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THE AZANIAN MARTYR AND COLD JUSTICE

The coldest months in Azania are June, July, and August. That is the winter season. There isn't much happening in this season in terms of agriculture. It is a season that follows on the heels of the autumn season wherein the harvesting, storage and the sale of the crops takes place.

The cold-resistant Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) founder and AZAPO leader, Muntu ka Myeza, had just passed his autumn and was in the middle of winter when he drove down to Mangaung (Bloemfontein) for a job interview. Having been sentenced in December 1976, he was just about 8 years fresh from Robben Island where he served 6 years of his 11 years. So, he badly needed a stable job to recover from the income gap in his life.

To make sense of the income and material development in his life, you have to consider that Myeza was arrested together with his Comrades on the night of 25 September 1974. He was a tender 23-year-old political activist at the time. In his capacity as the General Secretary of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), he had been in the forefront of the organising of the Viva Frelimo Rallies, the main one of which was at the Curries Fountain Sports Ground on 25 September 1974 and attended by about 10 000 political activists. The Viva Frelimo Rallies were organised by the BCM as a political symbolism of the celebration of the Independence of Mozambique by the Azanians. The bold political statement to the Azanian masses was: if settler-colonialism could be defeated in Mozambique, it could also be defeated in Azania. As was expected, the Rallies were banned by the white settler-colonial regime. However, a defiant Myeza and his BCM militants defied the banning and proceeded with the Rallies.

To place this revolutionary fearlessness into context, we have to take into account that these young BCM warriors entered the liberation struggle when the ANC and the PAC were banned, and their leaders either in prison, in exile or killed. These fearless and selfless young leaders had to mobilise the masses and reignite the fires of the Azanian Revolution.

This morally forthright and politically consistent revolutionary was the one who could be trusted to stand in as a care-taker leader when the SASO President Themba Sono was expelled in a SASO General Council for violating the organisation's policy. This political consistency and ideological vigilance were in action

when he “workshopped” a deviating fellow Comrade with a spade on Robben Island. He was vindicated when that Comrade defected to the ANC with a tooth missing after Myeza extracted it with a “lie-detector” spade.

Myeza’s life consistency was further reflected in the fact that he arrived in this anti-Black world on the 3rd day of December in 1950, and hastily departed on the 3rd day of July in 1990. He had done the engagement related to his job appointment on the Monday of 2 July 1990. At about 20h00, Myeza called his wife Thandi and told her he would not sleep over in Bloemfontein. He would drive home to Soweto, instead. He had driven only about 40km on the N1 outside Bloemfontein when he allegedly lost control of his car near the town called Glen. His car was said to have veered to the lane of oncoming traffic before it went off road on a stretch of land for about 64 metres before it collided with an iron pole and rolled to hit embankments before it landed on its roof.

AZAPO rejected the story of an accident. An experienced and skilled driver of Myeza’s calibre could not have been tired or drowsy within 40km of driving. Worse still, there was no evidence that an oncoming traffic or stray animal interfered with his ability to control his car. In fact, the investigations conducted by AZAPO through its lawyers found no skid marks consistent with a car that was out of control. However, the big Myeza was discovered the following morning around 07h00 by a young girl Theresa Manchu. He was still moving when Theresa dashed to seek help. He took his final rest in hospital. In honour of the great Myeza, AZAPO postponed its National Council that was to be held on 7-8 July in Polokwane (then Pietersburg) and declared that treacherous July a National Month of Mourning.

In AZAPO we have never had reason to drop our reasonable suspicion that Myeza was assassinated. You would do well to remember that Myeza called his wife to alert her that he would drive through the night. There is no doubt in our minds that the call was intercepted by the enemy, which then ambushed and assassinated Myeza and later poorly stage-managed an accident scene. What made matters worse was that the postmortem had it that he could have survived if he had received medical attention within an hour of the suspect accident.

On his release from Robben Island in 1982, Myeza wasted no time and joined AZAPO to serve in various positions as the Secretary General, Projects Director and Secretary for Publicity and Information. However, the most dangerous position he fearlessly agreed to serve was the one that may have had something to do with his death. There was one unelected position in AZAPO at the time. It was the Secretary for Defence. It was not only unelected, it was also not written and exposed in the Constitution. It was a secretly appointed position. The holder of the position was a link between the political arrangement inside the country and the military arrangement in exile. It was indeed a dangerous position for anyone to hold.

As if he was foretelling the world about the circumstances of his own death, at the January 1989 funeral of AZAPO leader Dr Abubaker Asvat who died at the tender age of 39, Myeza roared: “The irony of life was that valuable people often die too early, while others live too long and even defeated heart attacks and strokes”.

Ironically, one of Myeza’s names was “Justice”. It is now 33 years since Myeza’s falling. Yet justice refuses to even wink at him. In 2012 AZAPO declared the July Month the “Myeza Month” and called for an inquest

into his death. You would have thought a democratic government would be responsive to such calls for justice. Such loud calls fell on deaf ears. Myeza's case has now become as cold as was the winter in which his life was taken. In AZAPO we vow that we will do all in our power to keep our leader's case warm. We shall not rest until Justice finds Justice.

Though addressed to the white power structures, Myeza's opinion piece published on 4 May 1987 bears political relevance even for today's democratic government. He wrote in part:

"The force of change is not to be found in the sleek cocktail parties, the comfort of suburbs or in endless seminars and symposia arranged in the high-rise rarefied atmosphere of the so-called 'island of peace' syndicates. Change lies in the streets of the ghettos prowled by ugly monsters. It lies in the hungry stomachs of workers who have nowhere to run to. Change lies in the hearts and minds of children who have learnt too many things too soon. Change lies in the anguish and torment of families torn apart by jail and migratory labour. This is the force of change that the white elections ignore. That is the force that is so potent, so misunderstood and yet so tenacious and consistent. It is this force that is equally unstoppable which the whites ignore at their peril. This force is black people..."

We have no choice but to continue to stiffen our bodies as we salute you Mzukwase, Dimbane, Mpangela, Kuthwalwa. Wena owehla ngoMzungulu, wasala wabola! Owathwala abezizwana bengekathwali! Wena kaBovumane!