
An analysis of transformation in South Africa post 1994

Mr P.J. Maritz

Akademia

pjmaritz@gmail.com

Dr J.C.M. Venter

Faculty of Humanities

North West University

Jan.Venter@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

The transition from South Africa under the policies of Apartheid to its future state has been led by the African National Congress and its allies. This transition has been driven by a process of radical transformation, often informed by revolutionary philosophies and policies, which in turn were translated into radicalism. Historically revolutionary transformation has often had national disorder as consequence. As this approach entails great risk, this study indicates the risks entrenched in revolutionary transformation, and proposes alternative approaches. A literary study of relevant pieces of policy, and the philosophy that led to their construction was done, with indication of how these pieces of policy incarnated themselves in the actions of relevant political actors. Here the clear and present danger of these policies came to the fore. Opposing philosophies were then researched, and realistic alternatives proposed. The study concluded in finding revolutionary transformation not only sub-optimal, but purposefully dangerous for the safety and stability of a country, and urgently proposed that the tried and tested alternatives be adopted and normalised.

This study contributes to the ongoing issue of approaching change in South Africa. Few would deny that change was necessary in post-1994 South Africa, and this article does not challenge the need for change in any way. The article contributes to the broader field of national governance by analysing and critiquing the current approach to change, which is radicalism in the name of revolutionary transformation, and offering tried and tested alternatives, which would lead to change that is more stable, more consistent, and does not entail the same risk of death, destruction, and civil war that revolutionary transformation has brought about in states where it has previously been driven to its limits.

Opsomming

Die oorgang van Suid-Afrika onder die beleide van Apartheid na sy toekomstige toestand word gedryf deur die African National Congress en sy ideologiese vennote. Hierdie oorgang is tot dusver gedryf deur 'n proses van radikale transformasie, wat op sy beurt deur rewolusionêre denke en beleide aangevuur word, wat dan uitloop op hierdie radikalisme. Histories het rewolusionêre transformasie dikwels gelei tot nasionale wanorde. Siende dat hierdie benadering daarom groot risiko behels, wil hierdie artikel juis die risiko wat eie is aan rewolusionêre transformasie uitwys, en alternatiewe voorstel. 'n Literatuurstudie van relevante beleidstukke, grondingsdokumente, en denkrames is gedoen, waarna aangedui is hoe hierdie denke hulself vergestalt in die politieke rolspelers van die dag. Die duidelike gevare wat hierdie beleide en denkrames inhou is hier na vore gebring. Na afloop van hierdie proses is opponerende denkrames ondersoek, en realistiese alternatiewe voorgestel. Die artikel sluit af deur rewolusionêre transformasie nie net as sub-optimaal te bevind nie, maar ook as wesenlik gevaarlik vir die stabiliteit van 'n land. Vervolgens dan die beproefde alternatiewe wat voorgestel word om voorts te normaliseer.

Hierdie studie dra by tot die voortslepende vraag rondom die benadering tot verandering in Suid-Afrika. Min mense sal ontken dat verandering nodig was in 'n post-1994 Suid-Afrika, en hierdie artikel daag nie die behoefte aan verandering enigsins uit nie. Hierdie artikel dra by tot die breër veld van regeerkunde deur die huidige benadering tot verandering, dié van radikalisme in die naam van rewolusie, te kritiseer,

en alternatiewe te bied wat tot meer stabiele en volhoubare verandering sal lei, wat nie dieselfde risiko van dood, vernietiging, en selfs oorlog inhou wat rewolusionêre verandering so dikwels meegebring het waar dit tot 'n klimaks gedryf is nie.

Key Words:

Radicalism, Revolution, Fanon, EFF, Burke, Violence

Sleutelwoorde:

Radikalisme, Rewolusie, Fanon, EFF, Burke, Geweld

1. Introduction

In the past 27 years the Republic of South Africa has been the subject of a process of continuous political, economic and social change, as the country comes under the influence of governing ideas in increasing increments. As this continuous change and governing ideas are in the majority of cases implemented by the governing African National Congress (ANC) and its intellectual affiliate the South African Communist Party, it is relevant for those living in South Africa to understand the ideas behind these changes, and the particular approach that is being taken, as well as the underlying principles thereof. In recent years the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a party positioned to the left of the ANC, has also had a visible impact on ANC legislation. Understanding the underlying principles of the governing ideology opens the door for a more nuanced criticism, and a more reliable prediction of the future plans of the governing elite.

This aforementioned change is often referred to as “transformation” (ANC, 2018), which is why this article bears “transformation” in its title, and yet the focal point is much rather revolution than transformation. This seemingly contrasting fact will be defended and explained, with reference to the ANC, and change in South Africa springing from radical ideologies. As such the changes are almost always intolerant towards dissenting opinions and impatient towards implementation (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:18,19). This means that the method of change is revolutionary. It is important in reading this article that the relationships among these concepts be understood.

The method of change applied in South Africa is, in the words of the governing party, revolutionary, as stated frequently in its own revised 2017 version of its *Strategy and Tactics* document, specifically reference is made of articles 149-151 (ANC, 2018). While revolution is historically traced back to the French Revolution in 1789 or the waves of communist revolutions of the 20th century, the slow revolution of the ANC contains a very definite and an increasingly visible racial element (Mashilo, 2018:1). Revolution does not refer only to the European idea of revolution, but also the idea of revolutionary warfare. As such, a focus on the work of thinkers based in revolutionary warfare is also relevant, here a specific focus will be laid on Franz Fanon, as he is also pertinent in the modern thought of the EFF (pt. 4.2.1.).

