

Sanity must be made to prevail in Zimbabwe – Lloyd Msipa

“We are enveloped in the politics of hate. The amount of hate that is being preached today in this country is frightful. What Zimbabwe fought for was peace, progress, love, respect, justice, equality, not the opposite. And one of the worst evils we see today is corruption. The country bleeds today because of corruption . . . Our country cannot progress on fear and false accusations which are founded simply on the love of power. There is something radically wrong with our country and we (are) moving fast towards destruction. There is confusion and corruption and let us be clear about it, we are seeing racism in reverse under (the) false mirror of correcting imbalances of the past. In the process we are creating worse things. We have created fear in the minds of some in our country. We have made them feel unwanted, unsafe.....The fear that pervades the rulers has come down to the people and to the workers” These were the words of the late ZAPU president at the funeral of Lookout Masuku on the 12th of April 1986.

The Joshua Nkomo prophesy

One would have thought Joshua Nkomo was reading into the future, if he had known the trials and tribulations Zimbabweans were to go through since he spoke these words. Following a controversial and inconclusive election result in March 2008 between Zimbabwe’s main political parties, ZANU PF lead by Robert Mugabe, MDC-T lead by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC-M lead by Professor Arthur Mutambara, Zimbabweans were subjected to a political arrangement they did not vote for, namely the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which was signed in September 2008 brokered by the then South African President Thabo Mbeki. In that agreement the parties explicitly agreed to “*dedicate themselves to putting an end to the polarisation, divisions, conflict and intolerance that have characterised our country’s politics: They undertook to build a society free of violence, fear, intimidation, hate, patronage, corruption and founded on justice, openness, transparency, dignity and equality* (Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara 21 July 2008)

A False dawn

The initial response to this government of national unity from Zimbabweans was one of excitement and a sense of relief as it was a marked departure from the politics of polarisation that had become characteristic of Zimbabwe. At last Zimbabweans could begin the hard work of reconstructing Zimbabwe without having to worry about the politics. Here we had three political parties different in their outlook and aspirations coming together into this political arrangement with a promise to put Zimbabwe first. National interest one might say.

Two years later, punctuated by numerous trips to the SADC facilitators Zimbabweans are no way better off as they had imagined. The three political parties, ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-M that signed the coalition agreement have failed to implement the full text of the agreement and therefore have failed to deliver on the promises made. The blame game is the order of the day. They say when elephants fight it's the grass that suffers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whilst the three political parties are playing the blame game, real lives are bearing the brunt of it all. Zimbabweans have been presented with yet another false dawn.

The life span of the Global Political Agreement is coming to its natural end. All the three parties have now lost any appetite to implement the text of the agreement in its fullness. The focus has now shifted to the Presidential and Parliamentary elections that are due in the year 2011. The politics of patronage that Joshua Nkomo decried have now begun to rear their ugly heads. The leaders of the three political parties are more concerned about their political survival in the oncoming plebiscite.

In the MDC-T, Morgan Tsvangirai has been reshuffling his executive as he further entrenches himself as the only leader the MDC-T will have to contend with. The MDC-T Constitution was unilaterally amended to allow him unlimited terms as the MDC-T president. Morgan Tsvangirai has now surrounded himself with politicians that are appointed by him and not chosen by the people of Zimbabwe. Welcome to the politics of patronage. Corruption is rife in the MDC-T run local government institutions with widows losing houses and residential stands to corrupt MDC-T councillors who unilaterally transfer ownerships to themselves without due process. Joshua Nkomo was right when he prophesied that the *“country bleeds today because of corruption . . . Our country cannot progress on fear and false accusations which are founded simply on the*

love of power. There is something radically wrong with our country and we (are) moving fast towards destruction". Little did Joshua Nkomo know he was talking of a future Zimbabwe?

In ZANU PF, President Mugabe has decided to present himself as the presidential candidate for his party in 2011. ZANUPF as a political party has remained bottlenecked at the top. There has been no movement at the top, hence aspiring young and capable leaders have no prospects of ascending to the party presidium and as a result many have been frustrated. One can readily point at the breaking away of Simba Makoni and the one time departure of Professor Jonathan Moyo as evidence of this growing frustration. ZANU PF has had and still has many capable leaders within its rank and file. But none are on record of having or wanting to challenge President Mugabe for the hot seat. This deafening silence lends credence to the one time statement made by former sunningdale Parliamentarian Margaret Dongo, when she referred to ZANU PF Parliamentarians as "Mugabe's wives" (her crude description of Mugabe loyalists) The generality of Zimbabweans are very great full to President Robert Mugabe as together with other nationalists including Joshua Nkomo played a pivotal role in liberating Zimbabwe. However it is time for Zimbabwe to move on. ZANU PF can not keep recycling president Robert Mugabe ad infinitum.

