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RADICAL LAND REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA – A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE?

Abstract

A great deal of political rhetoric has been uttered regarding radical economic transformation that includes calls for more radical land reform proposals. This rhetoric is the source of political mobilisation in both the governing African National Congress (ANC), as well as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) opposition. While the ANC call for the end of the willing buyer, willing seller principle in land reform policies and legislation in line with their National Democratic Revolution (NDR), the EFF support a more extreme expropriation without compensation approach. Both these approaches can be regarded as forms of radical land reform that are grounded in their specific ideological orientations. Since no academic definition exists regarding the concept “radical land reform”, it is necessary that this is conceptualised. In order to analyse the possible implications of radical land reform, this article explores the outcomes of similar approaches in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Zimbabwe. The lessons of this comparative analysis indicate that land reform requires a balance between existing land rights and food security on the one hand, and the urgency for historical redress and redistribution on the other.

Keywords: Radical land reform; National Democratic Revolution (NDR); African National Congress (ANC); Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF); People’s Republic of China (PRC); Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); Zimbabwe; food security; redistribution; land reform.

Sleutelwoorde: Radikale grondhervorming; Nasionale Demokratiese Rewolusie (NDR); African National Congress (ANC); Ekonomiese Vryheidsvegters (EFF); Volksrepubliek van China (PRC); Unie van Sosialistiese Sowjetrepublieke (USSR); Zimbabwe; voedsel-sekerheid; herverdeling; grondhervorming.

1. INTRODUCTION

A great deal of political rhetoric has been uttered in South Africa relating to radical economic transformation. Transformation in general, and transformation of land ownership in South Africa in particular, is measured in terms of redistribution of ownership from white to black. In racially redistributive terms, transformation of land

ownership has been very slow since the first inclusive democratic elections in 1994. It is for this reason that there have been calls for a different approach to the redistribution of land.

Since the term “radical” is ideological in nature, the recent political rhetoric regarding radical economic transformation requires closer investigation from an ideological perspective. The point of departure for the rhetoric is grounded in the ideological framework of the African National Congress (ANC), namely the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). The NDR is rooted in Marxist-Leninism and is defined as, “A process of struggle that seeks to transfer power to the people and transform society into a non-racial, non-sexist, united democratic one, and changes the manner in which wealth is shared, in order to benefit all the people” (ANC 2012:70).

An academic discussion around transformation of land ownership within an ideological context requires that the terms “transformation” and “ideology” be defined. Eckstein (1988:798) defines transformation as, “the use of political power and artifice to engineer radically changed social and political structures, thus culture patterns and themes; to set society and polity on a new course toward unprecedented objectives”. This definition is supported by Duvenhage (2007:283) who describes transformation as, “the fast, progressive, comprehensive, and fundamental political change of society, that arises from an unacceptable past, which takes on the form of central planning (social engineering and political manipulation), often driven by hegemony, with an emphasis on the management of change in general and conflict management in particular”.

Ideology, on the other hand, is defined by Heywood (1997:41) as, “a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis for organised political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power relationships”. Sargent (1990:2) expands on this definition by defining ideology as, “a value system or belief system accepted as fact or truth by some group. It is composed of sets of attitudes toward the various institutions and processes of society. It provides the believer with a picture of the world both as it is and as it should be, and, in doing so, it organises the tremendous complexity of the world into something fairly simple and understandable”.

The above definitions indicate that while the ideological basis, the NDR, is the framework of ideals that needs to be achieved, transformation remains both an instrument and an outcome. In this regard, the ANC view one of the outcomes of a national democratic society as placing, “a high premium on redistribution of land in both urban and rural areas, for the benefit of those who were denied access under colonialism” (ANC 2012:26). It must be noted that the apartheid era is regarded by the ANC as, “colonialism of a special type”, during which time South Africa was viewed as an imperialist state with black people being the colony. The implication of this approach is that the wealth of

the white minority had been achieved by the exploitation of an impoverished black people through a system of racial capitalism (SACP 2010:1). While many may criticise this ideological approach, it is not possible to ignore the effects of colonialism and of apartheid policies and legislation. The infamous Natives Land Act (Act 27 of 1913) remains the symbol of past dispossession of black people's land by a white minority. One of the most famous quotes explaining the effect of the Natives Land Act was from Sol Plaatje's political tract, *Native life in South Africa?*, in which he stated, "Awakening on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (Holden and Plaut 2012:305).

