

## MDC-T spools Dhlodlos and Madanhires as electoral defeat looms

Zimbabwean Politics is dynamic as Zimbabweans at home and abroad have come to appreciate. The return of ZAPU into the epicentre of the Zimbabwean body politic has not only upset those that thought they had everything in the bag in upcoming elections in which they had only one challenger, an ageing president Robert Mugabe. As ZAPU takes its rightful place in the heart and minds of Zimbabweans as the real alternative for Zimbabweans in the next elections, the MDC –T propaganda machinery has gone into panic overdrive and in the process spooling disconcerted Sibusiso Dlodlos and Nevanji Madanhires both apparently domiciled in the city of Bulawayo the headquarters of ZAPU. Nevanji Madanhires article is entitled “Take seriously calls for united front next year”; while Dlodlo’s is titled “Zapu is a party of retrogressive reactionaries”. Reading the two pieces it was not difficult to see that this was a cynical propaganda construct by the MDC-T outfit designed to downplay the revival of ZAPU in Zimbabwe and in particular hood wink the people of Bulawayo into believing that MDC-T was the only game in town.

The sad thing about unmeasured propaganda is that whilst it is often intended to present facts selectively, by lying or omission to encourage a particular synthesis, or the use of loaded messages to produce an emotionally rather than rational response to the information presented, the undesired or unintended result is a change of the attitude toward those that are spooling the unmeasured propaganda, rather than further their political agenda.

In the articles penned by a Sibusiso Dhlodlo, he opens it with an unqualified statement and says, “This article is a synoptical analogy of ZAPU as a new entrant into the political fray in Zimbabwe”. It is obvious that Sibusiso Dhlodlo has not yet mastered the art of making an assertion and then backing it up with the necessary evidence or facts. Any Zimbabwean high school history student would have corrected the writer as to the factual void sitting right in the middle of that statement before he put pen to paper.

Considering that our literacy rate is upward of 90 percent, Zimbabweans have a general grasp of the history of Zimbabwe, knowledge of our party history and the liberation struggle for that matter. ZAPU still remains the oldest liberation war party in Zimbabwe since its formation in 1961. Up until the unity accord in December 1987, ZAPU existed as an autonomous entity until it was decided by the party leadership to enter into a unity agreement with ZANU following the political problems in Matabeleland and the Midlands of which one would expect the likes of Sibusiso Dhlodlo to have a basic grasp. To make a morally bankrupt statement to the effect that ZAPU is a new entrant into Zimbabwean politics is not only mischievous, but downright foolish. ZAPU pulled out of the unity accord and resurrected its structures that have always existed and today it stands on its own as the official opposition party of Zimbabwe.

Further down his article ‘Sibusiso Dhlodlo’ makes another unqualified statement, of which he says, *“For starters, ZAPU wants to pretend it is a popular political party that has the overwhelming support of the people of Matabeleland. Save for Dumiso Dabengwa and Methuseli Moyo, the president and the spokesperson respectively, one cannot identify any other serious comrades in the ZAPU gravy train. It appears ZAPU is a personal project for Dabengwa and his hangers-on. They seem to regard in high esteem the principle of megaphone politics that seeks to hoodwink the public that they are acting on behalf of the masses yet they have no electoral mandate whatever”*

On one hand ‘Sibusiso Dhlodlo’ accuses ZAPU as being a party that wants to pretend to be a popular party that has overwhelming support in Matabeleland and then he immediately contradicts himself in the same sentence by admitting that actually the two ZAPU officials that he refers to, President

Dumiso Dabengwa and Methuseli Moyo are indeed popular leaders. President Dumiso Dabengwa and Methuseli Moyo as ZAPU officials are popular on behalf of ZAPU. How can you have an unpopular ZAPU party and popular ZAPU officials at the same time? Further to this he asserts that he cannot identify other serious ZAPU officials and that the same popular ZAPU officials “*have no electoral mandate (sic)whatever*”

Someone out there must take time out to explain to Sibusiso Dhlodlo that an electoral mandate comes from the people of Zimbabwe. The most recent mandate given to ZAPU was the mandate that elected the same ZAPU officials he denigrates and many others in Zimbabwe and in the Diaspora when ZAPU held its national congress in August 2010. The next test of this mandate will avail itself when Zimbabwe goes to the elections, possibly next year. It is then that we will see who indeed carries the mandate of the people of Zimbabwe.

More Vernon is put out by ‘Sibusiso Dhlodlo’ in a rather dogmatic manner that “*ZAPU is in need of leadership renewal....and that ZAPU is gatherings are like a forum for old people interested in sharing ancient folklore. ....*”

After reading this and the recent attempt by the MDC-T Leader Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirayi trying to pander to the people of Bulawayo by reading to business leaders at a gathering the principle of devolution, one of ZAPU’s flagship policies in the context of Bulawayo, it was obvious that MDC-T does not remotely understand what ZAPU meant when they came up with the policy of devolution. When ZAPU talks of devolution, it means the deliberate de-centralisation of power from the centre to the other cities. Not the removal of power from Harare to Bulawayo. ZAPU talks of devolution at a national scale from Harare to Karoi, Chegutu, Chitungwiza, Bindira and all Zimbabweans towns which currently are suffering under development and administrative delays as a result of power being concentrated in Harare. It is therefore ludicrous to see the likes of Tsvangirayi reading the ZAPU devolution script each time he is Bulawayo and never refers to it when he visits his home town of Buhera.