This study follows the line of governing ideas to its roots, focussing on radicalism as approach to change, revolution as opposition to the status quo, and violence as instrument in revolutionary the aforementioned revolutionary change.

In the broader field of political philosophy, the ideas and policies of the government, as well as the way in which they are implemented, are bound to have a broad impact on society. By pointing out, analysing, and critiquing these ideas, the aim of the study is to indicate the dangers of the current governing ideas, and the dangerous foundations upon which they rest. Finally, an alternative method of change, as observed in historical events, will be proposed. This article then identifies these dangerous ideas as flawed, indicates their inherent flaws, and proposes more suitable ideas upon which a consistently stable society may be built.

2. Actors

2.1 *The ANC*

As government and as monopolistic political party, the African National Congress (ANC) has arguably the most important role in defining the contents and frame of reference of transformation. Born out of a mostly peaceful transition between the white Apartheid-government, which was led by the National Party (NP) from 1948 until 1994, and the mostly black ANC led government, under the initial leadership of President Nelson Mandela, few transitions have been celebrated so vigorously as a symbol of racial unity and cooperation by the international community, the seeds of discontent, and of division, and of racial exclusion are once again being sown in a country that some still call "The Rainbow Nation", despite this term becoming a term

of mockery amongst citizens (Msimang, 2015). In order to understand the current resistance to the “Rainbow Nation” metaphor, it will be necessary to first understand the political source and aim of the governing party, by understanding its approach to transformation.

Duvenage clearly asserts (2007:378) that “Seen from an ANC-perspective, transformation is nothing other than the continuation of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which aims to radically alter the state, society, and the economy”. While the ANC is no longer oppressed, it can not technically be ‘revolutionary’, as revolution refers to a subversion of the state (Pt. 3.1.3.), therefore it prefers the term ‘transformation’, yet for the ANC the transformation is simply, in the Stalinist metaphor, “Revolution from above” (Duvenage, 2005:9-19, 17).

In order to further drive home the idea that transformation is simply the practice of revolution, it is necessary to quote at length from the ANC’s own *Strategy and Tactics* document (2018). Paragraph 63 :

The NDR seeks to eradicate the specific relations of production that underpinned the national and gender oppression and super-exploitation of the majority of South Africans. It does not eradicate capitalist relations of production in general. It should therefore be expected that in a national democratic society class contradictions and class struggle, particularly between the working class and the bourgeoisie, will play themselves out. As such, a national democratic state will be called upon to regulate the environment in which such contradictions manifest themselves, in the interest of national development including fundamental socio-economic transformation.

Here it is seen that the aim of the NDR is achieved by means of “fundamental socio-economic transformation”. Recent news articulates the practice of transformation based on revolutionary ideas, and are offered as clarification:

Nathi Mthethwa, South African minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, is of the view that municipalities should have the option of voting to remove the statues of former South African leaders. Mbali Hlope, a member of minister Mthethwa’s party, the ruling ANC, recently motivated this stance: “*The presence of these colonial statues and monuments in the public domain do[es] not resonate with the founding principles of the democratic constitution of the land*” (Ndaba, 2020).

The focus on the iconic statue of President Paul Kruger (1825-1904), the last President of the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, which is under current scrutiny, is just the next in a wave of similar events, which started with the removal of the statue of colonial Cape Governor Cecil John Rhodes in 2015,

and has seen many statues removed, and colonial or Afrikaner-heritage monuments banned and vilified.

The over-arching theme is that history before 1994, and before the ANC, is to be removed from the public domain. This theme is strengthened by the decision by the South African Equality Court in August of 2019 to ban the public display of the former South African flag, which was the official flag from 1928 until 1994 (Mettler, 2019).

Attempts at radical social transformation are, however, not exclusive to the realms of history and symbolism, as they force their way into most spheres of social life. The South African Netball Federation recently disqualified a team from the provincial league for not fielding the correct racial composition of players (Bierman, 2020). The law of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (Act 53 of 2003) also regulates the business sector in South Africa, with only companies with a pre-determined racial composition being considered appropriate to do business with the government.

These examples illustrate the approach that the current South African government is taking in terms of the transition from one regime to the next. The practice of blaming minority groups and previous governments for a plethora of social and economic ills has become endemic, while purposefully forgetting current endemic problems such as corruption, maladministration and factionalism which is costing the country billions (Myburg, 2019:151). Along with this view of history, a choice has been made in favour of radical transformation in the South African political, economic and social spheres (Poplak, 2020). This model of transformation views political and social history before 1994 as a monolith, one that is to be vilified, uprooted, and subverted, wherever traces of it are still to be found. It is this very approach to change that must be analysed, understood, if the current trajectory of South Africa is to be changed or at least intellectually opposed.

2.2 The SACP

As the ideological wellspring for underpinning the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) affect both the policy and posture of the country.

While Marxism-Leninism was exhaling its dying breath in the East of Europe, socialist ideas were gaining momentum in South Africa. Joe Slovo, the secretary-general of the SACP from 1984 until 1991, wrote in 1988: *“We do not claim that we have a monopoly of wisdom. But, equipped with the theoretical tool of Marxism-Leninism and the inheritance of an unmatched*

wealth of revolutionary experience, it is not immodest for us to assert that our Party is uniquely qualified to help illuminate the correct analytical path" (Slovo, 1988). Slovo was to become an important figure in South African transitional politics, becoming a minister in the first cabinet of President Mandela in 1994, and feeding revolutionary thought into the newly-formed democratic South Africa from its very beginning.

