

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR DISCUSSION WITH MR AGGREY KLAASTE EDITOR THE SOWETAN
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When I look at Black South Africa I am beset by entirely
conflicting realisations. On the one hand I realise the extent to
which nothing that colonial invasion and conquest, racism and the
systematic oppression of Blacks by formalised racism - apartheid -
has done to us Blacks has robbed us of our ability to walk tall. We
have at times been very battered but we have never been crushed.
Everywhere there is that striking evidence of black patriots
walking tall in the knowledge of what they are doing for their
country.

On the other hand I realise the extent to which the trials and the
tribulations that are inevitable for us in apartheid society become
just too much for some. Apartheid does push many Blacks beyond all
limits of their endurance. Hope is driven out of them and they
begin developing all the dangerous characteristics of truly
desperate people. These people are probably the final victims of
apartheid.

When I look at Black South Africa in this way I must also look at
the context within which the individual Black, Mr. and Mrs. Average
and their children, either cling together in hope or break into the
snarling relationships that characterise dog eats dog. I must
think of the destruction of the wholeness of black
life and think of the terrible restrictions a new...
of Black people have to cope with.

In all this thinking and in all the emotions that I feel
for me, I want to reach out for the strong, the

committing blunders. I want political gains to

because they flow from pragmatic attacks on the
apartheid.

I am greatly cautioned in everything I do by the lessons of the past.

Africa has to teach us. I know that human beings being human
beings do what human beings do wherever they are. The social
sciences are very inexact and political science is far better in
being prescriptive than it is in being predictive. The genius of
man is to fashion order with the bits and pieces of experience and
nature which opportunity presents him. Human beings - being what
they are - tend to repeat blunders but perhaps more importantly,

human beings being what they are, are very distinguished from the rest of creation by their ability to learn from experience.

We in South Africa who will be the last on the continent of Africa to finally break away from colonialism, racism and oppression must learn from Africa. We must learn the fundamentals of political life. We must learn that unless a people are governed the way they want to be governed, there cannot be political stability. We must learn that people always blame a government of the day for their disadvantages and wherever there is spreading poverty, a government is blamed. We must learn that political victories that do not result in a better way of life for the people are empty victories.

There is no salvation for us in any ideology. There will be no manna floating down from the heavens. We are now making our own bed as we struggle against apartheid and we will have to lie in that bed. This brings me to a point that really needs to be made in South Africa today. We will yet succeed in establishing a real democracy in South Africa. We will be free. There will be a new South Africa. There will be a wholeness of life - a central South Africanism that characterises us as a people and characterises our society. This new one sovereign South Africa will have a tone and a flavour which we as a people give it as we struggle for our liberation.

The point that needs to be made in South Africa today is that this new South Africa is not going to be the hand-maiden of any political party. It is not going to be a creation of any political party. It is not going to be that which has been manipulated into being by power-mongers. The new South Africa is going to be created by the people and it will in fact be a multi-party South Africa. There can be no other South Africa.

Mr. Klaaste I have been looking forward to having this discussion with you because as a journalist - and one can add as a very senior black journalist in South Africa - you are a participating actor in the unfolding drama that exists around the intense battle for minds which is being waged. The media is used and abused, to make it either come up trumps or fail dismally to help give birth to a new and wonderful society in this country.

As a political leader I have always said that Inkatha is the one organisation doing what it is committed to do in the midst of a total struggle in which there are also other actors. I have always called for a multi-strategy approach in which each can do what each can best do in their own circumstances. I have always called for black unity on the basis of accepting the need for a multi-strategy approach which underwrites the value of the diversity of inputs which are being directed against apartheid.

In a free society different newspapers reflect different political opinions. In real democracies everybody has the right to be heard and everybody has the right to have what they believe propagated publicly for acceptance or rejection by the masses. In South

Africa we will one day have a press that is free but right now that is of course not possible. I believe that the lack of freedom of the press in South Africa has tragic consequences for the development of politics. You, Mr. Klaaste, should be able to write what you want to write. Ultimately it is the people who either buy your newspaper or do not buy it who can form their own effective censorship over your newspaper's content.

On the 19th September a column of yours appeared under the heading: "History will depend on strong black people". Who among those running for stakes in the battle for minds are being encouraged by the black press in South Africa. What role is the black press

playing to make strong black people? How does one define strong - the confrontational activists, the instigators of internecine Black-on-Black confrontations, the wild who give unfettered expression to black anger, those who reject the ideals of a non-

violent struggle against apartheid, or those from any party political camp that one may wish to name? What is being strong?

I 'wonder how blameless the black press is in the totality of the forces that attempt to upstage black strength in the make-believe world political propaganda attempts to write in the hearts and minds of the people. How strong can you be when you lack the realism to deal with real problems? How has the black press defined the real problems? How has it applauded those who do grapple with the real problems?

