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The Restoration Drum Today: Mthwakazi Restoration Agenda and The Politics of the Principles of Restoration

The month of September and November are very important months in the calendar of the Mthwakazi Nation. September the 10th is the King Mzilikazi Remembrance Day while the 4th of November is the Commemoration of the Battle of Bembesi (Gadade) against white settlers and the evils of colonialism in Matebeleland. Therefore, yesterday, Mthwakazi in her multitudes descended at Mhlahlandlela to remember King Mzilikazi who died on this very day. Reliable reports and pictures trending in social media point to the fact that the day was a success.

Today and this week I am particularly interested in the examination of the Restoration Concept in a much broader and deeper way than it is superficially understood by its adherents, attention-seeking and cowboy detractors and indeed its enemies. We need to explore its key principles that must provide an overarching framework for its understanding, advancement and implementation. The King Mzilikazi Remembrance Day and Gadade Commemorations will be visited in one of the key principles of Restoration that will be explained later. For now our next stage is to examine the Concept of Restoration and its broader meaning.

The Concept of Restoration

We all know that Restoration is about recovering and restoring that which has been lost or bringing back into existence that which used to exist but is no longer there or is there but in bad shape. It is therefore about repairing damaged things and putting them back into originality. The repairing of such items also includes cleaning them and ensuring they do not have rust that has built over years on them. The aspect of cleaning and removing rust adds the concept of quality in that which is restored. There is no doubt that quality of a restored item is lost if it is not cleaned and made presentable. This is what Restoration is about. Anything other than this falls far short of the meaning of Restoration. But Restoration of such an item needs one to have full knowledge about the item and indeed the skills and tools of repairing and restoring such an item. These are very crucial for the repairer in order for the repairer to do a good job of repairing and restoring the item. Any lack of understanding and knowledge about the item and lack of competent skills and necessary tools to repair and restore the item is bound to damage the item further rather than restore it. Therefore, Mthwakazi's Restoration Agenda needs all the ingredients above to be a successful adventure. But are we all on the same page when we talk of Restoration? It does not appear so and therefore there is a great need to harmonise thinking and ideas around the concept of Restoration as well as a need to ideologically deal with the attention-seeking and cowboy detractors and critics of the Restoration Agenda.

The Principles of Restoration

The Restorationists and interested parties and indeed its cowboy detractors and critics need to understand Restoration in its broader meaning rather than in a myopic and narrow minded way. This leads us to the proposed principles of Restoration that should guide the Restoration Movement and its

noble Restoration Agenda and act as framework for tangible progress for the Nation of Mthwakazi. The principles are Individual Psychological Restoration, Family Unit Based Restoration, Community Based Restoration, Commemoration Based Restoration, Cultural Restoration and Nation State Restoration.

Earlier in this piece, we discussed in detail what Restoration means in terms of Restoring that which is lost and damaged. We have identified the key principles of Restoration concerning Mthwakazi. What must be noted is that each principle feeds into the other and vice versa and the culture principle provides an overarching foundation for all the principles. It runs through all of them.

It must be stated unequivocally that the agents of various damages to Mthwakazi Nation that are leading to Mthwakazi's demand for Restoration are largely externally induced. To a certain extent Mthwakazi has its own agents that work against it and are driving a massive dagger through Mthwakazi's palpitating heart! That is however a debate for another day.

We are all aware of the factors that are causing Mthwakazi's demise but they still deserve special mention. White colonialism and its destructive occupation outcomes is a big elephant in Mthwakazi's room. The liberation war against colonialists in the late 60s and throughout the 70s had its destructive and traumatic outcomes for Mthwakazi, although aiming to free her from the shackles of white colonialism.

The third biggest elephant in the house remains Gukurahundi Genocide and the black occupation of Mthwakazi by Zimbabwe. White colonialism, Gukurahundi and black tribal colonialism that we experience today have always sought to annihilate Mthwakazi, damage Mthwakazi beyond repair and Restoration and it is these ills that the Restoration Movement seeks to confront in order to Restore our Motherland. It is therefore incumbent on us to look at each principle and interrogate its meaning, discuss what has been lost and what needs to be restored.

Individual Psychological Restoration Principle

First and foremost, we all know that without individuals there are no families, communities, societies and Nations to talk about. The individual is indeed the cornerstone of any families, communities, societies and Nations. The individual is therefore the biggest tool and agent of all these units. The way the individual thinks lead to their behaviour and their actions. White colonialism and black colonialism have always targeted the individual to damage their way of thinking in order to change their behaviour and their actions to suit their colonialist framework. Therefore the individual must be the most important target for the Restoration Movement to reverse the enemy fashioned way of thinking, behaving and acting. If not, any attempt by the Restoration Movement to advance the Restoration Agenda, falls flat on its belly.