Radical land reform is often regarded as a form of retribution for past injustices, instead of redistribution that redresses these injustices. In this respect Cousins (2016) indicates that, "Political rhetoric on land draws on a narrative in which white farmers and foreigners are villains, black South Africans are victims, and government (or an opposition party, or civil society activists) are heroes riding to the rescue. A political imaginary centred on race tends to dominate land discourse. For many young activists today, 'land' seems to connote the nation, sovereignty and control of the economy as a whole, rather than a resource used for food production. The dual meanings of 'land' in English elide the difference, but in nationalist and populist discourses such elisions help to mobilise supporters".

Since the issue of radical land reform appears to be a feature of political discussion in South Africa, a conceptualisation of the term "radical land reform" will benefit further political and academic discourse on the topic. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of some countries that are regarded as having implemented radical land reform will supply greater insights into the implications of this approach. The countries chosen for this purpose are the People's Republic of China (PRC), the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Zimbabwe. These countries supply both historical and contemporary perspectives on the implications of radical land reform. The article is restricted to the broad ideological and political issues relating to the conceptualisation of radical land reform in the form of comparative case studies and will not delve into the current or proposed legislative proposals regarding land reform in South Africa.

2. A CONCEPTUALISATION OF RADICAL LAND REFORM

In order to conceptualise the term "radical land reform", it is important to define the concepts "land reform" and "radical".

2.1. A conceptualisation of the term “land reform”

Land reform must be differentiated from land restitution and land tenure. Roodt (cited in Hendricks 2013:39-40) defines restitution in relation to, “the restoration of land rights lost through the direct application of apartheid laws”. Land tenure is broadly defined within a South African context by Lahiff (2009:93) as, “policies that seek to strengthen the property rights of those who already occupy land under various relatively insecure forms of tenure, notably in the communal areas and on commercial farms. It also has relevance for those who obtain land under the redistribution and restitution programmes”. Land reform is often broadly described to include various aspects, such as land redistribution, land restitution and land tenure. For the purposes of this article, land reform is conceptualised within the context of redistribution. In terms of the redistributive aspect of land reform, it is defined as, “an effort by government to modify the distribution of land ownership” (Binswinger-Mkhize *et al.* 2009:3). Meier and Rauch (2005:407) define land reform in its most basic definition as, “redistributing land to the rural poor”, while Martin (1995:1) defines it as, “the redistribution of property or rights in land for the benefit of the landless, tenants and farm labourers”. Within a South African context, land reform has a historical background, rooted in colonialism and apartheid. In South Africa, land reform proposals have the objective of transferring land from white ownership to black or state ownership. According to De Klerk (1991:27), land reform has three basic components:

- It is used in the context of the demand for political rights. This gives land a political dimension which is important within the context of the political transformation of society as a whole.
- It is an attempt to acquire land on which to live.
- It is an attempt to acquire land on which to work and by implication to secure a livelihood.

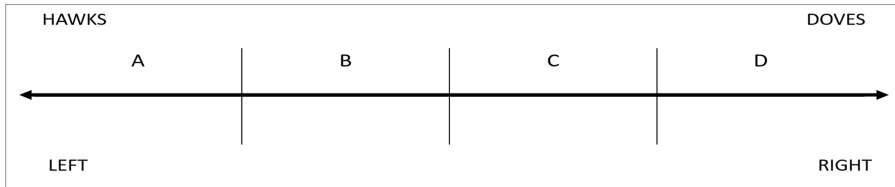
These three components are relevant to processes in which land reform is geared towards rights and production, but have a different meaning within an ideological context such as in the PRC, the former USSR, Zimbabwe and NDR driven proposals in South Africa. From the case studies that follow in the next sections, it is evident that, in cases of ideologically driven land reform, the political objectives outweigh any economic implications of such reforms. In this respect, Martin (1995:9) warns of two recurring issues that must be taken into account in an analysis of land reform programmes. The first is the political commitment by the leadership of the country. Opportunistically conceived land reforms fail because they are politically conceived in order to generate support for a government at a critical time when it best suits them, based on certain political considerations. The second relates to the administrative capacity of governments to implement land reform. Land reform requires a large and widely

distributed group of well-trained field or extension staff who are able to inform people of their entitlements, facilitate legal processes of land acquisition and redistribution, as well as ensure sustainability of land reform through agricultural support services to new and emerging farmers.

2.2. A conceptualisation of the term “radical”

Radicals are known to challenge the most established values of society. During the nineteenth century, extending the franchise to women, popular participation in politics, civil liberties and greater social welfare were often regarded as radical. During the twentieth century and beyond, this extended to some green parties and organisations, as well as those who challenged state-church relationships (McLean and McMillan 2003:455). Nineteenth century radicals may in many societies today be regarded as being *status quo* orientated or even conservative. Susser (1995:28) indicates that Western radicals may advocate economic equality, the redistribution of property and concern for the rights of the impoverished. In the former post-communist Soviet Union, however, state-enforced equality, collective economics and authoritarian politics would be regarded as conservative and radicals would be regarded as being supportive of free enterprise, property rights and individualism.

