

South Africa'S Land Confiscation

Going the way of Zimbabwe

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South Africa is experiencing considerable trouble these days, as Martin mentioned in a commentary a few weeks back. This past Tuesday, South Africa's parliament passed a motion. It was brought by a radical left party called Economic Freedom Fighters, who are essentially Communist, and their leader is a man, a radical Marxist, named Julius Malema. He brought this to the floor of the parliament, and his idea was that they should carry out land expropriation from white farmers without compensation, and it passed. This land expropriation—basically confiscation—is an integral cog in the ruling African National Congress government's platform under the new president by the name of Cyril Ramaphosa.

As I mentioned, the motion passed in a landslide vote: 241 to 83, roughly three to one. The country's constitution has to be amended for this to take place. This is not something that they voted on to implement. It merely is something that they voted on to get the ball rolling so that this will happen. So they're going to have to amend the constitution to allow for the confiscation of white owned land without compensation. There are a few bureaucratic hurdles that have to be leapt before this can happen, but the black parties in South Africa have the votes to do this.

In Malema's version of the bill, he goes so far as to say not even the blacks will own the land after it's confiscated. Remember, he's a Marxist; the government will own the land and some bureaucrat or a group of bureaucrats will allocate it to those who they determined need it. Malema proclaimed the time "for reconciliation is over; now is the time for justice." Just two years ago, he told his supporters he was "not calling for the slaughter of white people, *at least for now*." Very ominous words. It appears that South Africa is going the way of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), under another Marxist by the name of Robert Mugabe.

The following, from an article titled "How to Kill a Country," by Samantha Power, appeared in the December 2003 issue of *The Atlantic* magazine. It's a fairly long quotation here:

[Zimbabwe's] economy in 1997 was the fastest growing in all of Africa; now [in 2003] it is the fastest shrinking. A onetime net exporter of maize, cotton, beef, tobacco, roses, and sugarcane now exports only its educated professionals, who are fleeing by the tens of thousands. Although Zimbabwe

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has some of the richest farmland in Africa, children with distended bellies have begun arriving at school looking like miniature pregnant women.

How could the breadbasket of Africa have deteriorated so quickly into the continent's basket case? The answer is Robert Mugabe ... who by his actions has compiled something of a "how-to" manual for national destruction. ... The Zimbabwe case offers some important insights. It illustrates the prime importance of accountability as an antidote to idiocy and excess. It highlights the lasting effects of decolonization—limited Western influence on the continent and a reluctance by African leaders to criticize their own. And it offers a warning about how much damage one man can do, very quickly. ...

Mugabe decided on what he called "fast-track land reform" only in February of 2000, ... [when] he played the race card and the land card. "If white settlers just took the land from us without paying for it," the President declared, "we can, in a similar way, just take it from them without paying for it." ...

Generally the farms have not been given to black farm managers or farm workers. Indeed, because of their association with the opposition, more than a million farm workers and their dependents have been displaced, and they are now at grave risk of starvation. In fact, the beneficiaries of the land seizures are, with few exceptions, ruling-party officials and friends of the President's. Although Mugabe's people seem to view the possession of farms as a sign of status ... these elites don't have the experience, the equipment, or, apparently, the desire to run them. About 130,000 formerly landless peasants helped the ruling elites to take over the farms, but now that the dirty work is done, many of them are themselves being expelled.

The drop-off in agricultural production is staggering. Maize farming, which yielded more than 1.5 million tons annually before 2000, is this year [2003] expected to generate just 500,000 tons. Wheat production, which stood at 309,000 tons in 2000, will hover at 27,000 tons this year. Tobacco production, too, which at 265,000 tons accounted for nearly a third of the total foreign-currency earnings in 2000, has tumbled, to about 66,000 tons in 2003.

From other sources, I found that in the same period, GDP (Gross Domestic Product)

declined by half roughly—it went from over \$7 billion to a little bit over \$3 billion. Inflation was up 7600%. Eighty percent—you know how we say we we think that we have pretty much full employment at 5% [unemployment], roughly, in this country? Eighty percent of the people in Zimbabwe were unemployed. Only 20% of its children were in school, and—listen to this, if you don't think this was life altering—life expectancy dropped from somewhere in the mid-60s for men and women to age 34 for women and 36 for men, all because some Communist named Robert Mugabe decided to take the land and use it to reward his cronies.

The same sort of thing is beginning to happen in South Africa. We've seen signs of this for for years that it would happen, but now the ball has really started to roll. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, about half a million white South Africans have left the country in the last 30 years, and more than 100,000 are expected to emigrate in the next five years. It's increasing very quickly. A lady named Emma Waldorf—she's a consultant at a migration firm in Cape Town—said her agency has also seen an increase in those who are wanting to leave, and the places they want to go are Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the U.S. She notes, "We're finding that is not only white people wanting to emigrate; we are increasingly getting queries from clients that are black, colored, and Indian. They're seeing the writing on the wall, too, that this country is about to go down the drain and they don't want to get caught up in it."

She also said that those who are leaving—listen to this—those who are leaving were skilled professionals, tradespeople, craftsman. Those people who can make make things that other people want—entrepreneurs and experienced corporate employees. She concluded, "We're quickly losing all of our skilled workers."

That's exactly what happened in Zimbabwe once Robert Mugabe got on his roll. So Robert Mugabe's plan to destroy a nation is being put into place in South Africa as quickly as they can make it happen. And it is only a matter of time before South Africa begins to look much like Zimbabwe.