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**IS
F.W. DE KLERK
A MAN OF
INTEGRITY?**

INTRODUCTION:

During the course of the week of his release, Mr Nelson Mandela, the Vice-President of the ANC, gave an interview to the reporters of the SATV. The interview was broadcast on television. Referring to De Klerk, Mr Mandela stated:

“Well, the State President has taken very bold moves and I believe it when he says that he wants change in the political and economic set up in this country. I think that it has been very courageous of him and in my meetings with him I got the distinct impression that I am dealing with a man of integrity who is consciously aware of the danger to a public figure of making undertakings and failing to honour them”.

It is something very rare for a leader of an organisation which claims to be fighting for liberation to pay such a handsome compliment to the leader of the oppressive regime. We say “very rare” only out of humility for in truth we know of no instance in history of such a happening.

Be that as it may, we consider it essential to test the validity of Mr Mandela’s assessment of de Klerk’s character by rigorous analysis.

HOW TO MEASURE INTEGRITY

There is no invention or technique to test the mind of a person claiming “sincerety” or “integrity”. Nobody can read a human mind. Therefore we rely on that person’s *actions* to decide whether that person is sincere or is a person of integrity.

The word “integrity” has a number of meanings — virtue, goodness, purity, righteousness, upright and so on. Therefore, when a person is described as a “Man of Integrity”, that person is bestowed with the highest honour. How and in what circumstances can we favour a person with such an honour? In the

one case, the honour is bestowed where a person has performed virtuous deeds over a sustained period of time. In the other case, a single deed is performed; but the deed is so outstanding that we are driven to the inescapable conclusion that only a person of integrity is able to perform that deed.

In the case of F.W. de Klerk, he was born into Afrikaaner Nationalism; he grew up in a family and a house of Afrikaaner Nationalism; he drew his moral and intellectual sustenance from Afrikaaner Nationalism, he served with unquestioning loyalty the cause of Afrikaaner Nationalism, which like a juggernaut sought crush the legitimate aspirations of an oppressed people and which through diabolical cruelty engaged in social engineering by seeking to cast a whole people from a modern industrial society back into tribalism. Though the scheme failed, as it had to, the harm to society is incalculable.

It will therefore be seen that if the title of "Man of Integrity" is to be conferred on De Klerk, it cannot be because of his past record. Is it because he has unbanned certain organisations and released a few prisoners, including Mr Mandela? It is common knowledge that the release of long-term political prisoners and unbanning of political organisations were long in the offing. What was in question was the TIMING. WHEN was this to be done? De Klerk, the rightwinger from the Transvaal, had compelling reasons to perform the historic task of the unbanning and the release. These reasons are so well set out in the Editorial of the "Daily News" of 18 April 1990 that we think it is essential to quote the entire Editorial:

An economic nightmare which in recent years has loomed steadily larger on South Africa's horizon has at last been swept away.

Less than a year ago, when there was barely enough in South Africa's bottom drawer to meet the cost of a few weeks' imports, economists were warning that everyone in South Africa faced extremely

serious recessionary conditions. The country had little or no hope of meeting a massive R6-billion international debt that was to fall due for repayment in the middle of this year. There was speculation about South African aircraft being seized on foreign runways and ships and cargoes being confiscated if we reneged on the debt.

What changed things was State President F.W. de Klerk's change of political direction. A burst of foreign confidence, expressing itself as an inflow of investment capital and an easing of sanctions on foreign bank credit, did the rest, this in spite of Mr Nelson Mandela's talk about nationalisation. The result is that Reserve Bank Governor Chris Stals can now dismiss the debt repayment as a routine issue of less

important than the fight against inflation.

For the man in the street, beset by high mortgage and hire purchase repayment rates, there will be little immediate benefit. Yet the fact that the fundamental ills of both the constitution and the economy are now being tackled promises a brighter tomorrow.

(Emphasis ours)

The fears described in the Editorial provide a far more plausible explanation for the recent change in direction than anything unconvincing like a sudden change of heart on the part of the ruling class. The South African economy was in a mess and the South African ruling class in a pickle. The release and the unbanning were a calculated move to bring about relief. Integrity had nothing to do with it.

