

APDUSA VIEWS

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CLAURINA MOKONE – WORTH SOMETHING IN DEATH, BUT NOTHING IN LIFE

Introduction

Claurina Mokone lived with her partner and daughter in a shack in a place called Protea South in Soweto.

On the 6th November 2002, a bomb placed on a railway line near the shack, allegedly by right wing Afrikaners, was set off and caused a piece of metal to tear a hole in the roof of the shack and to strike and kill Clairina Mokone.

In life Clairina Mokone was one of those millions of women in this country who eked out a living and was generally unknown except to her family and neighbours. In death she assumed celebrity status. For days on end the radio reported her death and the circumstances surrounding it.

Death by violent means – whether caused by taxilords using professional killers to spray passenger-filled kombis of rival operators with automatic gunfire, or by robbers or hi-jackers; by drunken and/or unskilled drivers who cause a huge carnage on our roads; or through uncontrolled anger and passion – has earned South Africa the shameful title of being the most violent country in the world.

Deaths caused by these means run into many thousands.¹ How many of these deaths make it to the newspapers and electronic media?

So what was so special about Claurina Mokone?

She is alleged to have met her death at the hands of White people, Afrikaners to boot. These days the killing of any African by a White person is viewed as a political act, a continuation of racial oppression in a new and democratic South Africa. It is also regarded as an insult, like rubbing salt in a fresh wound inflicted by the very person applying the salt.

Had Claurina Mokone been killed by an African, the overwhelming probabilities are that her death would have passed unnoticed; unmourned except by her family and friends.

In life Claurina Mokone was nothing to the politicians. Eight years into democracy and "redistribution of wealth", she did not even get one of those matchbox RDP houses. Hence she lived in a shack in a so-called informal settlement.²

At her funeral in Lesotho, the Free State MEC for Safety and Security was present. So was the South African High Commissioner in Lesotho. If it were possible for Claurina Mokone to see all the

¹ The carnage on our roads alone account for about 10 000 deaths per annum.

² The term "informal settlement" is a euphemism for the vast and gigantic slums adjacent to each city and occupied by a poverty-stricken people. These settlements have no roads, no sanitation and sewage system. There is no drainage or electricity. There is no planning and health regulations have no application. These slums are a fire-trap. A single candle handled carelessly can cause a sweeping fire which can destroy hundreds of these shacks together with the belongings of the occupants. Sweeping shack fires have become a frequent feature of these slums. Yet no steps are taken to minimise or prevent the recurrence of this scourge.

attention she got after her death, she would have been completely puzzled. WHY?? she would have asked.

Conclusion:

Why did this unfortunate person have to die, allegedly at the hands of a White, to be given recognition as a human being? How much better had she been treated as a citizeness of a young democracy and had her basic needs (like a decent house to live in) attended to?

When politicians make a big issue of the death of a homeless member of society, their motives must be carefully scrutinised. Usually, it is nothing more than a publicity stunt. Shed a few tears, make a few stirring speeches blaming the Whites.

And then it is all forgotten.

We have not heard of the government making any satisfactory arrangements for the material and spiritual needs of the motherless daughter.

It is this kind of opportunistic behaviour which makes ordinary people call politics a dirty game.

QUOTAS IN SPORT – When anti-SACOS Thieves Fall Apart

Introduction

Ngconde Balfour, the Minister of Sport and Mr Percy Sonn, the president of the United Cricket Board, were part of a gang of political assassins who were once active members of SACOS, which for long years was the sports wing of the liberation movement and at times the only political force in the arena of politics. There was a time in the history of the liberatory struggle when it alone held out for a non racial society; it alone was the uncompromising advocate of non collaboration with the ruling class and imperialism. Its slogan, NO NORMAL SPORT IN AN ABNORMAL SOCIETY, gained international renown.

SACOS was the pride of the liberatory movement and occupied an important place in the lives of the oppressed people. This was so until the ANC represented by the likes of Balfour, Sonn and Mluleki George and the unprincipled Vawda brothers decided to dishonour SACOS. SACOS, a non party political organisation was given an ultimatum – either become the sports wing of the ANC or face a massive assault on it. When SACOS, predictably rejected the ultimatum, the ANC created the notorious National Sports Congress (NSC) to destroy SACOS.

While retaining their official positions in SACOS, the political assassins went to work to undermine SACOS and to build the NSC.

This constituted yet another sordid phase in the ANC's history.

The real intention behind the assassination was to remove the interdict or moratorium on permitting South Africa to participate in international sport.

SACOS persisted in its view that until the oppressed community had the disadvantage they suffered from in the various sporting codes as a result of oppression eliminated, South Africa should not be allowed to participate in international sport. To put it differently, SACOS wanted the playing fields levelled before it could be said that there was normality in sport.

The ANC on the other hand were all out to impress the Whites; to show them that they were not blood thirsty terrorists and were quite prepared to give them the long cherished gift of participation in international sport.

Like so many other things they do, the ANC did not look beyond their noses. They did not think out the issue and the disastrous consequences of permitting White sport international participation without regard for the oppressed people's aspirations in this regard.

White sport administrators like Ali Bacher, the leader of the rebel tour organisers, made promises aplenty about developing sport among the previously oppressed communities. Gullibility shoved aside common sense and experience and the promises were greedily grasped with both hands.