So what do we mean by Individual Psychological Restoration for Mthwakazi? What has the individual lost in Mthwakazi psychologically? What does the Restoration Movement need to recover and Restore in an Mthwakazi individual's mind? What exactly is the politics of the mind in this principle?

Any mentioning of psychology means that we are talking about the mind and the way people think. The way people think influences the way they behave and act on those thoughts. And this is very fundamental. Equally trauma brought by war and genocide has the biggest impact in influencing how individuals think, behave and act. Therefore if one wishes to change the way the people act and behave one has to change their thought patterns for transformational change to occur and in this case Restoration Transformational Change.

The symbols brought in by the oppressors to the oppressed have a big impact on the way people think, behave and act. The media, the music, the religious churches, the language and culture that the occupier brings have clear aims and motives to change the oppressed's way of thinking, behaving and acting and replace the three with its own mode of operation.

When colonialism grew its horns in 1894, it brought with it its white values and customs and culture that were largely taken up by us. We all know that we lost a significant chunk of our core values, customs, language, religion, cultures and our general developmental trajectory.

We all know that 1980's independence merely replaced white colonialism with black colonialism. Colonialism only changed hands and colour but continued on the war path of psychological damage to our people. Therefore the central argument is that Matebeleland has had a double whammy of psychological damage from white colonialism and black tribal occupation since 1894 up to the present day.

Both white colonialism and black colonialism have constantly destroyed our individual confidence, self-worth, self-esteem and indeed pride and replaced these with self-doubt, poor self-esteem and poor confidence, poverty of principles and to some extent cowardice.

The enemy also uses the politics of negative labeling to destroy its oppressed and its oppressed ends up accepting these negative labels as normal. This is the normalization of negative labelling from the oppressor by the oppressed and the triumphalist victory for the oppressor. Uzwa bethi asenzi njengabo no matter how wrong what they are doing is. Uzwa bethi amaNdebele kawasebenzi angamavila and yet the enemy denies our people opportunities to work and prove themselves. Uzwa bethi amaNdebele ngompondo kayintshintshwa and yet the enemy prevents you and me to work and be self-sufficient and look after our families. Uzwa bethi amaNdebele are violent uMgabe ulungile. Ubuye uzwe bethi amaNdebele kawafundanga and kawafuni ukufunda and yet the enemy has put in place a system that makes their negative labels come true. All these labels are churned out by our oppressors to damage the way our people think, behave and act and indeed eventually they accept these labels and be the preachers of these labels amongst them. The individual becomes a danger to the Nation and an agent of the system in the way they think, behave and act! Tragic!

The safeguarding of our values (Ubuntu, meritocracy, honesty and integrity), customs, language, religion and culture at individual level have been found wanting. The individual in Mthwakazi has become the weakest link. He has abandoned these fundamentals in favour of those of his oppressors thereby threatening our existence and identity as a people.

The Restoration Movement must therefore seek to Restore the way Mthwakazi people think, behave and act about themselves and their families, communities and indeed the Nation. The Psychological Principle of Restoration of our values, customs, religion, language, culture and identity must therefore start at individual level psychologically. We must seek to Restore the way our people think, behave and act about themselves to how they used to before. If we Restore the way they think about themselves, restore their confidence, self-esteem and pride about their identity and culture then we are bound to further the ultimate goal of Restoration of Mthwakazi as a State. There is therefore a huge task for the Restorationist Movement to shift the geography of our people's thinking towards the Restoration of the Mthwakazi values, customs, religion, language, culture and indeed the state of Mthwakazi. The thinking must shift (via education, 1:1 /group deep discussions with our own on these issues, giving our own narrative with our own media, music, celebrating our culture as a people) to them identifying themselves as uMthwakazi people rather than Zimbabweans. Such thinking will change their behaviour and the way they act. They will no longer think, behave and act as Zimbabweans but think, behave and act as uMthwakazi who is proud of her origins and identity.

There is a lot of work to be done with psychological restoration but great progress has been made. More work needs to be done through supporting programmes that appreciate Mthwakazi National symbols, music that sings about our culture, our history and our lived life experiences and indeed supporting our media that seeks to narrate our own story. These projects need to be supported inside Matebeleland and internationally. However we must acknowledge that good work is happening in this area and it is still work in progress. This work cannot wait for the Nation State Restoration. It must be implemented with agency by the Restoration Movement.

The family is a cornerstone of any community and society and Nation indeed and the next principle under consideration is the Family Unit Based Restoration Principle.