The SACP has enjoyed a commanding position up to 2021, with key ministerial positions such as those of Higher Education and Training, Communications, and Trade and Industry frequently being held by members of this party (Letsoalo, 2018). The SACP does not participate in national elections, but forms part of the "Tripartite Alliance", which governs South Africa. The other two members are the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). In this way the ideas of Marx and Lenin have remained ingrained and revered in South Africa, long after being formally abandoned by those countries which formed the Soviet Union. The examples that the introduction of this article offered prove the point that radical transformation and the subversion of the existing social order are crucial to a relevant interpretation of post-1994 South Africa.

While Marxism-Leninism differs from the Enlightenment philosophy of the 18th century, the two schools of thought share a joint supportive view of revolution (Marx & Engels, 2016). Thus, while the final aims of the Enlightenment thinkers were different to those of Bolshevik revolutionaries in Russia, the proposed mode of transition was one and the same: Revolution. As the question in issue in this article is that of transition, the nature of revolution and South Africa, and the universal roots this phenomenon are to be uncovered.

2.3 The EFF representing the newer generation of radicalism

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is a South African Political Party, that started in 2013 (Mailola, 2021). During the 2019 National Elections, the EFF drew 1 882 480 of the total 17 437 379 valid votes that were cast. This translates to 10.8% of the total vote, and resulted in the EFF having 44 seats in the national legislature, the third most of any party, behind the governing ANC (230 seats) and the official opposition, the DA (84 seats). Even before an analysis of their vision for South Africa is undertaken, it is clear that this party has a strong footing in South Africa, especially considering that it is the official opposition in three provinces, namely the Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and North West Provinces (Results Dashboard, 2019)

2.3.1 *The political positioning of the EFF in their own words*

On their official website, the EFF present themselves in these words: *“The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is a radical and militant economic emancipation movement, formed in the year 2013 with the aim of bringing together revolutionary, militant activists, community-based organizations as well as lobby groups under the umbrella of the political party pursuing the struggle of economic emancipation”* (Mailola, 2021). On the same webpage, the party states its vision and mission as follows:

Vision: The EFF will, with determination and consistency associate with the protest movement in South Africa and will also join in struggles that defy the unjust laws.

Mission: The EFF is a South African movement with a progressive internationalist outlook, which seeks to engage global progressive movements. We believe that the best contribution we can make in the national and international struggle against global imperialism is to rid our country of imperialist domination.

Amongst the seven pillars upon which the EFF stands, are the following (Mailola, 2021):

- 1 Expropriation of South Africa's land without compensation for equal redistribution in use.*
- 2 Nationalisation of mines, banks, and other strategic sectors of the economy, without compensation.*

The first two of the EFF's eight aims are (EFF, 2019):

- (1) To capture political and state power through whatever revolutionary means possible to transform the economy to benefit all, Africans in particular.*
- (2) To establish and sustain a society that cherishes revolutionary cultural values and to create conditions for the total political and economic emancipation, prosperity and equitable distribution of wealth of the nation.*

It is clear from the excerpts quoted above that the EFF see themselves as a radical group, a militant group, and a revolutionary group. By these radical means, this party wishes to change the economic and political status quo in South Africa. It is also clear that this party wishes for radically increased centralisation, with the focus on nationalisation coming to the fore frequently in their introductory and statutory documents.

2.3.2 Focus of the EFF on racial nationalism

The question might be posed, at this stage, where the EFF ideologically departs from the ANC. This point of departure is amongst other issues, one of race. The ANC states, in its *Strategy and Tactics* document (ANC, 2018) that:

The National Democratic Revolution is defined as such precisely because it seeks to abolish this combination of sources of social conflict. It has national and democratic tasks, and it should strive to realise shared prosperity, social justice and human solidarity, premised on:

- *a united state based on the will of all the people, without regard to race, sex, belief, language, ethnicity or geographic location;*
- *a dignified and improving quality of life among all the people by providing equal rights and opportunities to all citizens; and*
- *the restoration of the birth-right of all South Africans regarding access to land and other resources.*

While the EFF has a radical and revolutionary approach to change, it holds a racial nationalist view of South Africa and Africa, pertinently breaking from the ANC and NDR ideology of non-racialism. A perusal of aims three through eight as captured in the EFF Constitution of 2019 shows (EFF, 2019):

- (3) *To attain and defend the national integrity and liberation of the oppressed black majority of South Africa.*
- (4) *To participate in the global struggle for the complete eradication of imperialism, colonialism, racism and all other forms of oppression and discrimination.*
- (5) *To participate in, support and promote all struggles for the attainment of the complete independence and unity of an African state and by extension, the African continent.*
- (6) *To resolutely oppose tribalism, regionalism, religious and cultural intolerance.*

Julius Malema, the leader of the EFF, has been quoted in the media as referring only to black people as African, saying in 2018 (Mde, 2018):

Why is treasury always represented by an Indian when there is 80% African staff? Because there is a tendency [for] our Indian brothers to look down at Africans.

In 2020 Malema spoke to a crowd in KwaZulu Natal, saying that (Anon, 2019):

This is Shaka Zulu's land, not Van Wyk and Van Tonder's land.

Van Tonder is a typical surname of the white minority in South Africa, and Shaka Zulu the first king of the Zulu Nation, who ruled in the 19th century C.E.