Once entry in the world of international sport took place, the incentive to accelerate development in sport amongst the previously oppressed people weakened. The gap between declarations of intent and implementation grew wider by the day. The playing fields were tilted against the oppressed people and

except for certain cosmetic changes “as things were, so they remained.”

When the ANC found that Whites were not joining queues from mid night to vote for the ANC in the morning, they realized that their investment in buying goodwill from the Whites was not paying dividends, they decided to fast-track entry of black sportspersons in the national teams via the system of quotas.

No decent-minded sportsperson wants to be chosen to represent his or her country as a member of compulsory quota. For a start, others who were chosen on merit will not respect a “quota” sportsperson. The sportsperson will always have to carry the embarrassment of being a member of the South African team, not through merit alone but through the pigmentation of one’s skin. Studies in the United States of America and South Africa have shown the demoralising effect affirmative action has had on the so-called beneficiaries. Low self-esteem was a noticeable consequence. There is no reason to believe that those sportspersons who are chosen via the quota system will fare differently.

Premature Lifting of the Moratorium

The ANC has fouled up the opportunity to give sport among the oppressed the mighty boost it required to move towards the levelling of the field. This ought to have been done before the moratorium on international participation was lifted. White establishment sport would have moved heaven and earth to be able to participate in international sport.

Now it is over to the ANC government to move heaven and earth to develop the various codes of sport among the previously

oppressed people. They will have to pour money and all other resources to fast track that development.

If development of sport of the previously oppressed people is to be left to the management of the codes of sport, you will have a situation similar to the one existing in Zimbabwean cricket which having gone through over 20 years of liberation and democracy, has for all practical purposes remained predominantly white, notwithstanding the presence of black players some of whom have done fairly well.

Conclusion

The quota route is not the route to take. The correct route is development, dedication and encouragement of the playing and administering of sport by members of the formerly oppressed. This vitally important function of supervising and controlling the process of levelling the playing fields must be performed by persons of impeccable credentials of unstinting service to the cause of non-racial sport and to the cause of the upliftment of the toiling millions of this country.

Throughout this process, dignity and a sense of history must never be lost sight of. Just as portraits and statues of architects and propagators of racism can never occupy a place of pride in the lives of our people, so too those traitors like Omar Henry who betrayed the cause of non-racial sport by playing for the Whites Only teams as honorary whites. I refer to the position of pride accorded to Omar Henry – a national selector for cricket. What of the blatant racism displayed by Pat Symcox? Yet he too is a national selector.

What has happened to our sense of pride?

THE RIGHT TO REPLY

Professor Martin Prozesky responds.

In APDUSA VIEWS Number 63 which dealt with the abuse of culture by persons motivated by malice and arrogance and vengeance, we made a criticism of the views presented by Professor Prozesky in an article captioned "WHEN CULTURES CLASH" and which appeared in The Natal Witness of the 6th August 2002.

Professor Prozesky does not agree with our criticism and has set out his response which appears below:

"I believe that the fairly harsh criticisms against me personally and against my Witness article in your August 2002 issue are based on a mistaken perception of that article. You interpret it as being essentially about a particular incident in Bryanston, where cattle and sheep were slaughtered as part of a welcoming home ritual for the son of a certain Mr. Mabona, to which certain neighbours reportedly objected.

Specifically, you fault the article for speaking about one cow and not three plus the sheep and for understating the duration of the noise; secondly you fault the heading of the article in relation to this particular event; thirdly you aver that I "assume that the cause of the tension was the intolerance shown by the white residents..." and fourthly you chide me and others for allegedly not taking the trouble to visit the area and doing some first-hand checking of the facts.

Had my Witness article really been about this particular incident the first, second and fourth of these criticisms may have had some justification. But this is not what the article was all about. Certainly I refer to the Bryanston incident, but I had earlier read about a similar incident in the Free State some time ago, and had heard about a broadly similar one here in KZN. The article was based on all of these and on the general problem of sharp differences of custom that we sometimes find. The issue that formed the theme of the article was therefore exactly what the title says – the clash of cultures, not that particular incident. Far from being a misnomer, it exactly captures the substance of the article.

What I did was use a generalised statement of this sort of event in my introductory paragraphs, and then quite explicitly extend the issue into something broader and, in my view, more serious.

I have re-read my article and really do think its nature, as summarised above, is clear enough. So do a few other readers I consulted. But I know that a piece of writing can in good faith be differently interpreted, as has, I think, happened in the present case. Read the way I intended it and other readers understood it, I don't think it deserves those three criticisms you made against it.

As for the remaining criticism, viz. That I blame everything on the whites, I cannot for the life of me see what gave rise to this perception. The second half of the article especially is very much a set of suggestion to foster mutual understanding and toleration, not a one-sided apportioning of blame.

Lastly, would it be unfair of me to mention respectfully that while you are quite right to say that writers should always check their

facts for themselves, you did not do this in connection with my Witness article, to check your interpretation of it.

Thank you again for the courtesy you have shown me. I trust I have succeeded in my desire to do the same in this response.”

Editor’s Note: We are loathe to use the unfair “Last Word” and merely record our disagreement with the essence of Professor Prozesky’s response. We urge those readers who are interested in this matter to read all three articles.