

Take the A Train Malome 7-Mabone: By Mothobi Mutloatse

The people have spoken. Which people? The people in Zimbabwe's general elections. The ordinary people are the true heroes and heroines of Chimurenga – the liberation of Zimbabwe – yet again. They showed their mettle in April 1980, didn't they? Now what is delaying us people of Africa from respecting their wishes, their democratic sentiments and their aspirations? What is this dithering on our part? Why this shadow-boxing in the dark? Why can't we show some solidarity, eh? Why can't we embrace them for their bravery, their valour, their boldness, their daring? Don't they deserve this year's Nobel Peace Prize as a collective, as a nation of true grit?

I implore all African laureates, such as the Archbishop Tutu (who will be celebrating 77 years on October 7); Tata (uMadiba); Meneer FW de Klerk, bafana ba Peace; with Mme wa Peace, Kenya's Wangari Maathai; as well as literary laureates, comrades Nadine Gordimer; Wole Soyinka and Prof JM Coetzee to rally all other laureates throughout the democratic world (and even the repressed world), to join the heroic people of Zimbabwe in their new challenge: To help rebuild the Great Zimbabwe.

There is no time or resources to embark on Nuremberg-type court cases or inquisitions against the villains and human-rights violators within the defeated Zanu-PF tribal cabal. Old Smithie, the Rhodesian who would die virtually orphaned in democratic SA, was not hauled before any court for the sins and atrocities of his Rhodesian Front during the war of Chimurenga. Neither did the New SA charge the apartheid tyrant that was PW Botha, who steadfastly refused to appear before the TRC, let alone recognise it, despite the Archbishop's pleas. So, why the double standards now?

Even so, ex-teacher Malome Ro-hbaht is our brother-in-law, and an old boy of the University of Fort Hare to boot. He is married to a South African girl: Ausi Grace. Ask the people of Soweto – the people in Pimville – where you'll find some of his Mtshanas. Malume is entitled to the same treatment as Ian Smith when he left Zimbabwe for good, namely, no harassment or ridicule. Malume should be free to visit South Africa without being questioned or treated like a common criminal, even if the actions of his humiliated party in the past decade qualify as human-rights transgressions. We in South Africa gave PW Botha a state/official funeral, for goodness' sake! How hypocritical can we get?

Yes, Malume used to be our collective liberation hero. Now, all that he is – and I say this sadly – is a democratic zero. I met him once at the 1984 Zimbabwe International Book Fair in Harare. He came up to me, and not the other way around. He greeted me first, and not vice versa. He made me the envy of the other publishers around me. Why me? Don't ask me! Of course, earlier, I had published the doctoral dissertation in book form of Dr Paresch Pandya's study of Zanu-PF guerilla tactics, called *Chimurenga*.

I have nothing personal against Malome 7-Mabone (his degrees, comrades!). Actually, Uncle began his presidency with a strange philosophy then for a revolutionary leader, quaintly called: Reconciliation. He would later include yet

another ubuntuism called 'People First', which, coincidentally, would be adopted by democratic South Africa as ... wait for it – Batho Pele. Aha! So, that's where it springs from. Yaa-ma'an, so what? People First (being Zanu-PF people first). Just as in Batho (ba bangwe) Pele? Other People First? But I digress. 'Tis just a pity that Malome 7-Mabone was unable to obtain the most academic achievement of all: a PhD in Common Sense. And therein lies the rub: no such degree exists in the highest educational institutions.

Zimbabwe lies in virtual ruins in economic terms because Common Sense is in short supply. Do we still have the collective energy to rise again like the phoenix? Of course we do, if only we can place trust in ourselves as humans to invoke our inner gods to speak softly and humbly and quietly, and allow the truth be told; truth to be respected; truth to be hugged; and truth to be honoured. Did not the sages tell us that we humans are made in the image of God? Did God not speak through the voters of Zimbabwe on 29 March 2008?

Tell me I am wrong, and then I shall 'shaddap', never again to offend any human-rights violator anywhere in the world. But then, stubborn as I am as both a writer and publisher, I cannot offer that guarantee. Not when my Ndebele Khumalo cousins in Bulawayo (in the west, Matebeleland North) and Shona Bangwayo relatives in Chipinge (in the east, Manicaland) on both my maternal grandfather and paternal grandmother's sides respectively would have it.

I have blood ties to Zimbabwe, which explains the passion and earthiness of this outburst. And that is why I have a vested interest in the Rebirth of Zimbabwe, dammit. Also, because April is not only my birthday month, but the month of independence and freedom of Zimbabwe and South Africa, on the 18 and 27th respectively. See what this issue has made me do? Become agitated rather rational.

Is it true that justice is delayed, or is justice being denied? Are the Nobel Peace Prize committee and adjudicators in Norway listening? Am I too loud or too soft?

Presidential candidate Robert Gabriel Mugabe – now is the time to act honourably and timeously. Now is the time to doing the right and only thing. Now is not the time to engage in a meaningless and costly presidential run-off. The people have spoken; they said they loved your Zanu-PF less than the other parties combined. With the ruling party earning the most humiliating honour of becoming the first liberation movement to lose parliamentary majority, what more evidence do you require to realise it is all over? Avoid the Polokwane/hara-kiri route. Don't run again. Rather, take the A Train, Comrade Mugabe. In Africa, *umntu akalahlwa*, my fellow Africans.

If you love Zimbabwe more than you love yourself, ex-president Mugabe, then demonstrate to us in Africa first and shame the devil. *Swabisa satane*, Malome. Be graceful in defeat, and do the neighbourly thing.