



Vol 1: Issue 35

02 June 2023

## A TALK DELIVERED BY AZAPO PRESIDENT NELVIS QEKEMA AT THE AFRIKA LIBERATION DAY RALLY AT MOSES MOLELEKWA ARTS CENTRE IN THEMBISA ON 27 MAY 2023

Greetings to the leadership of the PAC, AZAPO, A-APRP and NNLC. We extend our greetings to all Afrikans in the Continent and the Afrikans in the Diaspora. As we are gathered here to commemorate Afrika Liberation Day, we spare a thought for the millions of Afrikans that are either dying or socially displaced as a result of the sponsored wars to destabilise the Afrikan Continent.

The speakers before me have gone to town on the event's theme, which is "Imperialism and Neocolonialism Must be Destroyed! Afrikans, Stand Ready for Revolution." We all know that Kwame Nkrumah taught us that "Neocolonialism is the last stage of Imperialism". The term "imperialism" is derived from the Latin word "imperium", which means "to command", whereas the term "colonialism" is from the Latin root "colonus", which means "to farm". There you have it. The Afrikan people were under the "command" of the foreign forces which treated the Afrikan Continent and its mineral resources as a "farm" to be harvested for foreign interests.

If stripped of all the intellectual and complex articulations, imperialism and neocolonialism are systems through which a foreign political and military force hold the natives of a given country in bondage while plundering the resources of the enslaved people and their country.

If you were to ask which are the best chocolate-producing countries in the world? The Afrikans themselves would be the first to raise hands and credit European countries like Switzerland, Belgium and the US. Yet all those countries do not produce mineral cocoa beans required to produce a chocolate. The countries endowed with the mineral resource to produce chocolate are to be found in Afrika. They are Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria.

For God's sake, how is it possible that foreign countries that do not produce cocoa beans are the best producers of chocolate? The reasons for that are the result of the mental slavery that continues to chain

the minds of Afrikan leaders. There is no reason why Afrikan countries do not beneficiate the Continent's mineral resources to triple their value for the development of Afrikans and the Continent. The example of the loss of value in cocoa is true for all the minerals like gold, platinum or oil in Afrika. Their value is not reflected in the development of the Afrikan people and the Continent.

The Afrikan people have not known peace since their enslavement, first by the Arabs in the 7th century, followed by the Europeans from the 16th century. The most notorious form of slavery was the shackling and selling of Afrikans in the Atlantic slave trade. The history of Afrikan slavery at Gorée Island is well documented. That Island is located about 3.5km off the coast of Dakar in Senegal. In that overcrowded House of Slaves, the Afrikan slaves were packed like sardines. We are told that they were chained on the floor with their backs against the wall in "dark and airless cells". Relatives were separated, while young girls were also separated for sex trade to their "owners".

In that House of Slaves, there was that narrow and treacherous Door of No Return. If an Afrikan slave went past that door, they faced the prospects of dying of diseases or being offloaded to be devoured by sharks on the forced journey to foreign lands. The survival across the waters meant the slave was forever going to lose their identity and humanity. The slave assumed the name of their masters. It is the reclamation of that identity and human dignity that "Malcolm Little" changed his name to "Malcolm X" in rejection of the name "Little" and all its anti-Black culture and identity.

What we have to stress here is the fact that the enslavement of Afrikans would probably not have succeeded if it did not have an Afrikan as an ally. Apart from the direct capture of Afrikans by the European slave masters, the Afrikans were hunted by fellow Afrikans and sold to the Atlantic slave trade. Add to that the fact that the total liberation of Afrika has been slowed down or postponed by Afrikan sellouts and leaders.

The effects of slavery have almost destroyed the Afrikan being and reduced it to carbon copies of the European personality. We are euphemistically told that we are "super-sized"; and that we should go to the Eurocentric markets and buy substances that will chisel our bodies to the bone so that we could look like Europeans. Yet the music videos and other media are now beginning to embrace the Afrikan nature and showing Afrikan dancers that are in fact "normal size". In their normal size, Afrikans are generally big with large bones. There isn't much we can do about that fact of our being.

Just imagine. With those large bones of ours, we are told to walk in the most unnatural of ways. You have to walk in a way that forces you to place your leg in front of you as an obstacle. You then have to push your second leg sideways and back to avoid the obstacle leg. In this way, your second leg becomes the new obstacle. You have to repeat these movements while your hips gyrate sideways. I think they know that this ordeal might be too much for an Afrikan. To hide the injustice you are doing to yourself, you are reminded to keep smiling throughout the stunt.

As the Afrikan is being taught how to "walk", "discoveries" are made that the Afrikan natural walk is the reason why Afrikan women can balance an assortment of objects in their heads while navigating rough terrain. In the midst of all that, they can still afford to stop and share information about their households and villages. What this means is that the natural walk keeps the posture upright and normal.