Radicals are extremely dissatisfied with society as it is, and are impatient with less extreme proposals for change to take place. Radicals want immediate and fundamental changes that may be regarded as revolutionary to take place. Due to the perception that radicals are revolutionaries and are prepared to use violence as a means of change, the reaction to them is often severe (Baradat 1997:17, 21). Radicals may differ from one another in fundamental ways. On the one hand there are radicals who postulate the idea, “I know the good, extend it”, while on the other side there are those who postulate, “I know the evil, eliminate it”. While the former may promote greater involvement in their approach to politics, the latter may promote greater resistance (Stankiewicz 2001:217). Those on the extreme left of the radical spectrum are often referred to as hawks, due to the often violent methods employed by them, while those on the right of this spectrum are referred to as doves, due to the often peaceful methods of protest. The categories from A to D on the diagram below are clarified in the table.



A	<p>Most extreme on the far left of the radical spectrum. Extremely dissatisfied and frustrated by the existing political order. They propose immediate and violent changes to the political order. Society is so corrupt and perverted that only fire will cleanse it. Any compromises with the existing order would compromise and infest the new proposed order. The system must burn down completely and something new must be built on the ruins and ashes.</p>
B	<p>These individuals are dissatisfied and frustrated with the <i>status quo</i>. Since their alternative is less distant from the <i>status quo</i> than the people in Category A, they have a more tempered approach to the type of changes that they would like to see. Although they would like to see immediate changes, Category Bs do not insist on the use of violence.</p>
C	<p>These individuals are dissatisfied and frustrated with the <i>status quo</i>. They differ from Category A and B regarding the use of violence to achieve the proposed changes. They are reluctant to use violence. If they have to choose between change with violence and no change without violence, they would opt for the former.</p>
D	<p>The political pacifists are located here. They propose fundamental and immediate change to the <i>status quo</i>. They refuse to use violence. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. are examples of such people. It is important to note that not all revolutions are violent.</p>

(Extrapolated from Baradat 1997:17-20)

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in radical ideologies in the form of change and protest driven actions, often associated with exponents of anti-globalisation, green initiatives, animal rights and feminist movements. Although these movements have not emerged as a challenge to traditional ideologies, they have brought about a certain amount of ideological renovation. Many of these ideologically based movements are transnational in nature, but manage to mobilize groups of citizens around issues of common interest

at national levels. The convergence of previous class gaps and distinctions in most societies has created new agencies for social, economic and political change. Such movements have introduced new dimensions to inequality and exploitation. The aims of such movements are not only directed towards activism, but also towards introducing a new form of consciousness to society (Schwarzmantel 2008:148-150).

In terms of the above explanations, radical land reform may be conceptualised as policies and legislation that allow for the abrupt and fundamental (often revolutionary) modification of the patterns of land ownership and usage through the redistribution of land from one group to another, using methods that may be regarded as an extrinsic threat to an existing order.

Changing an existing constitution that protects property rights to enable a government to expropriate land without compensation could be regarded as an extreme form of radical land reform. The reversal of the principle of willing buyer, willing seller, while still offering reasonable compensation or implementing land ceilings and restrictions on foreign land ownership could be regarded as a milder form of radical land reform. Other variations of radical land reform will be determined by how dramatically they deviate from an existing political and social order regarding land ownership and land usage, as well as the methods used to achieve these objectives.

An evaluation of case studies using the PRC, the USSR and Zimbabwe will supply insights into the implications of extreme forms of radical land reform.

3. PRC – AN IDEOLOGICAL PENDULUM

With the takeover of mainland China by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, a new radical approach to transformation of land ownership was implemented that was regarded as an agrarian revolution. The new approach was ideologically defined as being an important part of the bourgeois democratic revolution that would eliminate all the remnants of semi-feudalism that had previously characterised Chinese society. It had both political and economic objectives. On a political level it would deprive the landlords (who were most hostile to transformation) of their economic power and political strength, while increasing support of the peasants for the new government. On an economic level, it was seen as a means of restoring and increasing agricultural production. On 28 June 1950, the Agrarian Reform Law was enacted, followed by a campaign to destroy the former oppressors of the peasants. With hundreds of thousands of work teams comprising party, government and People's Liberation Army (PLA) cadres, the peasantry were mobilised behind the revolutionary land reform process. By 1952, about 46 million hectares of land (half of the cultivated land) had changed hands, involving about 300 million peasants. All draught animals, implements and houses were also confiscated and redistributed.

