessons where they charge their learners an arm and a leg for the lessons they are supposed to offer in class during the week?

What if parents regain their role of being parents and stop outsourcing the upbringing of their children to teachers and the State? What if parents ensure that their children are at home at night and not in taverns, only to blame the State when something horrible happens at 3am?

What if as members of the community we expose the criminals who are making our lives horrible? What if we work with police to ensure that our areas are safer?

The truth is that if we are living in hell, each of us is playing a role in sustaining our suffering. AZAPO has a campaign titled: #Iamthesolution. It calls on all of us to do the little we can to make sure that our country works. As our founding father Bantu Biko told us, people should not just accept their suffering, they should change it.

As bleak as the situation may appear, we should know that we have the power to change any situation to what we want it to be. The power is in our hands. You are the solution!

INSULATE THE STATE'S ADMINISTRATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE

One of the key pillars that anchors political stability in a country is the strengthening of the administration of the State to autonomously run its affairs independent of the Executive. The need for the insulation of the administration from the executive became more apparent in the past few weeks when there was a real possibility of President Cyril Ramaphosa stepping down over the Phala Phala saga.

When the president resigns, the cabinet goes with him. But if there is a real separation of roles between

the executive and the administration of the State, the disruption is minimal as the directors-general who are the administration heads of the various departments can hold the fort and ensure that the State continues to function properly.



Classic revolutionary liberation movements have as one of their primary objectives the taking of control of the key organs of State. These include the security apparatus – the Defence Force and the Police – the civil service and the judiciary.

Many liberal democrats would on paper argue for the independence of the judiciary while in practice would want to control it through the appointment of judges who share their political outlook. The reason for taking control of the key organs of State are necessitated by the need to defeat the bourgeois State machinery and replace it with a revolutionary one.

However, in the context of South Africa, where the pre-colonial and postcolonial, neo-colonial set-up to be accurate, have identical economic features, the need for destruction of the colonial State is not apparent. In fact, the apparent discomfort might be the historic racial composition of the State. But now that the State is increasingly resembling the demographics of the broader population, the quest for control of the State by the ruling party may no longer be a priority.

However, the ruling party may want control of the State for different reasons. The ruling party has a deployment committee that has de facto powers to appoint directors-general and chief executive officers at the various parastatals. The argument in support of

this committee is that the ruling party should have an interest in who leads the State because the ruling party should ensure that it can control the administration to implement its policies. However, evidence at the State Capture Commission proved the deployment committee was an enabler of State Capture and corruption.

There are lessons arising from the Zondo Commission reports. One of these lessons is that there is definitely a need to insulate the administration of the State from undue influence of the Executive. Things went wrong when ministers were able to instruct their directors-general and their CEOs to aid those who had captured the State to plunder public resources. Given the power dynamics, DGs and CEOs serve on contracts designed to be linked to the term of office of the political head, it is difficult for these top bureaucrats to stand their ground as they do not want to risk losing their jobs.

It would be in our collective interest as a country if the heads of the administration are allowed to be career bureaucrats whose term in office is not linked to that of the political principal. The benefits for such an arrangement would be several. One, they will be empowered to stand their ground as they would have no fear of their contracts not being renewed should they refuse to connive with those who want to loot State resources. Two, the country will benefit from their institutional memory in that they would be in those positions for longer periods and their experience would not be lost each time there is a new political administration. Three, there will be stability in the State. Whatever changes that can happen in the Executive will have little impact in the administration of the State.

But can the current ruling party loosen its tight grip on those who run the State?