Cult of personality

A cult of personality arises when individuals through mass media and other means create an idealised and heroic public image through unquestioning praise and flattery. The MDC-T and ZANU PF have this in common. It is now near impossible to envisage a ZANU PF without President Robert Mugabe. It is increasingly becoming impossible to envisage MDC-T without Morgan Tsvangirai. In other words the personality has now become bigger than the institution of the party.

The danger of having a leader who is bigger than the institution they purport to represent is that they become exactly that, bigger.

Zimbabwe is a country at a cross roads. Zimbabwe is now in need of an opposition party free from personalised politics. Zimbabwe needs a new opposition political party characterised by a new approach to the Zimbabwean situation, devoid of hidden agendas. The way forward must be premised on national interest through a new Zimbabwean agenda driven by a new crop of political leaders. The way ahead must be premised on the politics of principle rather than the pursuit of power to dominate others.

We need a new political party in Zimbabwe that will contest the next plebiscite. A political party that espouses public accountability in all its endeavours. A party, whose leaders pursue a new political thinking, composed of progressive and forward looking Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe needs a political party that espouses and respects the gains of the liberation struggle and is also aware that Zimbabwe has to move on in line with the new world order.

The ZAPU rebirth

Two years ago, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) pulled out of the unity accord with ZANU PF following the refusal by ZANU PF to fully implement the full text of the agreement. ZAPU had merged with ZANU PF in 1987 in order to end the atrocities committed by the 5th brigade in Matabeleland and the Midlands.

ZAPU members were constantly being sidelined when it came to senior appointments in the united ZANU PF party. ZAPU is a once militant political party that fought in the national liberation of Zimbabwe. It was founded on the 17th of December 1961. Its founding president was Joshua Nkomo; David Parirenyatwa was the vice president. Ndabaningi Sithole was the national chairman and Robert Mugabe was the information and publicity secretary. ZAPU members convened a meeting in November 2008 and it was at that meeting that the political structure of ZAPU ceased to operate under the title of ZANU PF and it resumed the title of ZAPU. It was decided that the reborn political structure would operate under the authority of the Constitution of ZAPU.

The third way

A few days ago ZAPU held its historic congress in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. It was attended by a record 5000 delegates. It was the first congress of the new ZAPU since it withdrew from the unity accord with ZANU PF. Dumiso Dabengwa was elected ZAPU president for the next five years. Following the historic congress ZAPU has hit the ground running. Its priority areas include the promotion and respect of human rights, devolution of powers to the provinces, nation building and the rule of law.

ZAPU has come at the right time. It now gives Zimbabweans a real and third option in the political arena. ZAPU seeks to do away with the political culture whereby an individual is the political party.

ZAPU has come out streets ahead of MDC-T and ZANU PF, as it is a political party that understands and appreciates the legacy of the liberation struggle and at the same seeks to establish relations with the international community. ZAPU when elected into office among its many positive policies seeks to reduce the number of provinces in Zimbabwe from the current 10 provinces to five, namely Manicaland, Mashonaland, Masvingo, Midlands and Matabeleland. Together with its policy to devolve political power to local governments in provinces will go a long way in dealing with the challenges currently associated with under development?

ZAPU rejects the personalisation of political parties and demands that all politics must be premised on national interest, rather than the politics of plunder and domination. A ZAPU government will seek the institutionalisation of political parties in the true sense of the word. This way, political parties will compete on the political field, hence allowing the party with best developmental policies to prevail.

The re-entry of ZAPU into the political arena presents Zimbabweans with a real option instead of being stuck with an unworkable coalition government. ZAPU stands for zero tolerance on matters of corruption, no matter who the perpetrator is. Under a ZAPU government there will be no sacred cows and all judicial processes will be premised on true justice, fairness and equity.

ZAPU celebrates the diversity of our nation and rejects tribalism, nepotism and cronyism. A ZAPU government will seek to exploit the strength that comes with the diversity of our people. Exploit Zimbabwe's natural resources for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. The elections pencilled for 2011 presents Zimbabweans with an opportunity to bring back sanity in Zimbabwe.

In the words of Mahatma Ghandi, "the roots of violence and underdevelopment are a result of wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice and politics without principles"

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