Former landlords were left with enough land to carry on as individual farmers in the peasant category. Any resistance was regarded as counter-revolutionary and was met with violence. It is estimated that, as a result of this programme, there were hundreds of thousands of deaths. The land reform programme satisfied the political objectives of destroying a landed class and distributing land to peasants, but its successes in terms of modernisation or increased agricultural production are negligible (Rodzinski 1988:19-21; Almond and Powell 1992:417).

By 1953, there was a realisation that the land reform programme had not contributed to larger crop yields. The new sentiment of the communist government was that socialism could not be built on the basis of a peasant economy, but rather on the basis of large collective industrial or agricultural undertakings. The new approach required the formation of agricultural co-operatives that would require peasant farmers to give up their land for this enterprise. This took place with great speed and by June 1955 about 16,9 million households were part of the 650 000 co-operatives. This was expected to increase to one million co-operatives, accommodating a third of the 110 million households by 1957. While some cadres were concerned by the speed of this reform, Mao Zedong was adamant that his co-operative approach should be carried out speedily. This process was completed by 1957. Labour, instead of land contributed, was used as a basis for remuneration on the co-operatives that were re-organised into 485 000 collective farms. This process was more successful than Stalin's collectivization in the Soviet Union. By 1978, authorities realised that a system of production in which groups of people who were deprived of initiative, responsibility or decision-making were flawed. After a process of experimentation, it was decided to return to a system of contracting production to households which implied a partial return to individual farming. Between 1982 and 1984, the system of collectivisation broke down as speedily as it had been implemented. The system of contracting land to peasants for 15 year terms encouraged peasant investment and improved stability. This was often regarded as the second land reform under the communist government and signified a liberalisation of land reform programmes. While government quotas had to be met, the new system gave people the power to make their own decisions regarding the economic activities in which they would engage. Surplus was sold on the free market, taxes were paid to government and farm machinery and implements previously used on communes were either purchased or hired. By 1984, over 90% of all tractors in the PRC were privately owned. While ownership of land remained in the hands of the collective, the agricultural output of peasants increased by over 100% and led to an increase in rural industries, such as food processing. As with all other countries, the mechanisation of agriculture led to a surplus of labour that had to be absorbed elsewhere (Rodzinski 1988:33-36, 267-269).

Transformation of any kind inevitably creates expectations of further even greater and faster changes. This was evident in the PRC during student uprisings in the late 1980s. In this respect, Fathers and Higgins (1989:17) indicate that, "What Deng (Xiaoping) could not, or would not, recognize was that the drive to reform and modernize China's economy had inevitably set expectations in train, at least among the intellectual and professional classes, that politics and society would be reformed in their turn, as surely as night follows day". Many economic reforms that include the decollectivisation of the agricultural sector, the introduction of the contract system and the creation of a commodity economy are expected to translate into political reforms. It has been postulated that China's diverse and decentralised regions will not be held together by nationalism and that democratisation in China will be a necessary outcome of changes that were first noticed and implemented in the rural agricultural sector (Khampa 2000:2,4).

The PRC transformation of land ownership is summarised in the table below which illustrates the specific time frames for each.

YEARS	TYPE OF AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION
1949-1952	Large landholdings ended and tenancy destroys the former rural elite.
1952-1955	Cooperatives of 4-10 households (agricultural producers) become the basic accounting units.
1955-1957	Collectivisation begins as smaller cooperatives become the basic units of higher cooperatives, with households retaining small plots.
1957-1959	Private plots are absorbed by communes and become production teams within communes of up to 25 000.
1959-1978	Private plots are returned to households with limited free markets for household food production. The communes are reduced in size and increase to about 50 000 after 1970.
From 1978	Return to family farming and the free marketing of surplus. Land use, draught animals and equipment are transferred to groups or households that incentivise production with individual profits.

(Almond and Powell 1992:418-419)

Lessons learned from the radical PRC approach to land reform indicate that collectivisation programmes do not contribute to improved agricultural output if they are not linked to market forces. The liberalisation that rewarded investment of initiative, labour and private mechanisation on land proved to dramatically improve the Chinese rural agricultural production and local economies. Unlike the USSR, the PRC was able to identify flaws in the radical approaches to collectivisation and to remedy them with a more market orientated liberal approach which dramatically improved agricultural outputs. The Chinese work ethic differs from other countries and makes incentivised market related reforms conducive to improved agricultural production.

