



NOW IT'S THE LAND, AND THE ANC IS SERIOUS!

Apart from the myriad other shocks to the system South Africans have endured since the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in 1994, the degradation of the country's environment and its infrastructure has arguably been the most traumatic. Now they've moved on to their next target – land, with an emphasis on agricultural land, although they may deny it.

This metamorphosis didn't happen overnight – for a few years, those who had sold us the new South Africa, world acclaim, democracy and its corollaries: citizen representation, government accountability and the honest use of taxpayers' money, basked in the spotlight of a fulfilled promise for a South Africa with a troubled past. Nelson Mandela's legacy appeared to have embodied the realization of the dreams and hopes of millions.

Everything worked, in a fashion. Sincere whites who wanted the new dispensation to function as before continued to give their all, investment did not perceptibly flag, and the “miracle” of a peaceful transition was lauded throughout the world.

Many skilled South Africans believed they would be “needed” and “appreciated” in the ANC's new South Africa. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The biggest shock was the slowly-discerned comprehension that the ANC really didn't care about anything except staying in power, at whatever cost. Forging ahead with the goals of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), the ANC is looking to convince its hapless voters that it is land they will get, somebody else's land. That's about all they have to offer, the last refuge of a regime at the end of a rope! What has happened to other African countries where land was traded for votes is summarily ignored – minds that only know short-term planning and quick gratification are at home within this milieu of vacuous promises and clamorous demands for ever-elusive equality!

DAMNING LEGISLATION TO TAKE LAND EXPROPRIATION BILL SET TO FACE CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

Two key pieces of legislation signed off by South African parliamentary committees on Tuesday 20 September proceed in lockstep in advancing the ANC's National Democratic Revolution, posing an existential risk to South Africa's constitutional democracy, the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) has

warned. (Report Published by the Daily Friend)

Both draft laws – the Expropriation Bill, approved September 21 by the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure, and the Land Court Bill, approved by the Committee on Justice and Correctional Services – have now been approved by the National Assembly (NA). The bill must then go to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) for final approval and then assented to by the president.

The official opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) and other groups including organised agriculture intend challenging the constitutionality of the bill if it is passed by the NCOP and the president. There is hope however that this action will not be necessary if enough pressure is brought to bear before the bill is enacted.

The habitual threat of this legislation is always present, and it waxes and wanes according to elections and ANC internal policy congresses where those who want to be seen as acting on behalf or “our people” can find nothing more interesting than proposing to take someone’s land. The IRR points out, inter alia, that both these bills are central to the ANC’s political objectives as set out by a few white communists who penned the Freedom Charter many years ago. The governing party’s overarching strategic objective, the NDR, was recently re-endorsed by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the ANC’s 2022 Policy Conference, and is aimed at fundamentally altering the relationship between citizen and state by, inter alia, expropriation (of land and property) without compensation (EWC).

WARNINGS

The IRR has repeatedly warned against EWC, as well as other aspects of the Expropriation and Land Courts bills. Before repeating these warnings, it is worth noting that for either bill to pass requires a simple majority in the NA. (It should also be pointed out here that way before the IRR’s current alarm bells, others within SA’s political ambit warned scores of years ago about the ramifications of an ANC government. Now that these are upon us, many who dismissed the early alerts as the ramblings of hardliners, racists and right wing extremists are now sitting with the results of ignoring what turned out to be only too prescient.) The IRR says that blocking the bills would require all opposition parties, civil society, business and, most especially, the electorate “to unite against the assault on property rights and bring sufficient pressure to bear to induce some ANC MPs to break ranks.”

Oddly enough, most people do not support EWC, says IRR. Numerous polls over the past decade in SA have shown that most black citizens do not want to farm. They want a job, a salary and security for their families. They realize that commercial farming is not for sissies, and that there are so many variables and unknowns in the industry that successful farming – making a profit - is rare and difficult to realise.

In a recent poll, IRR found that 80% of respondents of all colours said they would prefer economic growth to EWC. Despite this and the ANC's sham of asking for citizens' input on the substance of the bills, the governing party will try and forge ahead with their lunatic scheme, despite the fact that a second Zimbabwe or even a Haiti option could be on the cards for South Africa.

The IRR drew particular attention to Section 12(3) (a) of the Expropriation Bill which allows the state to take away private property where "the owner's main purpose is to benefit from appreciation of its market value". So if somebody buys to sell at a profit this, according to the bill, makes it "just and equitable" for the state to take the property away. This is technically limited to land, for now!!

Section 12(3)(c) of the Expropriation Bill allows the state to take away private property where an owner "fails to exercise control over it". This means that if someone's home, business, farm or factory is invaded successfully, then it would be "just and equitable", according to the bill, for the state to take away the owner's title deed as well.