It can be surmised that the EFF and its leader differentiate between people of different racial groups in South Africa, and that they believe that Africa belongs to Africans, which they believe to be exclusively black people. The EFF also has a utopian view of one African state.

2.3.3 Impact of the EFF on legislature

Various instances can be noted where aims and statements by the EFF were adopted or pursued by the ANC some years later. While the reasons for this might only be speculative, the fact remains that key debates on nationalisation and expropriation were introduced or reintroduced into the national debate by the EFF, and then adopted as ANC policy. Two notable examples are expropriation without compensation (EWC) and the nationalisation of the central/reserve bank.

In 2018 Professor Ruth Hall from the University of the Western Cape stated in an interview on Talkradio 702, a South African radio station, that she believes the ANC will push for a “watered down version of what the EFF are demanding” (*The Midday Report*, 2018).

The EFF states in its first constitution, which was adopted on the 16th of December 2014, that two of its non-negotiable positions are expropriation of land without compensation, and expropriation of banks without compensation (EFF, 2014). The ANC spoke about the nationalisation for the first time during their 2017 electoral conference, held in December of 2017 (Mahlali, 2018).

3. The framework of radical ideologies that dictate operations of the actors

All three of the actors analysed under point two subscribe to a form of radical change. In 2019 the ANC’s Secretary General, Ace Magashule, stated that Radical Economic Transformation is the ANC’s party policy, and that it will happen (Modise, 2019). The SACP states in its 1991 manifesto that “*Ownership, occupation and use of land requires radical readjustment*” (SACP, 1991). The preamble to the constitution of the EFF starts with the words “*The Economic Freedom Fighters is a radical and militant Economic*

Emancipation Movement” (EFF, 2019). This section seeks a fairly modern definition of Radicalism as an approach to social change.

3.1 *Radicalism*

3.1.1 *Definition*

Bötticher (2017) defines Radicalism as “*a form of hostility against the status quo and its establishment*” and also: “*Radicalism stands in rebellious opposition against the establishment*”.

Scruton (2007:576) shows that radicalism comes from the Latin *radix*, which means ‘root’. It denotes a person who takes political ideas to their roots. Such a person will be “*hostile to the status quo, and anxious for sweeping changes*”. Elsewhere a radical is defined as “*a social movement activists who embrace direct action and high-risk options, often including violence against others, to achieve a stated goal*” (Snow & Cross, 2011).

3.1.2 *Modern usage of the term radicalism*

Scruton (2007:576) believes that it would be wrong to assert that all radical thinkers are on the political left, but that radicalism is popular amongst leftist thinkers, as thinkers on the left are more radical about the status quo. Radicalism first came to prominence as a term to describe a political attitude at the end of the 18th century in France. Even though radicalism in modern times is mostly used to refer to an ideology that pursues restructuring, in some cases radicalism can pursue the overthrowing of political structures (Bötticher, 2017:75). While radical movements use violence pragmatically and selectively, as opposed to extremist movements that deem any violence legitimate, violence and the threat of violence nevertheless will be deemed legitimate in determined circumstances by such movements (Bötticher, 2017:75).

Radicals can be divided into four groups: Opportunistic, Coordinated, Loners, and Militants (Snow & Cross, 2011:123). Militant radicals, a term that the EFF uses to refer to themselves in their preamble (EFF, 2019), will be more prone to go for extremist approaches, particularly the idea that force and violence are the only remaining options (Snow & Cross, 2011:124).

3.1.3 *Conclusion and synthesis*

A group that refers to itself as radical, such as the ANC, the SACP, and the EFF, will not legitimise or condone violence in all circumstances;

however, more militant radicals, such as the EFF, are more prone to violence than other groups of radicals. Violence is, however, not off the table for more moderate radical groups, who deem violence an important tool in reform and subversion of the status quo.

Based on the analysis of radicalism, it would seem as if a radical ideology would be prone to revolution. In his 1791 *magnum opus*, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, the politician and author Edmund Burke states: '*To make a revolution is to subvert the previous state of our country, and extraordinary reasons are called for to justify such a violent proceeding*' (Burke, 2012).

While Burke refers to violence, the essence of revolution for Burke is that the previous state is subverted, for violence in itself does not wholly define a revolution. A modern definition of revolution is given by Scruton (2007:614): "*It seems to mean any major transformation that occurs simultaneously on the social and the political level, upsetting expectations and conformities that were sufficiently well established to define all important forms of association under the preceding order.*"

Revolution is to be understood henceforth to particularly mean subversion of the existing state, and the attempted replacement thereof with a completely new (radical) order. Thus, if a radical group wishes to overthrow the status quo on a social and political level, and legitimises the circumstantial use of violence, it would be fair to state that they are undertaking a revolution.

4. South African Revolution: Finding the sources

As revolution has been identified as the method which radical thinkers often employ in challenging and opposing the status quo, the roots of revolution will be considered in this section.

4.1 European Roots of Revolution

To criticize revolution, as this article sets out to do, both the definition and development of revolution are of critical importance. As revolution has been properly defined, the focus now falls on the origin of revolutionary thought.

Where did this idea, that an existing order must be subverted and radically transformed, come from? Historians by and large agree that the Revolution in France had its roots in the European Enlightenment, a movement with roots in the 17th century in the works of Bacon and Descartes (Kinneking, 2000), which the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant defined

in 1784 in this way: “*Enlightenment is the exit of people from their self-imposed immaturity*”. In this same essay, Kant promulgates the motto of the Enlightenment to be “*sapere aude!*” which can be roughly translated as “dare to know!” Kant’s view, and the view of many Enlightenment philosophers before him, was that traditional authority keeps human beings in a state of permanent immaturity by preventing them from applying their reason to its fullest. The human mind was, for Enlightenment thinkers the source of the most profound truth. By questioning all else and remaining only with his one maxim of *cogito ergo sum*, Descartes places human reason at the centre of the universe, a piece of philosophy with far reaching consequences for the coming Enlightenment, ultimately leading to revolution.

