

# 'Protect Integrity Of Family'

I HAVE chosen the form of a public letter to address family care and protection which, I believe, has not been approached with due regard to its importance by the Ruling Party and Government. The very fact that the family unit stands as a cornerstone of any human society warrants that any threat to its integrity be discussed by the concerned public if necessary.

It is hoped that this letter may introduce such a public debate and that the Party and Government stands ready to provide clarity where it might be required. If my views are grossly wrong, I would wholeheartedly welcome public feedback.

The Swapo Party is not only the wanted but indeed the beloved leader to the overwhelming majority of Namibians. That, however, does not mean everything is perfect. Obviously there are some people who experience immense apprehensions due to some things that the Party or Government does or does not do. One of such expressed apprehensions emanates from the observation that the Party and Government top leaders appear not to be strong on morality and ethics surrounding family values and is separating young spouses for extended periods.

The manner in which, and reasons for putting families asunder by way of state task allocations without any arrangements to keep such families in contact is questionable.

Spouses of any rank are separated for extended periods even up to years without their free consent. To have to choose between losing either your job promotion or your marriage is decided under duress! Families are not prepared to develop a shared commitment and pride so that the tasks given are borne by the whole family. In fact usually the seeds of

mutual distrust are sown between separated spouses. Who is to blame? Such a situation could be understood during the years of struggle for independence, but not thereafter.

The point is, the leaders do not appear to find it necessary to protect family integrity as the best investment in the future generations. Engineering or fanning tensions between men and women rather than creating conditions to find each other is not worthy of praise.

Take for example, the announcement of 50 per cent for women representation on Party and State organs. This is an important and far-reaching step that will change the balance not only of forces but also of power at organisational level and most definitely also in the household setting, the consequences of which only time can tell. Analysis of the objective reality of the situation can prove that most men or women are neither psychologically or socially prepared to absorb the full brunt of the consequences of such a courageous move. Appropriate understanding needs to be promoted and cultivated through extensive discussion and ongoing, planned education of both men and women alike so that they learn together, act together and stay together.

The Swapo Congress did not spend any time analysing the implications of such an important but involved announcement. Wide expectations have been raised for women in general to aspire to representative positions, but an air of urgency to meet the high expectations has also been created, precipitating a possible hasty appointment of women to positions they may or may not be prepared to occupy. In such a situation inappropriate reasons may find refuge.

Relations in families

may be put under strains, the strains whose validity could be brushed aside on the pretext that an urgent situation to fill the women quotas exists.

This is not to negate the advancement of women. Let no one misunderstand me on this score. But misinterpretation of empowerment has in many cases resulted in unnecessary conflicts in homes. The structure, spiritual cohesion and sanctity of the family is and will always be the only reliable basis for a peaceful, strong and learning nation. Although it appears, so far, and at the look of things that the Swapo leadership does not seem to be particularly concerned, I wish a genuine public debate and discussion could ensue with a hope to find appropriate and workable ways and means for developing all human beings in the societal set-up without disrupting the harmony is a hallmark. The truth and character and value of things cannot be seen in the things themselves but in their fruits, in their end results or in the consequences of their existence.

Who sets examples? The leaders! The best leadership is leadership by example. Now, no society conscious of preserving itself really wants to be led by people who have failed to be successful managers and negotiators in their marriages and homes. Because of the inability of these people to create unity at home they can only advance disunity and moral failure in sound families and society at large. Society unfortunately looks upon them for leadership! What do we learn from the reality that the majority of leading female personalities have the background of wrecked marriages? Is this to be the new trend?

Any seed brings forth its kind. Chicken breed chicken and eagles only eagles. Is that happening

in Namibia today? What seeds do we have around here. What is the future prospects seen through the examples of leaders we have today. Let everyone do their own research.

With regard to the reality of violence on the weaker members of society and in families: women and children, it is simply disgusting, to say the least. However, violence is a manifestation of frustration, perhaps unemployment, lack of social order, disintegrated social normative forces followed by defective upbringing, inability to adapt to change, whatever, ... but violent retaliation by the weaker would neither be the most appropriate answer.

All ills society are a manifestation of something wrong in the background of the perpetrators, namely the family life, community life or societal life. Therefore, the nucleus of the fabrics of society must be made strong if it is to be hoped that the evil will be crushed.

In as much as retaliation against those who collaborated with the enemy before independence was not considered by Swapo as a viable option for building peace in post-colonial Namibia, so will the arming of women not bring violent men to peaceful responses. However, intensive education and the creation of all the necessary conditions to advance a civil society will. This approach must include, the provision of a leadership that people can follow comfortably; a good, principled, exemplary leadership.

Last, but most importantly, it is crucial to define freedoms and rights, otherwise what is sought to be Democracy will in fact become Democracy without limits. Hypocrisy and egoistic tendencies enter under the cloak of Democracy because of the intrinsic dialects that exists at the interface of combusting Democracy and self interest. The grey area between Democracy and self interest offer extraordinary opportunities for confusion, self-delusion and self-serving opinions, given the human capacity for irrationality and ego-serving views of the world.

Therefore let every leader have the qualities and genuine disposition to protect the family as the basic societal formation. That is strategic operation for the way forward.

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