



IGNORANCE IS NOT ALWAYS BLISS, AND CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING!

CNN TV presenter and political guru Fareed Zakaria recently pontificated on the controversy surrounding the decision by US president Donald Trump to bring 59 white South Africans to his country as refugees. It takes a strong heart to leave South Africa, arguably the world most beautiful country, but they left for reasons that made sense to them. Not only is context crucial in assessing political events: cause and effect are key tenets of world history. Mr. Zakaria's ten minute litany of South Africa's "troubled" past contained every cliché in the book. There were falsehoods as well, but this has become par for the course where South Africa is concerned. The popular narrative has been set in cement and the more it is repeated, the harder it is to refute. Facts frankly mean nothing: they are dismissed as biased or fake news. Very few question that which has been set in stone for so long.

To many South Africans who live at the bottom of a blighted continent, the CNN clip was embarrassing. Surely someone like Zakaria should have carried out some background research as to why South African whites are relentlessly criticised while their genetic kin in other countries of the new world have literally gotten away with murder! White South Africans were faced with a conundrum no other white group has had to face in history! Yet the popular narrative on wicked white South Africans continues unabated. It is given currency by ignorant TV presenters masquerading as experts. Cherry-picking items to give plausibility to a story, is egregious. Combined with ignorance, it is just plain dishonest.

It is the question of land in South Africa upon which we concentrate, if only to allow some fresh air into the stale cell of the imprisoned narrative that whites "took" blacks' land.

LAND

Land in South Africa is viewed by two opposing viewpoints – the first and third worlds, the two mindsets that have clashed from the first time they met on the South African veld. Land rights are perceived as being valid by black and white for entirely different reasons – either by "occupation" or "use" on the one hand, or through provable heritage and/or Western-style written and recorded title. Land as an issue in the political "liberation" of Africa has been one of the continent's prime vote getters, with promises made to "return" land to those who either occupied or used it, notwithstanding the fact that the occupiers held no title and, more importantly, had not developed the land either agriculturally or otherwise. As well, in most cases, the "occupation" was of a migratory or temporary nature.

Black people ventured into Southern Africa from the north of the country at around the same time as the Afrikaner Voortrekkers moved into inland South Africa from the Cape.

They met around 1778. These whites' forefathers had arrived in Cape Town in 1652, just a few years after the American Plymouth Rock landing and the formation of the English settlement at Jamestown in the USA. South Africa's white settlers were no different from their counterparts in the rest of the new world, and their legitimacy cannot now be challenged any more than white settlers in America, Canada or Australia. (It is interesting that the first white settlement in Australia was in 1788 at Botany Bay, 136 years after the first Europeans landed in the Cape. How far back then is settler "legitimacy" established?)

It is important to note that in no area inhabited by blacks was there any system of individual freehold land. Tribal members only possessed usage rights within the territory of their particular group. Some land was occupied by different tribes at different times. The question arises as to how long land would have to be occupied before any legal right (in the Western sense) to the land would be established.

As in other parts of the new world, the land question created the same conundrum. None of the ancient migratory inhabitants, even those who "utilised" the land for periods of time, had title to land in the Western sense. Western law had taken priority, and land ownership had to be designated to claimants according to modern systems already existing in the rest of the world. It was a new world movement inculcating a system of regulating and controlling primitive tribes wandering through the land at will. It had to happen. What else could South Africa do? It did what everyone else was doing. It introduced legislation to bring order to chaos.

THE 1913 LAND ACT LEGISLATION

The Bantu Land Act of 27 of 1913 was designed to regulate and apportion land to the different peoples of South Africa. The Act embodied the principle of territorial segregation of black and white. It was not the Afrikaners who created and legalised this segregation – it was the British colonial government under whose rule South Africa existed at the time. Already it was obvious to the government that they were dealing with two different worlds – the subsistence cultivation of the black tribes and the commercial agriculture of Western heritage which farmed not for one day but for current and future consumption. For everyone in the country to be fed, it was impossible to continue with South Africa's third world subsistence mentality. The land available remained a constant, while the number of people who wanted to live on a little piece of ground and plant corn, far outnumbered the land available.

