



SOMETHING OF VALUE

Renowned author Robert Ruark's novel "Something of Value", published in 1955, recounted the conflict in Kenya from 1952 to 1956 between the British colonial government and local Mau Mau insurrectionists intent on ending British rule. The savagery, horror and retribution that occurred in this struggle to rid the country of the British ended up in Britain departing Kenya forever. They left the black population to its own devices. Post independent Kenya set a pattern that was to emerge in other African independent states (some worse, some better), and it is a moot point, depending on whose opinion prevails, whether the replacement government was any better or worse than the original colonial administration.

It was a controversial book at the time. It was explicit in tone and content, but its main theme was that if you replace something, replace it with "something of value". The book continues to be read today and appears to have more relevance than it did at the time, before many more independent movements swept through Africa.

What "value" replaced colonialism in Africa can be discussed *ad infinitum*. But close to home, one wonders whether the antics of one Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are adding value to the South African political scenario. It can be said that were South Africa not comprising a first and third world juxtaposition, people like the EFF would not exist. Their policies and actions would be laughed out of town in any sane country. But in the ANC's third world democracy, citizens must put up with and

finance the dangerous antics of a political party that has no value whatsoever.

The EFF's clarion call of "land for the masses" resonates with millions of poor and uneducated South Africans. They are in the main "unemployables", as so often referred to by former president Thabo Mbeki. They have no skills, and they soak up the "take back the land" mantra like blotting paper. They appear to have no inkling of the history of, *inter alia*, land distribution in South Africa and indeed land distribution throughout the world during the establishment of the new world countries by the colonial powers. If they did, they would realise that former US president George W. Bush would be accused by the EFF of "stealing land" from the native Indians. In Australia the theft would have been from the Aborigines, and in New Zealand the Maories would have been the victims of colonial stealing.

This list leaves out virtually the whole of South America where native peoples were the victims of serious plunder by colonial power Spain, where whole tribes and nations were wiped out.

So how to convince the EFF they are talking nonsense? It is impossible because this "theft of land" humbug is their political comfort blanket. As well it is not enough to simply enunciate their so-called political policies. They must be heard! Noise, violence, and threatening statements are their stock in trade. They need attention!

RUPERT

The EFF's recent protest march and virulent tirades against the Rupert and Oppenheimer families reveal their leader Julius Malema's vicarious resentment at white achievement and its corollary, wealth. Compare this to the EFF's sorry record of zero achievements and its legacy. The fact that the South African media gives space and time to the ludicrous EFF is lamentable because without this publicity, the EFF would sink without trace as

a factor in SA politics. Without its message, it is nothing. It's only claim to fame is noise, rabble rousing and taking taxpayers' money in the form of parliamentary salaries.

On 6 April 2022 hundreds of EFF supporters commemorated the arrival of Dutch explorer Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape 370 years ago with an anti-colonial march to the Remgro offices of business tycoon Johann Rupert, demanding land redistribution. They showed their disdain for the arrival of white settlers in South Africa on April 6, 1652, when they said the problems of South Africa began. They demanded an independent audit report of Rupert's tax records and public disclosure of all his offshore accounts and his foreign economic interests. The EFF also demanded disclosure of the living, working and remuneration conditions of farm workers on Rupert's properties. It demanded disclosure of corporate social investments made by Rupert personally and by his entities in South African communities, in particular those around his properties.

Malema who led the march threatened an "upcoming revolution". He said poverty among black people was caused by "land ownership". "They have stolen from us", he declared. Rich white South African families were accused of being "land criminals". The tirades along these lines went on *ad infinitum*.

Says J.G. Schoeman, Coordinator of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Protection of Property Rights: "There is no stolen land in the Republic of South Africa. Julius Malema is himself the owner of various properties, luxury cars, clothing, and jewellery. He misleads his followers to march and picket and destroy until he retreats to his high-flying lifestyle, all this when his followers struggle to make ends meet."

Indeed! A recent Sunday Times picture of Malema at a Grammy awards function at a fancy Sandton venue attended by the country's black glitterati was surely not seen by the thousands of his followers who cannot afford to buy a newspaper! Event guests at the posh function were served an "amuse bouche of shiso truffle

oysters, rock shrimp, chicken yakitori and tuna tataki. The main course was Peking duck, wagyu fillet or teriyaki salmon, followed by a salted caramel fondant." Enough said!

For the umpteenth time, TLU SA reiterates that anyone who believes that their land has been stolen can approach the court with evidence of this purported theft. TLU SA has also offered a reward of R100 000 to anyone who can prove that land was stolen from them or anyone else. So far there have been no takers.

Scores of historical books and official records reveal the background of land ownership in South Africa as penned by those who had visible and first-hand experience of living South Africa's history. The EFF has no historical proof that land was stolen by the Ruperts, the Oppenheimers or any other family in South Africa, of whatever level of wealth. In law, an accusation as serious as the EFF's must be backed by incontrovertible proof. Malema and his misled followers have no proof of anything they publicly proclaim with regard to theft of land in South Africa. If they had had this proof, they would surely have produced it by now.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE DEMANDS?

What land is Mr. Malema demanding? It would appear that flourishing commercial farms are in his crosshairs. Under the ANC's land "reform" programme, the vast majority of farms handed over to beneficiaries have ceased production. More than 4 000 of these farms have been lost to South Africa forever.

Before any consideration is given to accommodating the EFF's demand for land, a questionnaire should be answered by Julius Malema with regard to his suitability as a land transfer intermediary to ensure the continuity of food supply to South Africa's 60 million people.

Question: If land is to be transferred to "his people", can he ensure that the Deeds Office will efficiently register this land to the correct beneficiary? Who will actually be the beneficiaries? Friends of the

EFF? Where will the EFF obtain the funds to maintain the land handed to the EFF at the same level of sustainability in existence at the time of transfer of ownership? Which insurance company will insure the EFF's land? Who will produce the business plan demanded by the bank to supply cash flow to run the farms, if the land is indeed farmed? Who will stand surety for the EFF with said bank?

Who will guarantee the EFF suitable prices for their agricultural and other products? And what if there are no price guarantees and the EFF must go into the market itself and take what comes? What about the current pollution of agricultural soil? Who will the EFF call upon to sort out this problem if it exists on "the people's" land? Who in the EFF will have the expertise to manage the export of its followers' land? Who is capable within the EFF to handle the intricacies of commercial farming? Where are the skills for this job if not within the EFF?

What will happen if one of the ANC's venal ministers gives a licence to an overseas exploration group to mine for some commodity on an EFF farm? Now that there is a war in the Balkans from where 40% of the world's wheat is exported, can the EFF farmers grow enough wheat to satisfy even a portion of the market in SA? If land taken from productive farmers by the EFF ceases its lucrative production of maize, where will the EFF obtain alternative maize?

What access will the EFF have to the Land Bank? And what about drought? Who will help the EFF's people survive a drought? What about land invasions from people who didn't get land from the EFF? Who will prevent invasions of land already in the hands of the EFF? What about veld fires? Stock theft? A bad winter with below freezing temperatures where stock can't survive? And rising input costs? What about pay strikes by farm workers? What about Eskom's erratic supply of electricity?

The EFF should be perusing these problems now before threatening to take land from all and sundry. It is a tightrope the EFF will have to walk.