When there is one day the kind of democracy you and I would both welcome, I wonder how analysts would then assess the role of the black press in introducing that democracy. It seems to me that in all the annals of press history it would be a rare thing for a newspaper to halt in its editorial drive to wherever it was encouraging events to go and to admit that it was wrong. There has certainly been no evidence of that in South Africa. When I think back at the developing euphoria between 1976 and 1978 and remember the wild predictions of a government being on the run and apartheid being vanquished within a year or so, I ask myself where the press has admitted it was wrong in those years.

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For the white press not to admit that it was wrong is one thing, but for the black press not to do so is an entirely different thing. White journalists could have shrugged their shoulders and said theyâ\200\231 were wrong but would a shrug of a shoulder of a black journalist not be rejected as callous? Black journalists ought to have known better and vyet they were again participants in a developing euphoria in the 1984-86 period. When will they ever learn?

One of the things I have been looking forward to in vein |is dialogue between black journalism and political groupings about the role of newspapers in our struggle. What does the average reader

believe that Inkatha thinks about the black press? What does the average reader believe about what COSATU, the UDF, the ANC, AZAPO or the National Forum believe about the role of black Jjournalists in the struggle? There is pressure, yes. There are demands to do this or that, yes. But in the broad spectrum of things who and by what standards has the black press helped most to achieve what in South Africa? ;

I come back to the point of saying that our new South Africa will not be according to any party political design. It will not be a future fashioned by any one ideology. Our future South Africa will not be manipulated into being by any leader. It will emerge as a future authored by the people. I believe there is serious reason to say that black journalists in South Africa and the black press is doing too little to produce the new South Africa because too much is being done to support those who think they can produce a new South Africa. Let the press be a people's thing.

However let me say that in spite of all, that I have been following your writings with great interest, particularly just before you took over as Editor of 'The Sowetan' and after your took over. I have seen a boldness and forthrightness from your pen which I have at times found to be quite refreshing. If by strong people you mean people with this sort of courage, then there is hope for our country in spite of everything.

The black press has not been helpful since the seventies in building up black solidarity. By black solidarity, I do not mean being uniform. Far too many tags have been coined and repeated in our press ad nauseam which have further compounded the major problem of writing, which we Blacks face in this country. It has seemed to me that over the years black politics has revolved around who can fling the worst expletives and at whom? Those who are not in our particular political camp must be branded as 'enemies of the people'. The process once this was decided, was then to call all those with whom we did not agree all kinds of names. This was not only just character assassination for the sake of it. It was a way of making those who were vilified to be despised and hated by the people. Once this happened, violence followed between Blacks.

This lis to a great extent how black internicine conflicts have originated. It has been a case of 'give a dog a bad name and hang him'. That is how the brutal and barbaric 'necklacing' started. That lis how the murders of Councillors which were carried out so brutally with so much applause from certain sections of the African Intelligenza and from so many black political <circles started. People like Mr. Alfred Nzo, the Secretary-General of the External Mission of ANC, when asked about 'necklacing', stated that they (ANC) accepted this as a method the people at home had decided to use against collaborators' - so-called.

It was only last year in Harare that Mr. Oliver Tambo condemned this brutal method of killing political enemies as 'embarassing' to them. Yet ANC broadcasts from Radio Freedom in Lusaka, Addis Ababa and Dar-Es-Salaam urged youth in South Africa to band themselves together in order to kill all those whom they designated as 'collaborators'. This of course included just about everyone who did not embrace their strategy of violence.

Mr. Klaaste, I have been puzzled when black people who have murdered the so-called 'collaborators' have been praised as 'heroes' by very respectable black personalities in South Africa, who for the purpose of this memorandum will remain unnamed. But you do know who they are. Is this how to produce strong people? You must remember that I was myself almost murdered in Graaff Reinet in 1978 at the funeral of Robert Sobukwe. I did not see much condemnation of this in the black press at that time. I nurse no grudges against anyone about that, but I recall it as my position has not changed. A few months ago, a Mr. X at the Bethal Treason trial testified to the fact that he was sent here to Ulundi by the ANC to assassinate me. He stated in court that the only reason why he did not carry it out was that he did not find it 'convenient' to murder me at the time - whatever that means.

There is evidence that I am on their hit lists even now. However since I realise that black disunity is the biggest obstacle to our liberation, I have restrained myself from hating those of my

brothers who think that it is in the interests of the black struggle to murder me. In spite of all these threats and a vicious international vilification campaign by ANC and those who work in tandem with them, I harbour no hard feelings towards my brothers. That is why while all this is going on, I have approved efforts by my colleague Dr. O.D. Dhlomo, to talk to Mr. Thabo Mbeki and others in ANC with a view to reach some kind of rapprochement.

That is why I also agreed to the so-called Accord between Inkatha and Cosatu in the greater Pietermaritzburg area. I do believe in black unity and I do believe in bringing changes in our troubled land through non-violent means. I know that if we had a kind of

unified action as black organisations in South Africa similar to that which ZAPU and ZANU achieved through the medium of the Patriotic Front, we would already be halfway to our freedom. This is a bigger obstacle than White intransigence.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these concerns with you as a black brother. I thank you for your concern and I admire the patriotism which prompts you to do what you are attempting to do.

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