The fact that while Section 25 of the Constitution which the ANC failed to amend last year, should render all of these sections of the Expropriation Bill unconstitutional, it is likely to take years for the courts to settle on that, and in the intervening period people's private property stands to be expropriated by the state, with knock on effects ramifying through the economy.

Moreover the Bill defines "expropriation" in such a way as to allow the state to take private property into its "custodianship" without that counting as an expropriation. This is a technicality which aims to dodge the "just and equitable" requirements of the Constitution, since those apply to expropriations, not custodial takings.

ZIMBABWE

Despite the fact that the erstwhile breadbasket of Africa, Zimbabwe, was destroyed through land expropriation by the erstwhile president Robert Mugabe, and that it has never recovered from the rape of its farmland, the ANC once again appears to pay no heed to any realities that do not suit its ideological mindset, no matter how insane!

It is salutary to remember what Zimbabwe was when it was the old Rhodesia. The farms created by a few white settlers were judged by the United Nations in 1975 as the BEST IN THE WORLD. The first white hunters, traders and missionaries came to a land in the 19th century that was devoid of infrastructure. The wheel was not yet in use. Early travellers recorded not seeing any other human being for days. With a population of about a quarter of a million people at the time, indeed most of the land was not occupied.

Commercial farming started in the 1890s on what was, for the most part, virgin land. There were no roads or railways, there was no electricity or telephone; there were no fences, boreholes, pumps, windmills, dams, irrigation schemes;

there were no cattle dips, barns or other farm buildings.

These first farmers had to discover how to contend with predators that killed their livestock and other animals that consumed their crops; how to control diseases, pests and parasites of livestock and crops that were foreign to them. While some guidance could be drawn from South Africa, knowledge and experience built up over generations in the developed world had limited application, since the local climate, soil and vegetation were vastly different.

BREADBASKET

From this starting point, fraught with difficulties, agriculture developed faster than it had anywhere else in the world. Soon the country became self-sufficient in most agricultural products. In many cases yields per hectare and quality equalled or bettered those in the developed world. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Year Book of 1975 ranked the then Rhodesia second in the world in terms of yield of maize, wheat, soya beans and groundnuts, and third for cotton. It was indeed a veritable breadbasket!

In the combined ranking for all these crops Rhodesia ranked **FIRST IN THE WORLD**. Some of these rankings were, in fact, reached long before 1975. Rhodesia's Virginia tobacco was rated **THE BEST IN THE WORLD IN YIELD AND QUALITY**, while maize entries in world championships were constantly placed in the first three places.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST SINGLE CITRUS PRODUCER WAS DEVELOPED EARLY IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY. The highest quality breeding stock of numerous breeds of cattle was developed through breeding and selection to highly productive and respected breeds.

Wildlife was incorporated into farming systems to develop a highly successful eco-tourism industry and endangered species found their most secure havens on farm conservancies. The role of the then Rhodesian government in improving soil, building agricultural training colleges and introducing veterinary services laid the foundations for a prosperous agricultural industry, second to none. Research boards for tobacco and other crops improved crop varieties. Land was farmed according to its potential for sustainable production. Farmers provided schools, clinics and ambulance services for employees, their families and many in outlying areas who had lived from hand to mouth for centuries.

Zimbabwe is now a basket case. Starvation stalks the land. It is a travesty of democracy, sold to a hapless and ignorant populace who would believe anything if it was promised to them for free. The tyrant Robert Mugabe who was hailed as a saviour by the British and US governments, personally and vicariously destroyed agriculture in Zimbabwe, thus decimating a whole country.

There is no space here to fully recount this SA neighbour's horror story, but if civil society in South Africa does not wake up, the same scenario awaits us as tyrants masquerading as a government here will destroy more than 370 years of

hard work. They can do it in the proverbial blink of an eye. They are destroyers by nature.

Why the world sat by and watched Zimbabwe's torment is another story. But they will sit by and watch if South Africa goes down the same path. Already this country's farmers are under the sort of pressure meted out to Zimbabwe's farmers in order to terrorise them to leave the land. It worked there because the outside world, headed by the British and US governments, were determined to see the end of white rule in that blighted land. In SA today, crime is rampant. Farm murders continue unabated. There is little retaliatory action by the authorities to the terrorism that stalks our roads and our outlying areas, no accountability for stock theft and produce theft, while the vicious and retributory legislation against farmers already on our statute books is now added to and exacerbated by EWC. EWC will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. It must never come into existence.

For millions of South Africans, there is nowhere else to go. Many voted for people who cannot feed themselves, let alone feed South Africa. Farmers and others in the food chain have the power to stop the lunacy of the ANC. Those in power will listen when there's no food on the table. Do something and do it quickly. Stop the legislation with all at our disposal. There is no Plan B.