While the works of Enlightenment philosophers are many and thorough, the line from Descartes to the French Revolution must at the very least run through the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788). In chapter XIII of his 1651 book *Leviathan*, the English philosopher Hobbes imagines man in his “*natural condition*”, a thought experiment which is now scientifically known as “The State of Nature”. This philosophical construct disregards human experience and collective history as the primary sources of knowledge, but imagines man as an individual in nature, completely alone, and totally unbound. Hobbes uses this construct as a base from which conclusions about mankind and society are to be drawn, and upon which a new order is to be built (Hobbes, 2016).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau refers directly to Hobbes on various occasions in his work *On the Social Contract*, which was published in 1762, and while he differs greatly with Hobbesian absolutism, he does continue the idea of a social contract, or social pact (Rousseau, 2010). Rousseau assumes the starting point of man in a state of nature, and builds an argument up to a point where people will, in the name of self-preservation, “*place his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will*” (Rousseau, 2010). This term “general will”, or *Volonté Générale* is placed directly into the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen which formed the core statement of the French Revolution. By noting the works of Descartes, Hobbes, and Rousseau, it can briefly be surmised that the philosophical roots of revolution do indeed lie in Enlightenment philosophy.

If revolution is to be the violent uprooting and transformation of the existing order, and the existing order in the time of Rousseau was monarchical, it would make sense to accept that the revolution was aimed at the monarchy. Revolutionary thought as the idea that the existing authority must be violently subverted was moved from the context of monarchies to the context of a class

struggle by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Marx & Engels, 2016). While Marx and Engels are the founding fathers of certain revolutionary thought, it seems as if revolution in South Africa frequently states decoloniality as driving force, and justifies violence and revolution at the hand of a coloniser and indigenous relationship. The EFF's Julius Malema frequently sings "Kill the Boer" at rallies (Anon, 2020), a song calling for the murder of white farmers in South Africa, who are known as "Boer" (or "Boere" in the plural form). In order to understand the root of revolution in South Africa, it is therefore necessary to find the root of these thoughts.

4.2 *Franz Fanon and revolutionary warfare*

Franz Fanon (1925-1961) was born in Martinique under French rule, and died in 1961 of leukaemia. He is primarily known for writing anti-colonial liberation literature, famously *The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la terre)* and *Black Skin, White Masks* (Gibson, 2011). Breaking from the European idea of a revolutionary wave, Fanon proposes a longer struggle that goes through various phases, a revolutionary war. Fanon states (2014:110):

The leaders of the rebellion come to see that even very large-scale peasant risings need to be controlled and directed into certain channels. These leaders are led to renounce the movement in so far as it can be termed a peasant revolt, and to transform it into a revolutionary war.

While Kwame Nkrumah famously wrote *Revolutionary Warfare* in 1968, Fanon's writing predates him, and is taken as seminal point for the idea of a longer-term revolutionary struggle.

While Fanon is praised and qualified in various modern publications, this section will indicate only that Fanon is a relevant source to radical actors in South Africa, followed by his views on violence against the descendants of European settlers. Extensively quoting Fanon, especially his thoughts on violence, brings his thoughts to the fore directly.

4.2.1 *Fanon in South African political history*

Franz Fanon's work has been relevant in South African politics for nearly fifty years. The first known reference to Fanon by a South African was by Steve Biko, leader of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. Biko grounded this movement in the work of Fanon in the early 1970s (Gibson, 2011:xi). Most recently, in 2020 the EFF held readings of Fanon's works on two occasions, praising him as a "very important revolutionary" on their YouTube channel (EFF, 2020).

4.2.2 Fanon: On Violence

“On Violence”, the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, is Fanon’s primary work on violence. Fanon makes it unequivocally clear that the colonised must liberate themselves, and that this process of decolonization is “always a violent event” (Fanon, 2014:1). It will be indicated here that Fanon believes violence to be the only method of true decolonization, and that the use of violence within the realms of decolonization is fair and just.

4.2.2.1 Violence as the only possible mode of decolonization

Despite stating that decolonization is always a violent event, Fanon believes true decolonization to be absolute, thus the absolute and total “*substitution of one species of mankind by another*” (Fanon, 2014:1). He continues: “*Decolonization ... can be summed up in the well-known words: ‘The last shall be first’ ... the last can be the first only after a murderous and decisive confrontation between the two protagonists*” (Fanon, 2014:3). He does not see violence as an option among many, but qualifies this confrontation in absolute terms. The reality of the colonized can “*only be challenged by out and out violence*” (Fanon, 2014:3). No union is possible between the ‘native’ sector and the ‘European’ sector for Fanon. He states: “*there is no conciliation possible, one of them is superfluous*” (Fanon, 2014:4). This is supported by the idea that the “*colonist always remains a foreigner*” (Fanon, 2014:5) – thus no amount of appropriation can make a colonist a native. The colonial world must be either buried “*deep within the earth or banish(ed) from the territory*”.

