

# The Struggle Has Served Namibia Well

I AM not new to the liberation struggles of southern Africa. In fact I was born into the struggle waged by the ANC in South Africa and married into the struggle waged by Swapo in Namibia. Now, when you are born into something, it is part of you and you are part of it, not by choice but by birth. The liberation struggle was about people, land and wealth. It was about the inalienable right of people to freedom. It was about reclaiming our dignity as Africans and indigenous inhabitants of the soil of Africa. In fact the liberation struggle has been about claiming the right to deciding our own destiny as nations of Africa or at the least, having some input in such decisions. It was also about everyday "bread and butter" issues.

I am sure that anthropological experts will testify to the fact that one of the outstanding characteristics of populations is that they are not stagnant, but are constantly undergoing dynamic transformation. The aim is to ensure that this mobility is upward and forward instead of regressing.

For the masses the struggle has been about basic human rights. The right to protection, the right to food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and the right to free association. Whilst each one has to take responsibility for their own actions and life, it is the collective that has to ensure that the correct atmosphere and environmental milieu as well as systems and structures are in place to guarantee a positive contribution by the individual for the betterment of the society. Internationally it is the Breton Woods Institutions that countries adhere to and support for the sake of having workable and organised societies.

This immediately calls on the individual who has the right to be ambitious to exercise transparency and accountability. Hence the adoption of a system called democracy. The adoption of democracy does not imply the adoption of a western system, but is rather the implementation of the best workable system that

contains an assemblage of fairness and exudes a sense of national pride and a sense of worthiness and dignity to the society it serves. Democracy can be customised to suit that particular nation's needs.

The world has become a global village mainly due to the strides man has made in information technology as well as the affordability and speed with which people are able to travel from continent to continent. In my own travels I find that people have a keen interest in socio-economic and political matters on the African continent and the world at large.

What I have observed is that the populace of Africa is no longer prepared to accept any sense of embarrassment because of corrupt political leaders in their respective countries. This goes for the people's intolerance towards despotic tendencies from whatever quarter.

I have mentioned the masses and their interest when it came to the liberation struggles. However, it must not be forgotten that it has been the same masses that produced a robust and solid revolutionary intelligentsia able to interpret and practice real politics.

Having come from the masses does not necessarily assume that those with power will not be corrupted by hunger for such power. Nevertheless, these appetites are kept in check by the fact that there are others to compete with as well as the voice of the masses to contend with. The result is that the best person will then win. Owing to the ever-changing dynamics of society, leadership will also change because at the end of the day, leadership is about the people, the collective, the nation and not the individual.

The aim and art of both politics and religion is to unify people and to ensure the sustainability of that unity through service delivery. In any capitalist society, "service delivery" is a popular buzzword because the society is enticed, tempted and encouraged to consume. Financial interactions are

mainly characterised by producers and consumers and members of the population interchanging these roles. The danger here is that the majority of the population will become consumers instead of contributors.

Many times this leads to a situation where a minority of the population become very wealthy with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. The electronic media play a rigorous role in encouraging this state of affairs even through their soap operas whose emphasis is on wealth and immoral living.

The bottom line is that in order for a nation to actively engage in matters that affect its existence, the elected political and church leaders together with the bureaucrats and technocrats in both the public and private sector have to present the nation with innovative cutting edge programs that include all of society.

The last time I counted, there were forty-two countries holding elections during the year of 2004 globally. This means that there is a changing of the guard taking place in many countries including Namibia. Friend and enemy have to admit that Namibia has maintained a powerful sense of political, civil and economic stability, which together have contributed to the peace and tranquillity of the country. The Swapo leadership has proven their tenacity and political maturity over and over again when issues, which could have got out of hand, were handled with great craftiness and smartness as well. That is why it should not come as a surprise to those who understand the agenda of Swapo that the president has announced his decision to bring his tenure as head of state to a respectable, dignified closure as would be expected of any great African leader of our time. We can also rest assured that no longer being the president of the Republic does not automatically mean that it is the end of our president's political career.

In fact for me it is the continuation of a powerful career, which is

now to take another form. That of African Statesman, especially with the interesting evolution of the African Union and programs such as Nepad. It is statesmen such as our president and ex-president Nelson Mandela together with others of their generation and calibre that make us, the younger generation proud of being African.

I remain convinced that Swapo like other mass based political parties in the sub-region definitely has the interests of the nation and the country at heart. I watch with amazement how some of the media miss the whole thing when they concentrate on personalities and demonising them when the main issues go beyond the individual. The thing is that no matter how much the prophets of doom scream and shout, the people are not prepared to trust anyone with their lives and their children's future, but rather those men and women who unselfishly led the liberation struggle. Let us face it.

Service delivery for the masses and the previously disadvantaged under a Swapo government has taken place and even reshaped the landscape of the country. It is a great achievement for a community that never had running water coming out of taps to have this supplied to it. This includes electricity and roads as well as telephone lines.

The above have been the main aspects of life that the community has cried out for. The minority are concerned with tax breaks, micro and macro economic strategies and government spending which is fine, but many times the motive behind these concerns is usually self-centred. Our nation is in the process of producing a future generation where wealth will no longer be the right of only one colour, but our children, black and white will be entitled to achieve and possess wealth as Namibians.

It is an achievement when people who could never have expected anything in the past can own a piece of ground to build a house. It is an

achievement when all our children are free to attend any school and play anywhere and do not have to be subjected to early morning raids in which their parents are snatched from them. It is an achievement when the entire nation does not have to be gripped by a demonic spirit of fear because of draconian apartheid laws.

As a son of the liberation struggle and a citizen of Namibia as my adopted country and as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and an ex-UN diplomat, I would like to inform the segment of our society which has never experienced the real brunt of apartheid to desist from demonising leaders who contributed immensely to the freedom of the people of Namibia. I sense an uncomfortable anxiety among some of my indigenous Caucasian brethren. I would suggest that we all embrace this country as our collective responsibility and respect the government of the day and make a better contribution. It might be wiser for all of us to direct our energies and abilities towards sharing land and skills to achieve economic independence and satisfaction as we compete with other states for markets. It might be safer to realise that should one sink then we all sink.

Let us thank Almighty God for a country that is the envy of many countries in the world and let us commit to improve on our previous achievements. Allow me to express great respect and admiration for President Sam Nujoma and those around him for silently teaching us a lesson and having the foresight to unite the nation by having taken the step he has taken. Mr President, no one can deny that you are a great son of Africa, a founding father of this nation with its diversity. Your great legacy of hard work and high moral standards will always live on and manifest itself in the generations to come. Thank you sir for allowing a new day to dawn.

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