

STONE'S UNINFORMED ACTIVISM CAN BE DANGEROUS

It has become clear that some social commentators like Setumo Stone suffer from fixation and will not take facts into account. Being modern day and peace time heroes seems to be *the* thing he is concerned with. Moving goalposts every time a point is made does not assist the debate.

An objective commentator concentrates on playing the ball not the man. It is clear that he *hates* Kgosi Mangope with passion but this will not dissuade some of us from putting issues on the table to ensure that this *Johnny comes lately to Jo'burg* is informed.

Stone correctly refers to *namola leuba* which he should understand better than I that it means "poverty alleviation". These food parcels were handed out to destitute people in times of drought. It is nothing sinister as even the current government does that incessantly though in a lopsided manner as such parcels are given to only those who carry the spear and shield cards.

He disregards that such aid was extended to farmers for their livestock. They were given fodder in such times of need. This is what a responsible and caring government has to do. Farmers were subsidized and they produced food to feed the nation. It is on record that in 1991/92 these farmers produced sufficient maize crop that they were able to export to Zambia when there was drought there. This is nothing to apologise for or to feel ashamed about!

It is equally absurd to argue that whenever there were functions people were fed at Mangope's behest. This is great African hospitality. The current South African government does the same. When people are invited to occasions on 27 April, 16 December, whenever there is an inauguration of the president or even when parliament or legislatures are opened people are catered for. If activism means abandoning entertaining invited guests it can rather be given a wide berth. Or is the problem that it was done in the erstwhile Bophuthatswana but when it is done at the Union Buildings or Cape Town it is progressive?

There is every truth in the adage that where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. It is opportunistic to argue that there are more unions on the mines in

Bojanala and Kenneth Kaunda Districts, after all those are the only districts that have mines and factories of note. For the record Stone is not aware that unions operated on the Rustenburg mines even before 1994 when he came to. He needs to research more. He would rather ask activists of note like Dr Snuki Zikalala on operations of unions in what is now called Bojanala.

It is proving fruitless to debate with a peace time hero whose exposure to life seems to be confined to Ramatlabama and his new experience of the bright lights of Jozi.

Unbeknown to this great activist and commentator is that factories in Babelegi, Mogwase and Thaba Nchu were closed down because investors relocated as the new provincial governments overzealously expected the investors to be taxed like the mother factories on the reef. They did not prevail over the national government to consider that such factories offered employment to people in need. They viewed them, as Stone does, as creations of *apartheid* little realizing that they helped to keep the wolf away from the doors for those employed there. The relocation of the factories to Johannesburg and Botswana left South Africans jobless. This is not a North West phenomenon. It is the same in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga in areas such as Ekangala. He better comes to know the plight facing our people is the direct result of the uncaring attitude of those who were charged with caring for people but concentrated on looting the province of any wealth it had.

The nauseating situation of roads construction in the North West is the result of activist politicians. They are high and rich but the greater public is sitting with problems created by them. These are issues activists and commentators should talk to and not dwell on the past that was successful.

The current administration does concede that they are facing an uphill to deliver services. They do not need any self appointed spokesperson to stand in for them. They govern in the North West not in Johannesburg and do not enjoy the comfort of sucking facts from their thumbs. They have a citizenry to appease.

It shows the extent to which some commentators are not well informed. I cannot imagine a commentator stating on record that up to this day people in the North West are running scared of Mangope and do not vote as they should

when it is common knowledge that some party other than Mangope's has been winning elections from 1994 to date.

All responsible governments will and should show zero tolerance to criminals. The current South African government is determined to show that if people cannot hear they have to feel. There is no need to kiss criminals even if you are an activist.

Despite that this may be like trying to draw blood from a stone I set the record straight for what it is worth

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