BLACK POPULATION EXPLOSION

The black population explosion turned the original apportionment of land on its head. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911, 11th edition, Vol. 27, p.226, the 1904 SA census showed a SA population figure of 3,495,000 blacks and 1,118,000 whites. In 1921, blacks numbered 4,697,813 and whites 1,519,468. In 1936, blacks were at 6,596,689 and whites 2,003,069. In 1960, blacks totalled 10,926,000 and whites 3,088,000. In 1996, the black population figure was 31,128,000 and whites 4,434,000. In 2024, according to Stats South Africa, the population was 63 million, of whom there were 51.5 million blacks – 81.7% of the total – and 4.5 million whites (7.2%). The percentage population increase from 1904 to 1996 was blacks – 792% and whites 297%.

In fact nobody knows how many people there are in South Africa today. Under the ANC's policy of open borders, millions of people from Africa and elsewhere have streamed into the country without control or count.

THE 1936 LAND ACT

The terms of the 1913 Act existed until 1936, when cognisance was taken of the already very obvious black population explosion. More than 6.2 million hectares were earmarked for exclusive black use. This land was purchased from mainly white farmers. This was in addition to land already designated as "historically black areas". So blacks legally obtained land after thousands of years of wandering. Given the population at the time, and given the obvious fact that blacks could not and never did farm commercially - that is efficiently and for a profit - it was considered as fair as it could be at the time. Land allocated to blacks was amongst the most fertile in South Africa, with exceptional potential and high rainfall. The quality of this good land was such that 86 ha of this land had the same potential as 126 ha of land owned by whites. The question was: what did the blacks do with this land? That was the key to intelligent land preservation and conservation. It could not be that the more the black population exploded, the more land they received, given that they did not farm commercially. It simply didn't make sense.

SOUTH AFRICA PRE 1948

Not only did the purported division of South Africa's land (the old 87% white and 13% black myth) come under Mr. Zakaria's TV scrutiny. Apartheid, the old bogeyman, has always been a mandatory target in any debate about South Africa. In the TV program, pictures were shown of policemen chasing blacks, and segregated seats in parks. (This happened in America where there was no racial threat to the whites.) The reason why apartheid was introduced in the first place was ignored. Suffice it to say, given the black population explosion, some space had to be given to whites to develop the country, which they did on all fronts. This included the elimination of disease, the provision of medical services, the creation of industries and infrastructure, education and employment, not to mention the provision of food.

Given the huge disparity between the acculturation and social evolution of the two groups, separate development was the only solution to the conundrum where two highly disparate racial groups could live together in an undivided territory.. Separate development was the only answer within the one land mass that was South Africa. Whites were prepared to provide the funds and the skills to assist blacks to develop at their own pace. The alternative, where the numbers would swamp those with the skills to make things work, was unthinkable. In the end the tragedy of one man, one vote was imposed on South Africa and the results, wholly predictable, are now here for all to see.

Black South Africans could not and cannot still support themselves. As a group they had created nothing – an empirical fact. The most important reason why Mandela's ANC refused to become part of the homeland system was that they could never have managed a homeland. They needed the whites to survive. They knew only land and cattle as assets. Their standard of living had not moved much further than the stone-age within whose ambit they had lived for thousands of years. In the early nineteenth century and even earlier, British and German missionaries recorded the African life styles they witnessed in South Africa. Some of these visitors from Europe built rudimentary schools and dwellings for the black people. Observers sent to the Cape by the British government to report on the "native tribes" (as the British put it!) found that not much had changed from centuries before.