4. USSR – A RIGID ROAD TO STARVATION

South Africa has various agricultural projects (some called agri-villages) that display typical characteristics of collectivism. These collectives are implemented on similar principles to the collectivist approach in the former USSR. By investigating the transformation of land ownership in the former USSR between 1917 and 1964, it is possible to learn some important lessons, not only on collectivism, but on the political and economic impacts of radical and violent transformation of land ownership.

With the political victory of the Bolsheviks and the formation of the Soviet Union in 1917 came the birth of institutionalised communism. This had implications for the landed Russian estates. The 1918 Land Decree ordered the immediate partitioning of estates, livestock and implements belonging to the former imperial family and the church, to the peasants. The land became the property of the state and only individuals willing to cultivate it themselves were allowed to use it. The large estates were divided into 25 million individual smallholdings. This was, however, regarded as an interim measure until such time as collectivisation could take place. The arbitrary requisitioning of agricultural produce from peasant smallholdings, in the form of a food levy, led to a great deal of dissatisfaction. By 1921 a New Economic Policy (NEP) was accepted that replaced the food levy with a system of taxation that could not exceed half of the former levies, and surplus could be sold on the open market. This tax was levied progressively so that individuals producing more produce would be taxed more heavily. The reforms were, however, too late to prevent a famine, caused by previous policies, during 1921 and 1922. One of the consequences of the NEP was the realisation that, if peasants were to produce more food, they would require some sort of security in the form of reasonably long term land tenure. These concessions to peasants were known as the *Land Code*. This had an effect on industries across the country, with some industries being leased back to previous owners. The NEP also increased food production and allowed for food rationing, which was established during the famine, to be abolished (Dziewanowski 1979:105-106, 138-139).

By 1927, the government's unwillingness to pay market prices had led to a two million ton shortfall in state grain acquisition and another food crisis in the USSR. The reaction to this by leftist groups was to blame the 5% of peasants who had progressed to the category of owning more land than they could cultivate. They were referred to as Kulaks (fists) and regarded as exploiters, while in reality most were hard working industrious farmers who owned most of the machinery and produced most of the grain. By 1928, the Stalinist government had implemented massive reprisals against the prosperous peasantry by confiscating available food and arresting the Kulaks who were to be "liquidised". A new system of collectivisation of 20% of individual farms was introduced which involved the confiscation of property and its inclusion into collective farms. This

process is believed to have uprooted and destroyed millions of peasants. By the end of 1930, there were about 14 million peasant families on 250 000 collective farms, averaging about 1 200 acres in size, and 4 000 state owned farms, averaging 7 500 acres. While in 1928 nearly 96% of farms were in private hands, by 1938 about 94% were in one form or another controlled by the state.

Management of collective farms was one of the reasons for their failure. Collective farms were meant to elect their own chairpersons, but in practice chairpersons were appointed from above and were Communist Party members. After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev attempted to raise productivity and political support through campaigns aimed at social and political transformation. This did not improve food production, and in 1960 the Soviet Union once again experienced grain shortages which led to the large scale starvation of livestock. The need to purchase grain from Canada and Australia in 1963 due to a drought and in spite of the largest sown area in the history of the country (350 million acres) as part of Khrushchev's plant corn campaign, indicated the magnitude of the failure of the collectivized system. This was acknowledged by Khrushchev who criticised the fact that the input of farmers was not recognised in their rewards. He increased investment in agriculture to 11,5 billion roubles in the two years from 1964 to 1965, compared to 10 billion roubles in the previous four years combined. Additional investment in agricultural machinery, irrigation, chemicals, land reclamation and procurement price rises were adopted as part of long term programmes to improve agriculture. Agriculture soon became the greatest failure of the communist economy in the Soviet Union and led to the overthrow of Khrushchev in 1964, amid increased internal political instability (Dziewanowski 1979:189, 192-195, 349-350, 386; Breslauer 1982:121, 140, 269).

The above example indicates that collectivism as an instrument of land reform failed and led to serious famines in the USSR due to the following reasons:

- The lack of market-driven incentives to produce food.
- The punishment of individuals (Kulaks) who, through their initiatives and efforts, were able to produce more agricultural commodities and, as a result, accumulate more wealth and land than other farmers.
- The imposition of cadres into management positions in collective enterprises does not improve productivity of collectives.
- The central control of commodity prices and the resulting lack of production incentives contribute to poor agricultural outputs.
- Imposing the state as the only buyer and distributor of agricultural commodities does not work, especially when the state is not capacitated to carry out such a task.

5. ZIMBABWE – THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC RUIN

No comparative study on land reform in South Africa can be complete without including Zimbabwe as an example of a modern radical approach to this issue. The fact that Zimbabwe borders on South Africa, the demographic and historical similarities with South Africa, the fall-out in terms of cross border migration and the impact of Zimbabwe's land reform policies on South Africa's political and economic discourse make it imperative that this country's transformation policies are investigated further.