Fanon makes the assumption that “*colonized masses intuitively believe that their liberation must be achieved and can only be achieved by force*” (Fanon, 2014:33). He asserts this assumption by stating: “*They (the colonized peoples) know that such madness alone can deliver them from colonial oppression.*”

4.2.2.2 Violence as justifiable

For Fanon, violence in a decolonial setting can often times be justifiable and fair. “*You are rich because you are white, and you are white because you are rich*” (Fanon, 2014:5) – this quote of Fanon’s is frequently quoted, and it expresses the idea that skin colour and privilege are directly linked to each other for Fanon. The source of this wealth for the colonist is the colonial system (Fanon, 2014:2). Violence becomes, for Fanon, an instrument by which the native can free himself intellectually, and regain his society. “*The arrival of the colonist signified syncretically the death of indigenous society ... For the colonized, life can only materialize from the rotting cadaver of the colonist*” (Fanon, 2014:50). While absolutism rears

its ugly head here, it is also made clear that the native can only prosper after violence has been committed. Violence is justified, because of the ends that it produces. A further justification for violence is that justice, for the native inhabitant, is not attainable through due process. Fanon makes this even clearer when he says: “*the colonized subject wastes no time lamenting and almost never searches for justice in the colonial context*” (Fanon, 2014:43).

4.2.2.3 Fanon and the continuing struggle in South Africa

More (2011:173) wrote a chapter titled “*Fanon and the Land Question in (Post)Apartheid South Africa*”, where it is argued that South Africa has a flag-independence, which Fanon warned about. Such a flag-independence is a pseudo-independence, and it stands opposed to authentic independence which emerged from “*reappropriation of power and the land through violent struggle*”. Fanon, in this sense, becomes a critiquing tool of the far left, to criticize the negotiators of peace. These sentiments were repeated in 2015, when Julius Malema, the leader of the EFF, speaking to the Oxford Union, said Nelson Mandela, the first president of South Africa post-Apartheid, was a “*staged, managed Mandela, who compromised the principles of the revolution, which are captured in the freedom charter*” (Malema, 2015). The idea that a negotiated peace is a pseudo-peace, and that the struggle is not over, which originated with Fanon, is currently a relevant theme in South African politics.

4.2.3 Conclusion to Fanon

In order to avoid misconstruing the works of Franz Fanon, this section relied heavily on direct quotes, from an approved translation of Fanon’s literature. It can be concluded, based upon the words of Franz Fanon himself, that he believed violence to be the only way in which true decolonisation can be achieved, and that he believed violence to be justified in certain settings, especially with regard to native peoples using violence against people of European origin. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the works of Fanon are both relevant and popular amongst radical actors in contemporary South African politics, therefore conclusions about the work of Franz Fanon are conclusions that are of note in South African politics.

5. Alternatives to revolution as method of transformation

This article set out to identify the actors of radical transformation in South Africa, to define radicalism and find the source of international and South African

revolution, and finally to propose an alternative mode of social progress. The reason why such a proposal is necessary, is due to the destructive nature of subversive revolution. One of the most famous reactions to any revolution is that by Edmund Burke, to whom reference has been made.

5.1 Burke

Burke defies the French Revolution in two ways: Principle and practice (Burke, 2012).

Burke realised that the French Revolution was the summit of two centuries worth of Enlightenment thinking, and that simply criticising the fruits of this Enlightenment philosophy would be temporary if the roots were not laid bare. Burke did, however, also offer his sincere fears regarding the practice and eventual outcome of the Revolution. Criticism on principle and practice is interspersed throughout *Reflections on the Revolutions in France*, but it is in a later work: *An Appeal from the new to the old Whigs* (Burke, 1887) that Burke's criticism of principle, and inevitably of practice, comes to the fore most clearly: "*Dark and inscrutable are the ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of Nature are not of our making.*" This phrase criticises an idea that lies at the heart of Enlightenment philosophy – that of the State of Nature (see pt. 4.1). The idea that mankind may with absolute certainty make assumptions regarding the decisions and endeavours of the first human beings seem illogical and impractical to Burke, and this quote underlines that. From this basis, Burke defends his worldview, and his defence of and reverence for tradition (Burke, 1887:114).

Burke's criticism of Enlightenment philosophy touches on a great many points, but four are relevant to this article:

- Liberty as an inheritance,
- the idea of empirical governmental science,
- caution in change, and
- the loss of direction.

Each will be briefly unpacked.

It was the stance of Enlightenment philosophers, and consequently of Thomas Paine, that liberties are inherent to all those who are born, thus, all human beings. Burke questions this point of view, by stating that liberties are much rather an inheritance. We have freedom to act and live in a certain way because those who came before us laboured and realised these freedoms for themselves and their descendants. Burke states: "*You will observe that*

from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity" (Burke, 2012:37). The idea of liberties born into man, which translates into modern human rights, is based on an abstract idea of man and of freedom. Burke means to say that the basic, obvious, and palpable freedoms which we enjoy are inherited, not inborn.

A second idea which must be noted in opposition to Enlightenment philosophy, in opposition to the French Revolution, and currently in opposition to the National Democratic Revolution in South Africa, is the idea that an "Empirical Science of Government" is superior to the chain of human experience. Burke asks (2012:34): "*What is the use of discussing a man's abstract right to food or medicine? The question is upon the method of procuring and administering them. In that deliberation I shall always advise to call in the aid of the farmer and the physician rather than the professor of metaphysics.*" Burke, in thus stating, comes to an essential criticism of revolution: It brings about an untested and unrealistic system into a real and fallible world.

