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### THE RE-AFRIKANISATION OF OUR SYMBOLS

In AZAPO and the Black Consciousness Movement as a whole, we have never accepted the name “south Africa”. To us, our country and our land is Azania. Azania is an Afrikan country in Afrika. Of course, the white settler-colonialists “denamed” it “South Africa” without any consultation with the indigenous people of the land. For centuries, Black people were dispossessed of their land, colonised and enslaved by the white settler-colonialists under the name “South Africa”. Unfortunately, the ruling party under democracy wholeheartedly embraced the colonial name “South Africa”.

Yet, the re-Afrikanisation project ought to have started with the official restoration of the name “Azania” as the true name of the land in the south of Afrika. While the fundamental premise of the re-Afrikanisation project is about the liberation of the means of creating wealth, liberating of the Afrikan symbols form an integral part of that project. The re-Afrikanisation of our symbols is of historical, cultural, spiritual and sentimental value.

The removal of the notorious face of the colonialist and racist Jan van Riebeeck from the money of this country was a positive development. However, it turns out that the face that was attributed to Jan van Riebeeck probably belonged to Bartholomeus Vermuyden, a Dutch who never set his foot on this land of Azania. Money is an important token of national pride that has a direct bearing on the country’s economy and wealth. The first banknotes of South Africa (our Azania) came into circulation in 1922 under the authority of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Before that, it was the responsibility of the commercial banks to bring notes into circulation. Of course, there were disjointed activities of paper money brought into the Cape in 1782 to service the commercial activities of the Dutch East India Company. When the colonial rule in the Cape changed from Dutch to British colonialists and the Cape was declared a British colony in 1806, the British currency was introduced into the money system.

Take note how the issue of pride kicks in when it comes to the money symbols. Once the British and Dutch colonialists saw a need to smoke the piece pipe and agreed to jointly enslave Black people and plunder the country’s resources under the auspices of the colonial “Union of South Africa”, the Rand was introduced to replace the British Pound. The Afrikaners were in such haste that they placed wrong images they thought were those of their Jan van Riebeeck.

The step in the right direction started in 1992 when Jan van Riebeeck's mistaken identity was removed and replaced with the images of the country's Big 5 animals. It was clear that the white settlers did not mind losing the monetary symbols if they kept the wealth. However, the re-Afrikanisation of the monetary symbols was a critical threshold in the liberation of wealth and its means of creation. A plausible step was yet to come within the domain of democracy. In 2012 the SARB introduced the face of Nelson Mandela, the first President of the "democratic South Africa". That smiling face was accompanied by the Big 5 animals on the reverse side of the banknotes. That was a critical step of cultural symbolism for Black people to have their own face on the money. It may have an appearance of a hollow symbolism in the beginning, but it remains a critically important step in the re-Afrikanisation project.

If the image of money is at least Black, the religious community should move with speed and liberate and re-Afrikanise the image of God. An image of a white God seems to suggest Black people lack, or are not associated with divine power. It does suggest that Black people were not there in the origination of the human species. It does mean the absence of Blackness in Heaven. Whether it is of historical or mythical significance or not, the image of God must be addressed. Those of us that are armed with Black Consciousness should lead the spiritual struggle to liberate the image of God. Perhaps we should not worry much about the white Angels because our Ancestors remain Black in the realm of our Afrikan Spirituality.

The points of entry in a country should tell a story about the history and cultural makeup of that country and its people. The tourists should have no doubt about where they are. They should not leave Europe with the hope of landing in Afrika only to find themselves in another Europe. The name of the airport and the symbols should say something about the history and the culture of the country. It is for the same reason that the Afrikaners never made a mistake of naming their airports after Manthatisi, Shiriyaadenga, Moshoeshoe, Njhaka-Njhaka, Hintsa, Nghunghunyani or Shaka.

The first airport in this country was officially opened by the "Governor-General" of the "Union of South Africa" in 1931 as the Rand Airport in Germiston. It served as an international airport. To digress a bit, those who love the name "Union Buildings" must be reminded that the "Union" was the "Union of Colonialists". From 1945 to 1952, the airport was relocated to Katlehong and was called Palmietfontein Airport. It was in fact a wartime air force base. The Jan Smuts Airport in Kempton Park was in the process of being built, and it was officially opened in 1952. This international airport was named after the Afrikaner Prime Minister of apartheid South Africa. Take note that the white settlers recognised the historical and cultural symbolism in naming the entry points of the country.

It does appear that the freedom fighters were aware of this important symbolism. As from 1994, a policy of not naming the airports of the country after human beings was implemented. Well, I hope they were not suggesting that Jan Smuts was a human being. Be that as might, The Jan Smuts Airports was renamed Johannesburg International Airport with much fanfare by the freedom fighters. What they forgot was that Johannes(burg) was another colonialist and racist name that was no different from Jan Smuts. Johannesburg was named after two colonialists – Christian JOHANNES Joubert and JOHANNES Rissik. The freedom fighters would have been able to know that had they been armed even with a little dose of Black Consciousness. Probably they realised that both Jan smuts and Johannes were not human beings, for the

policy of not naming airports after human beings was reversed to accommodate the renaming of the Johannesburg International Airport to OR Tambo International Airport on 27 October 2006.

It is interesting that the Director General of the Department of Arts and Culture who delivered the submission carrying the airport renaming details to be signed by the Minister of Arts and Culture was former AZAPO President, Cde Prof Itumeleng Mosala. The irony is that Cde Mosala delivered the submission to the Minister of Science and Technology Mosibudi Mangena, who was the Acting Minister of Arts and Culture at that time. Cde Mangena was also serving as the President of AZAPO during that time.

The re-Afrikanisation of our symbols is an important part of the liberation struggle.

You may wonder why AZAPO would welcome the introduction of Mandela's face on the country's money, as well as the renaming of the airport to OR Tambo International Airport. The answer is simple. We don't know Jan van Riebeeck, but we know Nelson Mandela. We don't know Jan Smuts and Johannes, but we know OR Tambo.