ROLE OF F.W. de KLERK

F.W. de Klerk is the chosen representative of the Nationalist Party through its caucus. This is the party which has been ruling the country for the past 42 years. A government is installed to govern the country and the population on behalf of the economic system prevailing in the country. The present economic system is in existence to provide profit for imperialism (investors from Britain, U.S.A., West Germany, Japan, etc.); the local capitalists (factory owners, bankers and big landlords) and the farming sector. The bulk of the population get the leftovers and live in poverty and want.

Since the Act of Union, all Prime Ministers and State Presidents in South Africa were representatives of the system which has been called Imperialism-Herrenvolkism. The system decides WHO its leading representative is to be. Where that representative no longer serves the interests of the system, he is removed.

Examples of this are B.J. Vorster and later P.W. Botha. The system chooses the representative most suited to perform a given task. When the conditions of World War II demanded a loyal servant of imperialism, Smuts assumed power in the country. When the system demanded the "iron fist", Vorster was chosen.

F.W. de Klerk has been chosen because he projects a certain image which suits the system. He has the appearance of candour; he is mild in speech and comes over as being fair, reasonable and accommodating. He has a clean look about him and gives the impression that he is a man "you can talk to."

THE SYSTEM OF IMPERIALISM-HERRENVOLKISM*

There can be no understanding of the political situation in this country and the tasks facing us unless we understand the SYSTEM governing this country.

We present to the reader the oft quoted classical description of the system by "The Torch" (a Unity Movement newspaper) of 19 August 1952:

"Imperialism-Herrenvolkism has no "conscience" or "soul" or "sense of decency". It is not moved to pity or reform by the misery and suffering of the oppressed and exploited people. It causes and lives off this oppression and exploitation, of which poverty, tyranny and suffering are inevitable and inseparable parts. It has no respect for those who seek to end its regime of oppression and exploitation. In fact, it passes laws against, builds jails for, and generally hounds and persecutes those who seek to liberate the impoverished, rightless and voiceless mass which is the foundation of Imperialism-Herrenvolkism. It never repents, because repentance would mean suicide. It never parts with anything

*Herrenvolkism is a belief that a certain population group is superior to others by virtue of "race". Herrenvolk literally means the SIR People or Master Race.

voluntarily. It only gives up only what is forced from it. It never departs from the scene of its own accord. It fights with every means at its disposal. It disguises itself where and when it can. It uses any agency or person it can, and in the end, it has to be beaten to its grave by the active, unified, organised, principled and militant struggles of the oppressed and exploited."

We make no apologies for the length of this quotation. If the profound truth contained in the passage can be understood and imparted, there will be far less glib talk about negotiations.

It is the system which rules the country, not De Klerk. He is the mask of the system. He is its current disguise.

For how else can we explain the savage suppression of the march at Sebokeng? How else can we explain the role of the South African Police in the civil war taking place in the Edendale Valley? IT IS THE SYSTEM GOING ABOUT ITS DEADLY BUSINESS.

Lest it be said that we in the Unity Movement are exaggerating, let us hasten to assure our readers that we are not the only ones who question the validity of the title of "Man of Integrity". There are many in the ranks of the oppressed who think like us on this matter. What better example to quote than the Publicity Secretary of the UDF and ANC Co-ordinator for Southern Natal, Mr Patrick Lekota. Allocating blame for the recent massacres in Edendale and in other parts of Natal, Mr Lekota stated:

"Buthelezi is the Minister of KwaZulu Police; he is the head of Inkatha; his very police force is eliminating our people. In Natal MK (Umkhonto weSizwe) is not allowed to operate. So where are the bullets coming from? F.W. (De Klerk) is giving bullets to the ZPs (KwaZulu Police)".

(Our emphasis; Third parenthesis is ours). "The New African" 12-21 April 1990

CONCLUSION

F.W. de Klerk is the representative of the system of Imperialism-Herrenvolkism. His private views and opinions are of no consequence. He must be judged as the system to which he belongs is judged. He is an integral part of the system. He does not have a political identity separate from the system he serves.

To say that de Klerk is a man of integrity is politically unscientific; it is misleading and is bound to cause confusion. Evidence of the confusion is the appearance of slogans of "VIVA De KLERK" in some areas of the oppressed.

Unhappy is the lot of the oppressed who wish *long life* to their oppressors!