POLITICAL DECISIONS AND THE COMMERCIAL FARMING COMMUNITY

In 1948, whites faced an election of necessity. The situation in the country was untenable. What would happen to South Africa if the swamping of the cities continued? Whites chose separate development (apartheid) as a solution: not perfect but under the circumstances, arguably the only option worth looking at. How to accommodate people of vastly different cultures and norms and levels of development in one political system? The other option on the cards was "democracy", African style, as proposed by various black political factions at the time. This was unacceptable to the people who were carrying the country and whose forefathers had built it from nothing. This discussion on South Africa's political choices is important as the question of land "need" is always used by black politicians to whip up their followers' emotions, despite the lunacy of such a policy. Black population growth is never mentioned.

The homelands were developed at a cost of millions, and thousands of white civil servants were seconded to these areas which prospered, some spectacularly. The Bophuthatswana homeland became the fourth largest economy in Africa. The ANC however rejected the homelands because they are incapable of governing themselves. They need the whole of South Africa on which to depend for their own survival.

FOOD EVERY DAY, WITHOUT FAIL.

There are 32 000 commercial farmers in South Africa: they produce 96% of the food needed to feed 65 million people every day. South Africa is not a farming friendly country – only 12% of the land is arable and only 1.5% – 2% is irrigated. The state owns around 30% of South Africa's total land surface of approximately 123 million hectares. Only 15 million hectares of South Africa's total surface is commercially cultivated. SA is a dry country with a mean annual precipitation of only 464 mm in a world average of 857mm. Sixty five percent of the country has an annual rainfall of less than 500 mm, usually regarded as the minimum for successful dry land farming. Yet South Africa's farmers produce virtually every available crop there is.

MURDERS, ASSAULTS AND FARM LOSSES

Despite their crucial role in the country's survival, SA's farmers have been the targets of ANC victimization and earmarking for assassination. They have endured punitive legislation, water pollution, crimes such as stock and harvest theft, farm invasions for dog bunts, land grabs, illegal squatting and dysfunctional local government. Third world politicians receiving generous taxpayer-funded salaries publicly call for farmers to be killed: the "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" clarion call was recently revealed to the whole world from the White House's Oval office's television set.

SA's farmers are murdered at a rate far greater than any other group outside a war zone. Many are tortured during the assaults: burnt with hot water and hot irons, cut open with machetes, and other obscenities. These are good people who provide food for the cretins who call for their deaths! From 1990 to 2024, 2302 farmers, both black and white, have been murdered in their homes. That is one farmer, his family and his farm destroyed every five days.

And nobody is punished for farm murders. Only 6.8% of murderers are convicted in South Africa for crimes across the country. Getting away with murder is a piece of cake! Murders in South Africa occurred at 74 per day in 2022. Under apartheid, the general murder rate was about 90% less than under the ANC, and farm murders were almost non-existent. The crime rate in white areas was extremely low.

LAND 'REFORM'

During the ANC's land "reform" program, millions of hectares of productive farmland were handed over to "claimants" who used some very tenuous rationalisations as proof of ownership.. More than 3 500 operational white farms were lost to production. And to this day productive farms are still handed over under this policy, and more farms are lost. The book "The Great South African Land Scandal", published twenty years ago (and still on line), reveals in shameful detail how successful farms were destroyed by ANC recipients, many of them friends of government officials who used these properties as weekend party venues.

A once successful first world country – South Africa – has degenerated into a third world example of what would have happened 60 years ago if apartheid had not been introduced. The country is rife with every third-world African government's malaise – wholesale corruption and theft, inefficiency, the placing of incompetents and party supporters into positions for which they are abysmally unsuitable, of criminal syndicates, violence both gratuitous and otherwise, a worthless police force, huge unemployment, porous borders, hard scrabble black poverty juxtaposed against the obscene wealth of the black elite. Everything the ANC has touched has turned to dust. It is time the world acknowledged a South African reality hidden for years by a devious media. It is time to set the record straight.