

## ON AFROPHOBIA

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On trial and being cross-examined Biko said that “... township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood. There will be a situation of absolute want in which black will kill black to survive. This is the basis of vandalism, rape and plunder that goes on while the real sources of evil – white society – are suntanning on exclusive beaches or relaxing in their bourgeois homes”.

In the “Pitfalls of National consciousness” Frantz Fanon echoes similar sentiments and castigates the national bourgeoisie (in our case the ANC) for precipitating black on black violence. He argues that “the native bourgeoisie [ANC] which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners. The National bourgeoisie’s mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists...of being the transmission line between the nation and capitalism. It [the ANC] waves aloft the notion of the nationalization and Africanization of the ruling classes [BEE]...The working class of the towns, the masses of unemployed, the small artisans and craftsmen for their part line up behind this nationalist attitude; but in all justice let it be said, they only follow in the steps of their bourgeoisie”...“foreigners are called on to leave; their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked, and in fact the government...commands them to go, thus giving their nationals satisfaction”.

To say, the Xenophobic attacks which began in KZN last week are, in fact, a form of afro-phobia



is nothing new. After all the police minister, Nathi Nhleko, himself has asserted as much. What is however becoming clear is that it makes little sense to ignore the obvious contradiction in terming the attacks on our brothers and sisters from the continent ‘xenophobic’, whilst European foreigners go unscathed and “are suntanning on exclusive beaches”. This together with the above two quotes, perhaps, brings us closer to the way in which we, the Rhodes Must Fall movement (RMF), understand the current crisis.

Without hesitation we lay the blame for these attacks at the door of white society and its history of black oppression, subjugation and dispossession. However, a portion of the blame must be allotted to government, and in this case, particularly, the traditional body – King Goodwill Zwelithini and his statements.

How do we arrive at a conclusion that both implicates a black government and white supremacy?

Some compelling research suggests that afro-phobic attacks flare up around elections: especially in the build up towards local government elections.



Members of a given community complain to their ward councillors about the lack of employment opportunities and local government representatives, usually encouraged by provincial and national, respond with a crude cursory “you know where your jobs are, the foreigners have them”. This is a sinister ploy by government to shirk their responsibility for failing black people and not meeting needs for new economies of space, production, and housing. King



Goodwill Zwelithini – who falls within the gambit of the department for co-operative government and traditional affairs – made some untenable remarks whose consequences we have perhaps yet to fully appreciate. He at once betrays his lack of political education and understanding of who is a foreigner, who is a settler and which group has caused us blacks any problems. We maintain that is impossible for an Afrikan to be a foreigner on Afrikan soil.

Nonetheless, it would be naïve of us to read the king’s statements and the concomitant, lackadaisical, government posture as mere ignorance. The phenomena whereby “xenophobic” attacks rear its ugly head whenever strides are made to resolve the national question or address historical questions of white privilege and black suffering – inequality – is suspicious. In the least it warrants analyses.

Black on black violence and the contorted reality of black life has its genesis in white society and white supremacy. So as not to misdiagnose black people’s problems it is important to pay attention to Biko’s indictment of white society. He argues that their white wealth is created on the back of black poverty. He charges that “the real sources of evil” - in this

case, afrophobia – are white society. A society that through the strategies of apartheid colonialism has impoverished blacks materially and has gone on to do so psychologically. It has managed to convince black south afrikans that their souls are not their own and that they are in fact, not Afrikan. That is, black South Africans fear/attack fellow Afrikans but serve white society with an ingratiating docility without compunction.

**TO BE CLEAR, we unequivocally condemn the acts of violence and anti-immigrant sentiment, but do so with the wisdom to recognise that, indeed, victims have become killers.**

We do not condemn the people who have committed these heinous acts of violence against our own brothers and sisters but rather condemn white society and its implicit bodyguard – an ANC/DA government. **TO BE CLEAR, we unequivocally condemn the acts of violence and anti-immigrant sentiment, but do so with the wisdom to recognise that, indeed, victims have become killers.**

#### **WAY FORWARD**

Ours will be to campaign student to student, organisation to organisation and door to door and proclaim that the architects of black dispossession and misery are white society and white minority capital. That black misery and white privilege are being maintained by a compradorial black government which continues to sell out black people and their desires for 30 pieces of silver.

Down with Afrophobia down!  
Decolonise Now!  
Azania will rise!

In struggle,  
Rhodes Must Fall