In the workplaces, some Afrikans are ashamed of their fellow Afrikans. They blame them for being loud and noisy. These "embarrassed" Afrikans are apparently trying to accommodate the Eurocentric norm of speaking softly at such formal places. What they forget is that Afrikans are not loud, but audible. The reason why we have to be audible is that we usually enjoy speaking to bigger groups than to one individual. We are audible because we have nothing to hide. We don't whisper in the dark. We speak for everyone to hear and benefit. That is why an Afrikan jumps to a train or a bus and greets everyone in the coach, while the fellow passengers roar back in acknowledgement of the humane gesture. Greetings help us to spiritually connect with others. It is for the same reason that Afrikans usually don't close their home doors during the day as a sign of welcome to others. Crime has negatively interfered with this positive habit. When an Afrikan walks past a house whose doors are open, they always greet irrespective of whether or not they see someone. Whether visible or not, there is always some human or spiritual presence in a home.

We are a greeting people because we are a connecting people. In the various radio and TV talk programmes, the anchors can't cope because every Afrikan caller starts by politely greeting and finding out if all is well with you. It doesn't matter if the anchor assures them that he is well, and that they should not bother asking, they will nonetheless continue to greet and ask if he or she is well. That's because we are generally caring people. Foreign nations took advantage of our caring to enslave and oppress us. Afrikans don't have to know you to care for you. It is enough that you are a human being. Even if you were an animal or some aspect of nature, you would get no less care. That is why the attacking and harassing of fellow Afrikans in our borders is anti-Black and un-Afrikan.

We are told the universe is about 14.5 billion years old. The earth is 4.6 billion years old, and human life in the form of hominids is about 3 million years old. That human life originated in Afrika. Homo sapiens date to about 2,500 years. Many Afrikans are indoctrinated to look to Israel, Bethlehem or Nazareth when they search for the origins of humankind. Colonialism and racism have poisoned their minds to not see themselves worthy of that natural and historical honour. Yet the Cradle of Humankind or Maropeng is here in Azania, not far from Johannesburg. Afrika is not just the Cradle of Humankind, but the place of origin of great human civilisations.

We are the people of the forest, cave, mountain, river, sea, water, fire, air and space.

We are the people of the circle. There are spiritual and architectural reasons why Afrikan homes were built to be of a circular structure. There are countless scientific benefits to the circular structure. They include the aerodynamics, which make them able to withstand wild nature like strong winds and tsunamis. Incidentally, our parents kept on warning us to stay away from the (street) corners in the townships where we grew up.

Our kraals are also circular. Both the rondavel and the kraal shape our sitting arrangement as Afrikans. Even though, regimented in accordance with age, Afrikans sit at the same place in a circular formation. The reason for that is that every point is both the end and the beginning in a circle. A circle formation entrenches the values of egalitarianism. The umqombothi calabash will go round and touch every lip whether old or young, educated or uneducated. The recent health challenges tended to negatively interfere with this humane and equalitarian practice. Somehow, we are all of equal human value in a

circle. The Eurocentric architect has imposed on us the hierarchical classroom sitting arrangement with a know-all teacher in front, and the learners facing the teacher. The university lecture halls are the same.

Take a good look at the Afrikan churches and notice that they prefer to remove anything that separates their feet from the earth. They need that direct spiritual connection with Mother Earth. Notice further that they conduct their spiritual dance in a circular movement to the beat of the drum.

We are the people of the circle. We originate from the circle. We were nurtured in a circle. We are the people of the Womb, and the Womb is circular. The Earth is circular. The Moon is circular. The Sun is circular. Our life is circular. The beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning. Our spiritual life is a circular continuum.

The beat, the rhythm and the melody are a continuum that transmit our spiritual energy. We are a singing people. We sing when we are happy. We sing when we are in distress. We sing when we go to war. When the beat, the rhythm and the melody resonate, something that cannot be explained happens. Furthermore, when the three resonate with your spirit, you spiritually transform and transition into a world you've never been to. It is that same spiritual energy that gets Afrikans to confront and fight armed enemy tanks with stones. Get somebody who knows how to beat a drum and see what happens to you when the beat of the drum resonates with the spirit.

Afrikan folk songs do not have a specific composer and copyright. In some cases, there are no definite lyrics. The lead singer improvises the lyrics in accordance with the environment at that particular event. See how they dance. Most of the Afrikan dances mimic the movement of animals including the shape of the cattle horns. The importance of the cattle as an economic value can hardly be overemphasised. Even in the modern urban setup, take note of the amount of improvisation required to master the Afrikan dance. Apart from the confiscated cattle, colonialism brought along with it poverty levels that severed the Afrikan from nature and animals. The result is that our dance is beginning to steer away from mimicking the movement of animals. Our corrupted urban dance has degenerated into being crude and sexualised. Yet sex is a spiritual activity that is practised with dignity in the secrecy of our dwellings.

Imperialism, colonialism and racism negate the return of the Afrikan to their Afrikan Being. We hate and condemn our true nature and aspire to be like others. We never succeed to fully escape from Blackness, and never achieve acceptance into whiteness. The unfortunate result is a cultural identity crisis on the part of the Afrikan. While the liberation struggle is an instrument and platform upon which to develop one common culture, that struggle cannot be waged without some cultural grounding.

Thank you.