The third of Burke's criticisms is that of cautionary change. Revolution, as it has historically been understood, and as it has been defined in this article, aims to uproot the existing order, and to construct a new order on top of its ruins. Burke warns against this in no uncertain terms, famously stating that we should "*approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude*" (Burke, 2012:53). Those who trample on the legacies of leaders who ruled before them are clearly warned by Burke that this is not the best way forward. A profound humility, as well as an awareness of man's own fallibility when bringing about change comes to the fore as a clear message in Burke's warning.

The fourth and final warning by Edmund Burke which is derived from the countless warnings that he offers, is that revolution leads to a loss of moral direction. "*We fear God; we look up with awe to kings, with affection to parliaments, with duty to magistrates, with reverence to priests, and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is natural to be so affected*" (Burke, 2012:72). Burke sees in religion and custom a source for social order.

Essential to all of Burke's criticisms of revolution that are stated above, is the central theme of human fallibility. Human minds cannot conjure up ideas that are without shortcomings, that can clearly envision the future, and that hold themselves to be divine.

5.2 *Christian approach to social progress*

When Edmund Burke discusses the fallibility of human reason, he echoes the thoughts of Christian thinkers, perhaps Thomas Aquinas above all, who stated that *lex humana* or human laws can never truly be eternal (Aquinas, 2008). In the Christian tradition it is believed that the principles underlying a good life, including how to act when oppressed, or when you have newly entered government, are to be found in the Bible, which Christians confess to be the infallible word of God (Geisler, 2010:16).

While destructive and subversive revolution undermines the principles of the Bible (Geisler, 2010:258), there are ways for citizens and groups to be disobedient to government, or to bring about social change, without causing the social and physical destruction of a revolt. Refusing to oppose government is referred to as “radical patriotism”, which sanctifies government illegitimately (Geisler, 2010:244). This subsection cites civil disobedience in the Bible, that happened in accordance with the principles of the Bible. Then the core principles of Christian civil disobedience are identified. Finally a possible Christian approach to social progress is outlined.

5.2.1 *Examples of civil disobedience in the Bible*

The Bible includes various examples of civil disobedience which did not oppose biblical principles. In Acts 4 it is recounted how the apostles Peter and John were warned by the Sanhedrin, the local Jewish government in Jerusalem, to not evangelise people anymore. They answer with these words: “*But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard”* (NIV Bible, Acts 4:19-20). These apostles invoke the right in “God’s eyes” as of higher value than the right in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, creating a hierarchy of power which negates the position of earthly power.

In the Old Testament book of Daniel there is an elaboration on King Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image. After this statue had been erected, a herald loudly proclaimed: “*Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace”* (NIV Bible, Daniel 3:4-6). Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego, three Jewish men in Babylon, refuse to comply. Upon being summoned before the king, they state: "*King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up*" (NIV Bible, Daniel 3:16-18). As with Peter and John after them, these men clearly define a hierarchy of leadership, with "*the God we serve*" being supreme to the will of the government.

While both previous cases state an ideological difference and a choice of faith, the Bible mentions more blatant examples of civil disobedience. 1 Kings 18 states how Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab, was "*killing off the LORD's prophets*" (NIV Bible, 1 Kings 18:4). In direct opposition to the royal will, Obadiah, the palace administrator, "*had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water*" (NIV Bible, 1 Kings 18:4). While choosing to do God's will rather than the king's, Obadiah also chose against evil and violence. The same would be true of the Hebrew women who saved Hebrew babies from death in Egypt against the Pharaoh's will, as Exodus 1:17 states.

5.2.2 Principles of Christian civil disobedience

Christian disobedience means refusal to obey a direct command, but not to revolt against it (Geisler, 2010:251). This necessarily implies non-violence, and nonviolent resistance, accompanied with taking the punishments handed down for disobeying human law (Geisler, 2010:251). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego enter the furnace rather than violently revolt against the king. Where possible, it should be fled from, as in the case of Obadiah's priests, where impossible, it should be refused, and the penalties accepted (Geisler, 2010:251). Romans 13:1 offers a foundation for the source of power, when it states: "*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God*" (NIV Bible, Romans 13:1), reiterated by Acts 5:29: "*We must obey God rather than human beings!*"

5.3 *Alternatives to revolution: In conclusion*

The alternatives posed to revolution and violence in this section offer direct rebuttals to canonical Enlightenment Philosophers who planted the seeds of revolution, to revolutionary thinkers such as Marx and Fanon who theorised on practical revolutions, and finally also to radical actors in the current South African context.

5.3.1 *Human reason and fallibility*

For Descartes, Hobbes and Kant (4.1), the intellect of the currently living human is superior, and a human State of Nature becomes the starting point of reasoning. Burke opposes and rebuts this point, critiquing the philosophical roots of revolutionary thinking.

5.3.2 *Violence as absolute versus nonviolence*

For Franz Fanon there is no other way of decolonisation, and thus of causing meta-social change, than violent struggle. The biblical examples and principles here discussed prove that an alternative is possible, and that violence is neither necessary nor right.

6. Conclusion

This article set out to identify the current approach to social change and progress in South Africa, and identified a radical, mostly left-leaning group of actors pushing South Africa in a direction through a slow revolution, but a revolution none the less. In considering the violent and destructive failures that revolutions have brought about in the past, this article first indicated the roots of modern revolution, then specified the roots of violent revolution in a formerly colonial context. Finally, this article indicated that the core assumptions of radicalism are highly dangerous and racially divisive.