Family Unit Based Restoration Principle

uMthwakazi has lost the very important and fundamental values, customs and the structures that strengthened and safeguarded family units. Marriage is now being despised. Having children out of wedlock has become fashionable. Children no longer have any respect for parents and their families. Men no longer respect their wives and vice versa. Divorce has become fashionable. Family units are largely broken. Our cultural fabric has been and continues to be broken. OMamazala sebezola laboMkhwenyana or vice versa. The 1979 Grand Plan stipulating the impregnating our sisters and abandoning them has caused havoc. Gukurahundi left many family units broken. The latest technology has not helped either and the family unit is under attack. The Restoration Movement must therefore champion in innovative and modern ways the Restoration of Mthwakazi values, customs and cultures that will mend our broken family units. It must champion the values of Ubuntu and the Restoration of Ubuntu through programmes that address these shortcomings. In doing so, the Restoration Movement must restore and modernize its strategies on dealing with these key issues at family level. A strengthened family unit is a basis for a strengthened Community and a strengthened Nation. But it is not enough to Restore, mend and strengthen the family unit alone. Our local communities need

Restoration big time. What then does Community Based Restoration Principle mean and how can the Restorationist Movement advance it in our local communities.

Community Based Restoration Principle

Communities flooded with weak family units are usually weak communities. Communities flooded with strong family units will be strong communities. There is a lot of damage in our communities that have been brought by white colonialism, Gukurahundi and current black occupation. These border on social, health (both mental and physical), economic, cultural and local development issues. This is where the Restoration Movement must come in and carry out Community Based Restoration Projects ranging from social, health, and economic enterprise, cultural and religious spheres. Therefore, those who argue that the Restoration Agenda is a pie in the sky must be proved wrong by the Restorationist lobby. The lobby must go directly to the people and work with them. The Restorationist Movement must repair schools, clinics and support empowerment projects in local communities. The Restorationists must fight for the employment of locals in their local communities.

Individual Psychological Restoration cannot take place if individuals in their communities are not benefitting from their communities in order to benefit their families. Family Unit Based Restoration cannot happen when family members are unemployed and are wallowing in abject poverty. Poverty destroys individuals, families and communities and in turn societies and in turn Nations. Restorationists need to go directly to the people and start working with them in advancing the Restoration Agenda. The enemy will try to block these programmes but people power is the greatest insurance we have. This is where the battle has got to be fought with the enemy and won. We must confront the enemy peacefully with our programmes for the people. We must exploit people power for the defence of their Restoration Programmes in local communities. We must play the game of chess and play it very well.

Nations have National symbols, History and National Figures and events that characterise the soul of such Nations. These National symbols, history and historical figures and events give each nation its unique character and identity. Mthwakazi Nation is no different but what is different is that white colonialism and current black colonialism have always sought to delete our symbols, history and historical figures from our narrative and replace them with their symbols, history and events in order to destroy the soul and the character of this great Nation. All these influence how people think, behave and act and any damage to them brings a significant threat to the existence of a Nation. Our next discussion involves the Commemoration Restoration Principle and the importance of public Memorization in Mthwakazi.

Commemoration Based Restoration Principle

Commemoration based Restoration is one of the most significant principles of the Restoration Agenda. It is about the commemoration of history and historical figures in our Nation. All Nations do it. Mthwakazi has been slow but is catching up soon. Yesterday we had the King Mzilikazi Day conducted at Mhlahlandlela. This event has been going on for some few years now. Gadade, that is the Bembesi Battle against colonialism, is in November and will be commemorated soon. There are also Battles such as the Tshangani and Phuphu Battles that need commemoration.

There is virtually no nation in the world that does not celebrate its history and historical figures. There is no Nation that does not celebrate and or remember its wars. Mthwakazi has been too slow to pick up on this. Commemoration restores and re-affirms self-worth, identity, confidence and pride in individuals, families, communities and Nations and its future generations. It is a strong weapon of all the principles of Restoration and must be weaponised to drive the Restoration Agenda forward. But who should lead the commemorations? Is it the Ndunas? It is none other than a chosen King. Therefore commemoration restoration needs a King to lead the events. The restoration of the Kingship and the role of the King is therefore fundamental. Matebeleland needs a King soon. King Lobhengula disappeared (if not killed by whites) during the destruction of our Kingdom due to white colonialism and settlers prevented the installation of another King. We need the Restoration of His Royal Majesty to be the head-figure of culture and to lead commemoration events. This is long over due.

The Restorationists must begin to work on Projects of Commemoration in Matebeleland with a sense of urgency. Restorationist must Restore symbols that matter in the character of local communities and the Nation. For example Bulawayo has no statues of King Mzilikazi and King Lobengula and yet it has a statue of Nkomo. The work on original Capital Bulawayo must be under the hands of Restorationists as a National Symbol that is very important. The date of its burning must be turned into a Public Memorization Day and be etched in the National character of the Nation. Local buildings, education centres and many other structures must be named after our key Traditional Institutions. The so called National University of Science and Technology (NUST) must be Mhlahlandlela University of Science and Technology (MUST) or Bulawayo University of Science and Technology.

