

# Questions And Comments On Land Expropriation

AS a landless pensioner born in this country, I am concerned about the propaganda, polemic and economic folly perpetrated in the guise of land expropriation or worse: 'land reform'. I am particularly struck by the fact that many of the most prominent advocates are those whose ancestors have never had any land taken away from them.

Reform implies reorganisation, a new order of improvement of what is in existence. How dare Government representatives use this word while the "Odendaal farms" are disintegrating and even the farms bought by the independent State of Namibia are going to wreck and ruin? More on that score later. Surely a few questions will be permitted: Who are the 246 000 landless? Where do they come from and how will they be provided with know-how and start-up finances? What happens to those who loose their jobs in the course of expropriation?

In Zimbabwe hundreds of thousands were sacrificed to the ego of a dictator and the land was ruined. Hopefully potential donors have observed the economic folly of Zimbabwe.

Here, as well as over there, it has not been possible to keep the promises made by politicians who now employ populist methods to gain points, particularly before an election. It is frightening that foreigners are blamed for Zimbabwe's downfall, which has automatically harmed the region as a whole.

Can anyone explain why we here in Namibia expropriate well-run farms, which were tax-paying production units with large sums of money, in order to put them on the drip of the State?

At the same time millions of hectares of undeveloped communal land lie fallow, not to mention the disintegrating "Odendaal farms". The President pleads for agricultural produce and self-sufficiency. But nothing much is happening in the areas where sufficient water is available and where the largest unemployment problem looms. If knowledge and "know how" are needed, why not make use of white experts? The hated Boers are used along the Orange River where table grapes are profitably cultivated. For them water is pumped out of the boundary river in spite of the water and border

question not yet having been settled.

The half-farm Westfalen (next to Uhlenhorst) was bought nine years ago and demonstrates how taxpayers' money and investment capital are wasted. The Government bought this farm of approximately one thousand hectares with seventeen thousand citrus trees for N\$ 1.67 million since the previous owner annually harvested between 40,000 and 46,000 bags of 5kg oranges each. Mismanagement by now has 1 000 trees surviving. Cuban comrades also played a role in this sad tale. Anyone interested in observing the activities and the disintegration is invited to do so by the brother-in-law of the previous owner on the neighbouring farm.

Could one find out whether ministers and high-ranking officials who have already acquired farms also belong to the "Affirmative Action" farmers and how the farms that have been bought by now were distributed?

Once the genus "commercial farmer" has disappeared, one would then also be rid of several irritating taxpayers and producers. Then the Farm Workers Union could be dissolved and the Minister of Lands and Resettlement could take a rest thanks to his new productive farming community.

How does one explain to the amazed observer from overseas the African paradox of seeking investors on the one hand and on the other hand deterring these same investors by passing laws about Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment?

One complains about the need for qualified people while they have been discharged or allowed to emigrate - and the brain drain has not even been noticed. While hunger threatens the population of Zimbabwe, other African countries - even Nigeria - seek the knowledge and skill of white farmers expelled from Zimbabwe.

Who dares to offer an explanation for such economic folly? With such behaviour it is not surprising that in world comparisons, a number of African States will justify the metaphor of "sucking the hind tit".

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