



AFRICA-FRIDAY REFLECTIONS

"AFROCENTRIC THOUGHT"



ALUTA TERMINA (THE STRUGGLE DISCONTINUES).

BY ZAHARAH NOSISEKELO MSOMI

*“Well if the struggle continue then
When will we overcome?
Right here and now my struggle end
Prosperity from now on
And I don’ wanna sing a song that says
“The struggle live on”
When I wish it would die and wither away
No more struggling at all...”
~Damian Marley
“The Struggle Discontinues”.*

There is not an eon in history where Black bodies have not been subjected to oppression. Generation after generation, oppression has constantly stuck to our wound-ridden selves, as a shadow would to a body. It has marred our lives and determined our future, one that is exclusionary and never in our best interests.

The month of March 2021 weighs heavy on the spirit. Two notable events need to be recognised:

the commemoration of the Sharpeville Uprising and the nationwide student protests. Both events highlight a system that is founded on and thrives on anti-Blackness.

I was recently extended the fortune of being able to visit Sharpeville, an experience I have long sought from an early age. This visit encompassed a tour of the museum, paying our respects to the martyrs at their graves and more importantly, meeting survivors of the uprising; elders whose eyes witnessed the slaughter of their loved ones and comrades, whose ears will never forget the piercing sound of gun-fire and bodies that eternally house the trauma of that day. What was anticipated to be a day of non-violent resistance marked a day where the grounds of a necessary revolution turned into an abattoir, with Black bodies feasted upon by the butcher(apartheid). Sadly, even now, these elders are marginalised and live impoverished lives whilst being denied access to what they had been promised.

"What was anticipated to be a day of non-violent resistance marked a day where the grounds of a necessary revolution turned into an abattoir, with Black bodies feasted upon by the butcher(apartheid)."

A recurring issue that appears at the beginning of every academic year is that of fees. The flame of the movement of #FeesMustFall was once again ignited in March. Students from various Universities shutdown their Universities as act of protest and a measure of highlighting the plight of mainly Black students, who are constantly financially and academically excluded. One of the aftermaths of these protests saw a Black man, Mthokozisi Ntumba, who was a non-participant, brutally murdered. This unveiled what is known but overlooked – the ongoing inequalities and disproportion that Black students are subjected to. In retrospect, it is odd to note how the phrase 'the youth are future' is regurgitated when in 2020, our youth unemployment rate sat at a shocking 55.75%, when there are no permanent structures that are put in place to empower us nor any active investment into our future.



1960



2021

A parallel needs to be drawn. The advent of democracy and a new South Africa wrapped hopeful Black South Africans in an illusionary dream that events of the past would not reoccur. However, 61 years after the Sharpeville Uprising, Black bodies have at innumerable times placed their bodies in danger of requesting the most basic resources of which they have been promised. Events of this nature continue to shatter the fallacy that claims South Africa belongs to all those who live in it and the additional false promise of the enjoyment of its resources. It cuts even deeper in this age as this time, anti-Blackness is ironically perpetuated by Black people.

The solution to the problem is easy to find and does not require years of research to identify – it is the system. In order to remedy an anti-black system, there needs to be a complete breakdown of it and total abolition. Our efforts should not end at highlighting and addressing an anti-Black system. There should be collective involvement, from every race, in ensuring that there is a move away from the current system and that it is further replaced with one that is inclusive and works for all. Award-winning novelist James Baldwin once stated that, “I don’t know how this will be achieved but it must be achieved. So, we will have to do it.”

“In order to remedy an anti-black system, there needs to be a complete breakdown of it and total abolition.”

There is a plethora of different articles that have been penned by academics on how we can achieve total reformation and abolition of the system, which shows that we do have a direction on how to achieve eliminating this system and all that we are short of is enforcement. Our Black bodies yearn for silence, rest and peace. Through a new system, this longing seems likely to occur. This, we are deserving of and more.

The Black struggle is undeniably interconnected. The same voices that chanted the lingering slogan of Mayibuye (may it return) during the days of apartheid can still be heard, despite the white noise that seeks to cancel it. Fortunately, there are those who respond to its command and have committed themselves to the service of ensuring that the Black man is free from any bondage. The galvanising power of this four-syllable word should never be doubted or undermined. This slogan has birthed revolutions, raised revolutionaries and mothered armies. Mayibuye is multidimensional in exploring Black identity. Mayibuye encapsulates (but is not limited to) our:

- Land
- Identity
- Culture
- Resources and minerals
- ... and the infinite number of things that have been usurped from us.

Our pain will know an end. Tragedies will be a stranger to us. Happiness will not be the visitor that travels from far and only comes one in a while – it will find a home on our faces. Soon, there will come a day where we all sing ‘no more struggle’, where no Black person is strangled by poverty and every Black body once again gets to be, without any threat or fear . But before all of that is returned, nawe muntu omnyama buya(you, also, Black person must return to self).



Zaharah Nosisekelo Msomi