Zimbabwe's colonial history regarding land is similar to that of South Africa. Prior to the fast track land reform policies, land was in the hands of a white minority, while the majority black population were reduced to full-time industrial or mine workers with subsistence-based agricultural activities for migrant labourers and their families on labour reserves. Some commodity production took place on communal reserves that were mostly run by unwaged females whose husbands were working elsewhere. Many such areas were run by traditional authorities. Although this system was not called apartheid, it was very similar to the South African system (Moyo 2013:255-256).

The Zimbabwean land reform model received a large amount of international attention, and land reform in this country was denounced as "land grabs" under a, "corrupt and brutal dictatorship" (Martin 1995:6). The land reform programmes, together with the international reaction, had a negative economic impact that turned the bread-basket of Southern Africa into a so-called basket case. The programmes were based on the 1992 Amendment to the Constitution and the Land Acquisition Act (Act 3 of 1992), aimed at allowing government to acquire 5 million hectares of land from commercial farmers for resettlement. The Act made provision for a number of non-market provisions, such as land valuation procedures to replace the willing buyer, willing seller provisions in determining purchase prices, limits on the number of farms owned, limits on farm size, limits on absentee landlords and foreign ownership and for the designation of areas for land acquisition and resettlement (Martin 1995:6).

This land reform model was carried out in three distinct phases (time frames), as indicated by the table below.

PHASE	TIME FRAME	TYPE OF REFORM
1	1980-1992	Secure predominance of market methods with two sub-phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1980-1985: Political emphasis on engaging with the market and delivering land to the peasantry. Government appeasement of peasantry. • 1985-1992: Redistribution and the fiscal status of the state tapered off. The liberation movement became embourgeoised (urban middle class orientated) which led to a rift between the ruling party and rural populations.
2	1992-1999	Beginning of the official challenge to market methods which led to the threat of compulsory acquisition in 1997 in the context of an encroaching social and political crisis. The Land Acquisition Act in 1992 legalised compulsory acquisition with provisions for compensation and legal recourse. This was done to appease the demands of war veterans and place the spotlight on the 1 470 white commercial farmers promising the transfer of 20% of their land to the veterans.
3	2000-2002	The resolute abandonment of a market approach which was replaced with radical and compulsory acquisition. By 2000, mass land occupations were led by war veterans and by June 2000, about 800 white owned farms had been occupied. By 2002, the “fast track” land reform had expropriated about 90% of white farms (10 million hectares).

(Extrapolated from Moyo and Yeros 2005:183-185, 187-188)

The farmers, farm workers and their families were the main victims of occupations in Zimbabwe. In some rare cases, farm workers supported and joined such occupations, but in many instances they opposed them. In instances where they opposed occupations, they were subjected to violence and forced evictions. The unstructured land reform process often placed the interests of farm workers against those of landless invaders of land. The farm workers were not supported by the government who regarded them as being mobilised by white landowners to vote against constitutional changes and for the political opposition. In the past, unions among farm workers concentrated on issues such as wages and working conditions, and they never engaged on land reform. The land occupations resulted in 150 000 workers being displaced and left destitute (Moyo and Yeros 2005:190-191). Between 2000 and 2015, about 4 800 white farmers and many black commercial farmers were forcibly evicted from their

properties. Approximately one million hectares are still under the control and management of original owners in what is technically known as “Offer Letters”, which are regarded as 99 year leases. About 200 farmers (3% of land affected) accepted compensation offered by the state and relinquished their rights to the land. The compensation amounted to a mere 10% in some instances. However, an extensive registry of land that had been expropriated was kept and this has been used to successfully challenge the Zimbabwean acquisition programmes in various regional and international courts of law (Cross 2016:2-3).