In this regard, it is easier to forgive the likes of Sibusiso Dhlodlo who believe in pointing out the speck in the eye of ZAPU and ignoring the log in the MDC-T eye. For starters, President Dumiso Dabengwa only became the substantive leader of ZAPU this year when he was elected at the party’s national congress. He has barely been in his position for than three months. Further to this the man himself has numerously been quoted on record that he has no plans to stay at the helm of the party much longer than is necessary.

A cursory examination of the leadership of ZAPU will show you that ZAPU is indeed a party that is grooming young leaders in readiness for tomorrow. The structures of ZAPU both in Zimbabwe and outside Zimbabwe are littered with young man and woman who are working hard to bring the long awaited freedom to the people of Zimbabwe. ZAPU as a party recognises the role played by the elderly and hence it is the only political party in Zimbabwe that has deliberately created an institution in the party called, The Council of Elders. It is in this institution that we have our elderly ZAPU cadres as they are a permanent source of wisdom. No other party in Zimbabwe has such an arrangement. To the contrary, MDC-T has had one president since its inception in 1999 and to date the same president has unilaterally amended the party constitution to make sure he remains at the helm even though his two terms originally agreed have passed. What sought of precedence is he setting should he ever become the State president, one wonders.

Closer to the end of his article, Sibusiso Dhlodlo, writes “*ZAPU is a group of angry people who have a tribal agenda and are driven by anger and vengeance*”. Any person with any historical and moral compass will understand that ZAPU has always been a national party that has had no regard as to

where in Zimbabwe one comes from. ZAPU was formed by James Chikerama and Joshua Nkomo in 1961. During Nkomo's detention, Chikerema was ZAPU's President. ZAPU's current leadership and membership reflects this non tribal precedence set by James Chikerema and Joshua Nkomo many years ago.

The President of ZAPU is Dr Dumiso Dabengwa, the party vice president is Amai Emilia Mukaratirwa, the national Secretary General is Dr Ralph Mguni, Bishop MaCrea Chigwedere heads the mobilisation team, Mr Cephas Muswere is the secretary for finance and Mr C Nziramasanga is the secretary for Information and Publicity and the list goes on. The national leadership of ZAPU and indeed the leadership of the provinces both in and outside Zimbabwe is a true reflection of a national party. Those that attempt to brand ZAPU as a tribal party are usually politicians that thrive on using this political tactic in power contestations. It is in fact a cynical attempt to hide their own shortcomings as to what they can do for the people of Zimbabwe. Surely, the politics of Zimbabwe should be premised on the ability to deliver a good life for Zimbabweans. ZAPU policies are premised on improving the lives of the people of Zimbabwe, not spending months on end bickering about who should be appointed Governor of this or that province, or the ambassador of this or that country as has been the case with the MDC-T outfit.

Regarding this overrated allegation of tribalism, any person who understands the demographic nature of Zimbabwe will be the first to testify that Zimbabweans are a homogenous people who pay no regard as to where one comes from. Tribalism only exists amongst politicians who have nothing to offer the people of Zimbabwe except to divide and then rule them. There has been so much inter-marriage between the original ethnic groups in Zimbabwe such that it is not a surprise at all to find a family that once lived in Rusape settled in Gwanda or a family that once lived in Lupane now settled in Bindura. There has been so much internal migration for many reasons to a point that anybody who sees tribal lines amongst the people of Zimbabwe needs their head read.

So the propaganda being spooled by the likes of Sibusiso Dhlodlo who think that by using a Ndebele pseudonym to attack ZAPU as a resident in Bulawayo would further his political agenda is not only achieving the opposite, he is campaigning for ZAPU and de-campaigning his MDC-T outfit.

This brings me to my final point. The Nevanji Madanhire article, entitled, "Take seriously calls for united front next year" . He calls on what he refers to as 'small parties' to fall behind the MDC-T Tsvangirayi outfit in the next election in order to avoid splitting the national vote. I assume if ZAPU, Mavambo, MDC Mutambara are small parties, then in his mind the bigger party must be MDC-T. We need to remind Mr Nevanji Madanhire that ZAPU is not a small party by any stretch of imagination. ZAPU was not there to contest the last March 2008 harmonised elections. ZAPU will however be there to contest nationally in the upcoming elections. ZAPU offers the people of Zimbabwe an option they did not have in March 2008 whereby the people of Zimbabwe voted against ZANU PF by voting for MDC-T and the MDC-T outfit misconstrues this to mean the people of Zimbabwe voted for them. In other words the MDC-T is in government courtesy of a protest vote by the people of Zimbabwe and the benevolence of SADC and ZANU PF.

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