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The problem of Afrikan politics and the danger of white politics in South Africa

By Masilo Lepuru



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One of the significant benefits of an Afrikan-centred study of European thought and behaviour is the fundamental discovery that “politics is the continuation of war by other means”. Politics in essence is about power. While elections are a function of a representative democracy, they are not the core of power. Elections are a mere aspect and one of the instruments of attaining power. Electionism as a

manifestation of the reduction of politics to voting is a profound indication of the poor level of political literacy in South Africa among Afrikans. A solid level of political literacy helps one to know that the emergence and antagonism between Afrikan politics and white politics in South Africa begin with the conquest of the Indigenous people in 1652 by European conquerors.

At the core of white politics as nothing but the pursuit and preservation of white power by white settlers are at least two characteristics. And these are a long-term vision and the unapologetic exercise of power. These fundamental characteristics are what to a certain extent accounts for the long-lasting dominance and control of whites in South Africa since 1652. The strategy of divide and conquer is what undergirds these characteristics. Whites have been using this strategy for centuries and it has been effective. The context may differ now and then but the strategy remains fruitful and this is why whites still use today in the context of the current elections. The fact that in the context of elections Afrikan politics manifests itself through the registration of 300 parties is a case in point. Afrikans seem to constantly fail to recognise the advantage of their numerical majority and to use it effectively, for example through an Afrikan agenda of liberation politics.

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Whites on the other hand know and understand the threat of Afrikan numerical majority. And this is why they do their level best to fragment it, the DA's moon-shot pact is a case in point. The centuries-long exclusion of Afrikans from white democracy is a clear indication of the fear of the black-peril/*swart gevaar* in the form of numerical majority. The persistent white fear of the "one man one vote" and the opportunistic introduction of judicial review and a constitutional court since 1994 are an example of how whites understand the power of numbers. Unlike Afrikans, whites have plans that span over 100 years. Marcus Garvey has warned Afrikans about this collective weakness as a race. Apart from the constraints that came with the post-1994 constitutional dispensation, Afrikans in general lack a collective long-term vision and an unapologetic attitude when it comes to the exercise of power.

The annoying fear of being called a reverse racist or black racist and *ubuntu* are some of the dangerous reasons why Afrikans never capitalise on power when they get it. It is naïve and dangerous to be apologetic about how you exercise power when you are dealing whites whose understanding of power is one of domination and control. The historical antagonism between Afrikan politics and white politics represents the impossibility of the coexistence between Afrikan power and white power. Based on conquest through wars of colonisation, white power seeks to distort and destroy Afrikan power. The fundamental objective of Afrikan power on the other hand, is the total elimination of white power and its beneficiaries. This is the *liberation dialectic* of Afrikan politics and white politics in South Africa. Until Afrikans understand this dialectic they will always fall victim to the machinations of white politics.

The unity of white politics in the form of white nationalism is what maintains white power in South Africa. Whites know when to fight among each other as they always do and when to close ranks against Afrikans as their common enemy. The call for the Cape independence by white settlers is a recent example. The fundamental concept of the political as the "distinction between a friend and enemy" is what many Afrikans fail to understand and practice when dealing with whites. There is an urgent need to resuscitate Afrikan nationalism (as formulated by Marcus Garvey and Anton Lembede *ala Afrika* for the Afrikans) as the highest expression of Afrikan politics. Electionism without this tried and tested ideology of Afrikan nationalism is a futile exercise in rituals of representative democracy and a recipe for the triumph of white politics at the expense of Afrikan politics. In any event the point is not to participate in elections but to restore Afrikan sovereignty and power by any means necessary.

Masilo Lepuru

A Researcher and founding director of the Institute for Kemetite and Marcus Garvey Studies (IKMGS).



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Author has 7 publications published on ModernGhana.com

Column: **Masilo Lepuru**

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