State assisted grassroots transformation of land ownership in Zimbabwe took the country into famine status. The 489 000 unemployed farm workers became part of the 49% of the extremely food insecure part of the population that relied on donations from the United Nations World Food Programme. By 2005, about seven million Zimbabweans were on the brink of starvation. Mugabe gave the state controlled Grain Marketing Board the sole right to import and distribute maize supplies. This enabled the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – the Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and government officials – to use food as a political instrument, since ZANU-PF controlled areas received priority and opposition areas were blocked. Currently there are about 160 000 black smallholder farmers on seven million hectares of land and 28 000 black commercial farmers on two million hectares of land, with about 200 to 300 white commercial farmers left. Although food production has recently improved, the country is still struggling with food insecurity and the economy remains in ruins (Plaut and Holden 2012:325-326; Meredith 2005:645). There has, however, been an increase in cropped land since the implementation of land reform policies. Before 2002, the large scale white owned farmers cropped 700 000 hectares of land that amounted to 20% of arable land. This had increased to 40% of arable land by 2007. The outputs in terms of yields per hectare fell significantly since 2000 and agricultural exports decreased significantly. Although the outputs have improved in recent times, they remain far below the 2002 values. Export commodities, such as tobacco, were grown on the large scale landholdings. By 2004, tobacco output decreased by 72% when compared to the 1990s average, but started to increase by 2011. The reduction in export commodities had a significant impact on Zimbabwe’s economy (Moyo 2013:273). Droughts across the Southern African region further impacted on the existing food security problems in Zimbabwe.

In March 2016, the Minister of Finance in Zimbabwe tabled a memorandum in Parliament that established a special fund to raise money for the administration and payment of compensation to owners of land held in Zimbabwe under freehold tenure. This implies that victims of the so-called “Fast Track Land Reform Programme” could be eligible for compensation for four items, namely the land itself, immovable property and improvements, movable property taken over at the time of acquisition and any legal fees incurred

(Cross 2016:2). The sources of funding for this, however, appear to be as unsure as the political insecurity that the political rhetoric espoused by the country's President continues to create. Furthermore, it has been reported that the new 99-year leases issued to beneficiaries of the land-grabbing are not bankable. Although the Lands Minister, Douglas Mombeshora, indicated that such leases could be used to secure loans, the banks are rejecting the new lease documents. The main reasons for the rejection appear to be based on the lack of skills and infrastructure (Mpfu 2016:24).

While some politicians in South Africa hail Robert Mugabe as an African hero for the manner in which he dealt with white farmers, it cannot be disputed that his methods destroyed Zimbabwe's economy and food security in the process. Much of the fallout in terms of these land reform policies and legislation was because the government lost control of their implementation and allowed this to fall into the hands of violent and unscrupulous land invaders who cared little for the economic, political or social implications of their actions. It also made the state appear weak and unable to control land invaders, which had as bad an impact on investment and the economy as the actual actions of such invaders. The socio-economic and political implications of Zimbabwe's radical land reform policies serve as a valuable lesson for South Africa. They also serve as a warning of what can happen when politicians, faced with growing opposition and seeking ways to divert political pressure and anger, are willing to sacrifice a country for personal political survival. Although South Africa has a much more diverse economy and different rural/urban dynamics than Zimbabwe, the ANC-led regime is facing mounting pressure, and political rhetoric indicates a need for scapegoats who could afford short term political respite for political elites under pressure. In this respect, Zimbabwe looms as an extreme example of how short-sighted ideologically driven policies can impact on the economy of a country and the lives of its people.

6. SOUTH AFRICA'S RADICAL RHETORIC

One of the ANC's founding documents that outlines the ideological struggle against apartheid and for post-apartheid transformation, the 1955 Freedom Charter, pronounces that, "Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and hunger" (ANC 2015). The National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is based on the Freedom Charter and remains the central ideological basis and, to a large degree, also the political strategy through which the governing alliance in South Africa plans to transform South African society.

Speaking at the event celebrating the ANC's 104th anniversary, President Zuma said the pace of land reform, "must be radically accelerated" (Shoba 2016). More recent comments by President Zuma during a speech at the

2017 official opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders have served to emphasise that issues relating to transformation of land ownership are far from resolved. On this occasion the President made the following comments, “The land question is central to the achievement of a National Democratic Society and true reconciliation and empowerment of our people. It is a central issue for traditional leaders. We have identified the weaknesses in the land restitution and redistribution programme. The willing buyer, willing seller principle did not work effectively. It made the state a price taker in an unfair process. In addition, there are too many laws dealing with land reform which cause confusion and delays. The fact remains that land hunger is real” (Zuma 2017). The President continued by explaining the relationship between the NDR and radical economic transformation with the following, “The governing party declared at the last national conference in Mangaung in 2012, that we had entered the second phase in our transition from Apartheid colonialism to a National Democratic Society”. He went on to confirm that this would be implemented by, “radical economic transformation” which means, “fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy, in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female” (Zuma 2017).

Not to be outdone by the ANC, the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Julius Malema, addressed a crowd in Newcastle in November 2016 with the following controversial utterances, “They found peaceful Africans here. They killed them! They slaughtered them, like animals! We are not calling for the slaughter of white people, at least not for now” (*Timeslive* 2016). EFF policy documents indicate that the party would support expropriation without compensation by transferring all land to the custodianship of the state (EFF 2014).