It can be concluded that a radical philosophy of transformation based upon the premises that one group or ideology or race must be pushed out before the other can flourish and this indeed underpins various actors in the South African political sphere. This radical philosophy is not the only possible approach, and there are alternatives to consider. Based upon the historical success of revolt, it would seem as if the alternatives would serve the country better than the current ideologies.

Bibliography

- ANC. 2018. *Strategy and tactics of the African National Congress As adopted by the 54th National Conference 2017*. In: Politicsweb: <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/the-ancs-strategy--tactics-2017> – Accessed 3 June 2021
- ANON. 2019. #JuliusMalema tells EFF supporters: We want white people to be our domestic workers. IOL News, Feb 25, 2019. < <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/juliusmalema-tells-eff-supporters-we-want-white-people-to-be-our-domestic-workers-19496146> >
- ANON. 2020. Malema, EFF, may be in trouble over ‘Kill the Boer’. The Citizen, 16 October 2020. <<https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/courts/2371719/malema-eff-may-be-in-trouble-over-kill-the-boer-video/> >
- AQUINAS, T. 2008. *Selected Philosophical Writings* (T. McDermott (Ed.); 3d Edition). Oxford University Press.
- BÖTTICHER, A. 2017. Towards academic consensus definitions of radicalism and extremism. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 11(4):73-77.
- BURKE, E. 1887. *The works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. Vol. 04* (1st ed.). London:John C. Nimmo.
- BURKE, E. 2012. *The revolution in France. Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, 2, 1235-1304.
- DUVENHAGE, A. 2005. Politieke transformasie – ’n konseptuele oriëntering en Suid-Afrikaanse toepassing. *Acta academia*, 37(3):1-40.
- DUVENAGE, A. 2007. Politieke Transformasie as ’n ideologiese denkraamwerk: ’n beleidsdinamiese analise en perspektief. *Koers*, 72(3) 2007:377-403
- EFF, C. of the. 2019. Constitution of the EFF. *Medical Entomology and Zoology*, 1(2):1-29. <https://doi.org/10.7601/mez.55.184>
- FANON, F. 2014. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Translated by Richard Philcox). Grove Press.
- GEISLER, N.L. 2010. *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options* (Second Edn). Baker Academic.
- GIBSON, N. 2011. Fanonian Practices in South Africa: From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo. In: M. Ralphs (Ed.), *Social Movement Studies*, 1st ed., 12(Issue). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.830569>

- HOBBS, T. 2016. *Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (Longman Library of Primary Sources in Philosophy)*. Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (Longman Library of Primary Sources in Philosophy). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315507613>
- MAHLATI, N. 2018. The “proposed” nationalisation of the South African Reserve Bank: a coherent or fallacious proposal? in *Faculty of ILw, University of Pretoria (master's dissertation)* (November). University of Pretoria.
- MAILOLA, P. 2021. *EFF Online*.
- MARX, K., & ENGELS, F. 2016. Manifesto of the communist party. In: *Social Theory Re-Wired: New Connections to Classical and Contemporary Perspectives: Second Edition*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315775357>
- METTLER, K. August 22, 2019. Washington Post <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/08/22/south-africa-bans-most-displays-apartheid-flag-symbol-crime-against-humanity/> – accessed 5 November 2020.
- MODISE, K. 2019. ANC: We have confidence in black professionals, black managers. Eyewitness News, 26 February 2019. < <https://ewn.co.za/2019/02/27/anc-we-have-confidence-in-black-professionals-black-managers> >
- MORE, M.P. 2011. Fanon and the Land Question in (Post)Apartheid South Africa. In: *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives*, Gibson (Ed.) 173-185 pp.
- MSIMANG, S. 2015. The end of the Rainbow Nation Myth. *New York Times*, 12 August 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/13/opinion/the-end-of-the-rainbow-nation-myth.html> Date of access: 23 March 2021
- MYBURGH, P.L. 2019. *Gangster State: Unravelling Ace Magashule's Web of Capture*. Cape Town: Penguin Randomhouse Publishers.
- NDABA, B. 2020. IOL news, Public can vote for relocation of apartheid and colonial statues, says Mthethwa, 6 November 2020.
- POPLAK, R. 2020. *Daily Maverick*: Radical Economic Transformation is upon us but it is not what you thought it would be. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-03-radical-economic-transformation-is-upon-us-but-it-is-not-what-you-thought-it-would-be/> – accessed 10 November 2020
- RESULTS DASHBOARD. 2019. Published by the Independent Electoral Commission. Viewed 14 March 2021. <https://www.elections.org.za/NPEDashboard/app/dashboard.html>
- ROUSSEAU, J.J. 2010. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The social contract. In: *The Social Contract*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/UPO9781844653591.010>

- SACP. 1991. *Manifesto of the South African Communist Party*, 1(8):1-13.
- SCRUTON, R. 2007. The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought. *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230625099>
- SLOVO, J. 1988. The South African Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution. Umsebenzi Discussion Pamphlet. Published by the South African Communist Party
- SNOW, D. & CROSS, R. 2011. Radicalism within the Context of Social Movements: Processes and Types. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(4):115-130. <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.5>
- SOUTH AFRICA. 2003. *The Law on Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment*, 53 of 2003.
- THE MIDDAY REPORT WITH MANDY WIENER. 2018. *Talkradio 702*. 28 February 2018. Available at: <https://www.702.co.za/articles/293816/land-expropriation-anc-will-push-for-a-watered-down-version-of-eff-demands> – Accessed: 15 March 2021.