Media and music must play a pivotal role in producing narratives and songs that nurture the Commemoration Restoration Principle. Indeed what we see (symbols), what we hear and feel (music) has the greatest impact in the way we think, behave and act. It is the reason why the colonialists have always sought to obliterate our music, TV Drama, Radio Stations, newspapers, traditions and customs and our artists. Where are Majaivana and other Mthwakazi musicians? Colonialists sought to destroy them in order that they cannot influence our thoughts, behaviour and actions and indeed to remove any commemoration and memorization messages in our public platforms. The regeneration of our music by such artists as Zinja Ziyaluma, Impumelelo Shining Stars, Albert Nyathi and others is indeed pleasing. It is the way to go.

Restorationists must therefore support projects of commemoration and Public Memorization inside Matebeleland and in the Diaspora. Restorationists must support projects for our musicians inside Matebeleland and in the Diaspora. Restoration must be meaningful and transformational to individuals, local communities and the Nation.

The Individual Psychological Restoration, Family Unit Based Restoration, Community Based Restoration and Commemoration Restoration principles are all underpinned by the Cultural Restoration Principle. There are no peoples in the world that do not have a culture. Culture is lived by individuals, families, local communities and indeed lived and celebrated by Nations at National level. Culture is the ingredient

that makes a Nation that brings out the character and soul of a Nation and its people. It is the reason why culture is targeted by colonialist for damage. The medium for carrying and translating this culture in a Nation is language. Language is the single most important medium that distinguishes Nations and allows Nations to live and exercise their cultures. Any destruction of a peoples' language is a destruction of a peoples' identity and humanity. Colonialists therefore tend to target language for destruction and as we all know this is happening in Matebeleland as we speak. And the usual section of society that is targeted by colonialists is the children as these are the future of the Nation. We know for a fact that the Shona system is in operation in our schools to ultimately destroy our diverse languages in Matebeleland. Therefore our next fundamental principle for discussion is the Cultural Restoration Principle within the Restorationist Movement.

Cultural Restoration Principle

As already mentioned before, the Cultural Restoration principle runs through all these principles that have been mentioned and discussed. We are what we are because of our culture. Matebeleland is what it must be because of its culture. Over years and as well as since 1980 our culture and language has and continues to be trampled upon. Restorationists must capacitate individuals, family units and local communities to restore the space for our culture and language and defend the space restored. The individual, the family units and local communities must be weaponised to restore and defend their own restored cultural space that is being vandalized by black colonialists from Zimbabwe. Programmes that seek to address these must be put in place and ensure the Cultural Restoration Agenda is in motion. Restorationists must resource and capacitate cultural activities at local and National level.

But the ultimate and big prize of our Restoration Agenda is Mthwakazi Nation State Restoration. Finally we explore it and its basis.

Nation State Restoration Principle

The Nation State Restoration is the mother of all Restoration Principle. It is the bigger goal of the Restorationist Movement. This concerns the Restoration of the Jameson Line that is a boundary between Mthwakazi and Mashoanaland. It is basically the Restoration of our land and all the resources found underneath and above it and the birds of the air found in it. It's a principle that advocates the Restoration of the state of Mthwakazi (Matebeleland) that was lost due to colonialism in 1894. Once again, Restorationists have to go to the people and engage them and win them over regarding this principle through politics and human rights advocacy. The Restorastionist Movement has to present its demands to all the International bodies as a united front and a united people with a united position on our demand for our state. All tools at our disposal must be deployed to advance our cause peacefully. Political and Diplomatic tools must be removed from our Mthwakazi toolbox for use. People power (individuals, families and local communities) must be made to have a buy-in in the Agenda and be the

owners of the Restoration Movement. Legal fire power must be used at all costs to advance the Restoration Agenda. The media and technology tools must have a place to advance the struggle.

Conclusion

The revisiting of Restoration as a concept today and the setting out of clear principles that need to govern the Restoration Agenda is meant to advance a Restoration framework that is understandable to Mthwakazi people. Many people of Mthwakazi have and continue to state that Restoration is not feasible in Mthwakazi. It is possible as long as we understand the broader concept of Restoration. Restorationists need to go to the people and work with them directly in recovering and restoring their families and local communities. It will not be an easy road but this is to be expected. Restorationists must put innovative programmes in place that will capacitate individuals, families and local communities to make the mother of all Restorations, the Nation State Restoration, possible. Therefore one hopes this piece has to some extent put in a debate among the Restorationist lobby about the way forward in advancing the Restoration Movement ideals. One also hopes that this piece answers some of the cowboy detractors of Restoration Movement whose understanding of Restoration is limited and is grossly found wanting.

Friends and foes alike, this is the Restoration Drum Beat today and for this week!

Seskhona!

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