

## **Tsvangirai utterances: is there method in the madness?**

In Act 2, Scene 2 of one of William Shakespeare's well known plays, Hamlet, set in the Kingdom of Denmark. Polonius, a character in the play and the King's chief counsellor asks Hamlet the Prince of Denmark who was exhibiting strange behavioural traits:

*"What is the matter, my lord? Between who? Hamlet answers, "I mean the matter that you read, my lord. Polonius further retorts: Hamlet answers" Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward" and on the side Polonius concludes "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it"*

My expression, "is there method in the madness," derives from this comical scene, The politic Polonius, convinced that Hamlet is truly mad, nonetheless recognizes in his speech some "method"—that is, a kind of artfulness and order. The question for us Zimbabwe is that is there method in Morgan Tsvangirai's utterances. Is there method in his unsolicited utterances in praise of President Robert Mugabe? Is there some artfulness or order that is intended or they are merely a series of blunders inconsistent with the will and aspiration of the people of Zimbabwe.

At an MDC-T 11th year anniversary meeting held in Gokwe last Saturday, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai told about 5000 people gathered that he and President Robert Mugabe had agreed to hold elections next year that would put an end to the unity agreement. "When I last saw President Mugabe he said the prevailing peace was ideal for us to go for an election and this time we agreed that whoever loses should make way for the winner," Tsvangirai said. Huh, blunder—Any smart aleck would have thought a prudent leader might actually have taken President Robert Mugabe on the matter and get him to hold a press conference on the matter. Not that would bind President Robert Mugabe to the sentiment expressed, but it would at least go a long way into making Tsvangirai look more capable.

Less than a week later Morgan Tsvangirai tells David Smith of the Guardian UK newspaper that Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe has made a positive contribution He described his weekly meetings with the president as "cordial" saying of Mugabe, "he's as human as you are". "Because he will want to secure his legacy, he will not want to be remembered as a villain," Tsvangirai said. He referred to Mugabe's liberation war credentials saying he was a liberator and a founding father of the nation. Huh, another blunder. I can understand why this drew the ire of many Zimbabweans.

For instance, did the Prime minister consider how those who had their own liberation war legacies tempered with through tempestuous political charges disguised as criminal charges might have felt. Liberation war heroes like Joshua Nkomo, Canaan Banana, Ndabaningi Sithole, Lookout Masuku, Eddison Zvogbo and many others are probably turning in their graves. There are many that are more deserving of the title “founding father of the nation”.

The above scenarios are not exclusive. There are many other incidences on record that have caught the Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai throwing unsolicited praises at President Robert Mugabe. In fact the unsolicited praises of President Robert Mugabe by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai must be read in the context of admiration for the man and nothing more. That there is method in this madness, I have my doubts. In fact his unsolicited praise singing is reminiscent of the late Tony Gara, the former Harare mayor and deputy minister in the ZANU PF government (May his soul rest in peace) who once described President Robert Mugabe as “*God’s other son*”. Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai has been at pains to tell the whole wide world President Robert Mugabe is the most misunderstood man in the world. He keeps praising the man even when the man pummelled him and his lieutenant Nelson Chamisa to near death less than three years ago. An incident broadcast and condemned the world over.

Is it possible that Morgan Tsvangirai, despite being the leader of the MDC-T party bears many similarities to the man he so aptly praises. For instance during his campaign days before the March 2008 harmonised elections, he campaigned in Matabeleland and the Midlands on the ticket that he will do something proactively about Gukurahundi along the lines of restorative justice. The people of Matabeleland and the midlands voted passionately for him and his MDC-T party. This resulted in him being ushered into government. A position he enjoys today. The people of Matabeleland and midlands have not heard anything on the matter since. They will probably hear about it again during the next election campaign trip. Is it possible that Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai political indoctrination as a ZANU PF cadre has contributed significantly to what he is today? Zimbabwe should overlook this disturbing trait at their own peril.

A cursory look at Morgan Tsvangirai’s early political life is indicative of the origin of this disturbing trait that is so familiar, familiar because we have lived with it over the last thirty years. Those that argued before that there was method in his madness, in his constant and consistent praise of President Robert Mugabe and empty rhetorical promises are surely beginning to have their reservations over the man’s qualities as a leader. In an editorial carried in Wilf Mbanga’s newspaper, The Zimbabwean in an article entitled “**Tsvangirai skating on thin ice**” Morgan Tsvangirai’s sense of judgement is questioned over a number of pronouncements he has made “that have left even the staunchest of his supporters questioning the ability of the MDC-T leader to wade through Zimbabwe’s booby-trapped political landscape without compromising the struggle for democracy”.

What the writer of the article in The Zimbabwean stops short of saying is that Morgan Tsvangirai is being true to his early politicisation process in ZANU PF. Morgan Tsvangirai joined ZANU PF as a young cadre aged 28 in 1980 and became an ardent Robert Mugabe supporter. He rose swiftly in the ZANU PF hierarchy and eventually becoming one of the party's senior officials. He is remembered for his revolutionary roles in the youth league of which he was a member in 1983. The youth league back then is the equivalent of today's Border Gezi green bombers.

After he was seconded to the newly formed ZANU PF backed workers union, the ZCTU (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) the umbrella trade union organization of Zimbabwe. Of which he was to become the Secretary-General in 1989. He eventually used this as a launch pad for his political career when he, the organisation began to question the policies of the ZANU PF government. Questions still abound over his role in the youth league, especially during the period of the massacres in the midlands and Matabeleland generally known as the Gukurahundi massacres. It is no secret that the ZANU PF youth league of which he was an active member played a role in the massacres.

Morgan Tsvangirai was entrusted by the people of Zimbabwe in the last election to fight for democracy and deliver the people of Zimbabwe from the clutches of a regime that has held on to power for the sole purposes of plunder and domination. Since his inauguration as the leader of the MDC-T he has been making one blunder after another. The latest series of blunders are merely a continuation of this madness and there is surely no method in the madness. Zimbabweans can ill afford a president with a propensity to blunder so consistently with the lives of the people., just in case he blunders them into another dictatorship.

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