The Black First! – Land First! Movement (BLF) also supports the redistribution of land along strong racial lines with the following comments, “Without land there can be no freedom or dignity. We want Land First because it is the basis of our freedom, our identity, our spiritual well-being, our economic development and culture. The land of Africans was stolen and this theft has rendered us landless in our own land. We want all the land with all its endowments on its surface, together with all the fortunes underground as well as the sky. All of it belongs to us. We are a people crying for our stolen land. We have decided to get it back by any means possible” (BLF 2017).

Various political actors in South Africa, including the President, are calling for radical land reform based on race-based political rhetoric. This has the potential to create political expectations that could be difficult to control. Much of this rhetoric is also viewed against the background of a need to divert political debates away from both post-1994 government failures regarding land reform, as well as a growing internal crisis within the ANC. If redistribution from white

to black ownership is the measurement for the success of land reform, then previous attempts to transform patterns of land ownership have failed dismally.

While the ANC are contemplating a milder form of radical land reform through the reversal of the willing buyer, willing seller principle, the EFF are advocating a more extreme form of radical land reform with an expropriation without compensation approach, similar to that of the PRC, the former USSR and Zimbabwe. The current radical political rhetoric around the issue of land reform will have to be countered with alternatives that can achieve the political outcomes of a need for redress and redistribution, without compromising rural economies and food security.

The latest Regulation of Land Holdings Bill (B – 2017) that includes the implementation of land ceilings and restrictions on foreign land ownership has the following objectives (as quoted, Section Two):

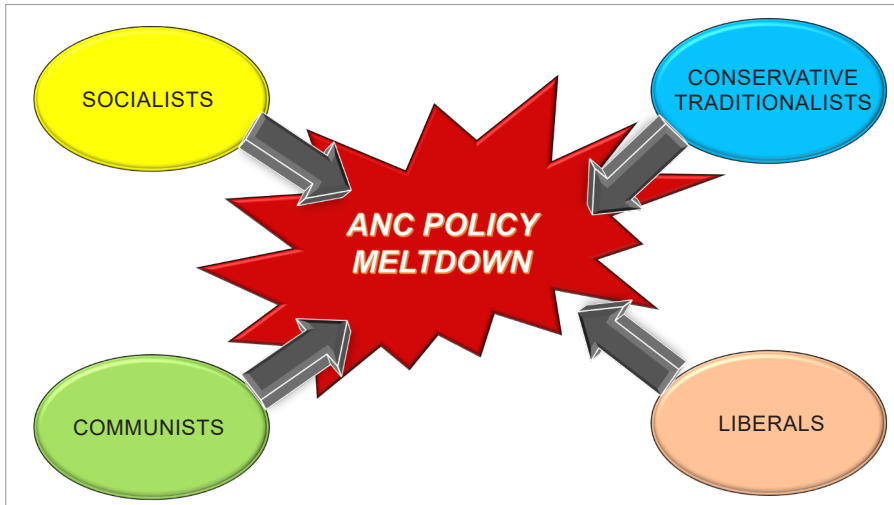
- a. To obtain agricultural land for redistribution in order to support and promote productive employment and income to poor and efficient small scale farmers;
- b. to ensure redress for past imbalances in access to agricultural land;
- c. to promote food security in the Republic;
- d. to provide a transparent and more conducive regulatory framework for the generation and utilisation of policy-relevant information on agricultural land ownership and usage, thereby improving the state's ability to monitor and evaluate its compliance with the constitutional directive to ensure land, tenure and related reforms in respect of land, with the intent of taking measures to redress results of past racial discrimination;
- e. to provide certainty regarding the ownership of public and private agricultural land; and
- f. to enable the state to effectively deliberate on matters of land, natural resource economics, the property market and the extent of land use to meet the policy and legislative intent of the state including its principles and objectives.
- g. While the objectives of this legislation may not be controversial, the methods proposed may be regarded as a moderate form of radical land reform. This proposed legislation could lay the foundation for further more radical land reform legislation in the future, in line with the objectives of the NDR.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The revolutionary nature of the NDR can be regarded as a radical ideological alternative to the current constitutional dispensation. While the ANC supported the current constitutional order and participated in its architecture, it appears that the NDR remains the ideological point of departure, strategy and intended outcome of the party. This is in contrast to the government development plans, such as the National Development Plan (NDP) that include the following proposals regarding land reform:

- The speed of transfers of agricultural land from white to black beneficiaries should be increased without distorting land markets or the confidence of business in the agricultural sector.
- Human resources should be developed through incubators, learnerships, apprenticeships, mentoring and accelerated training in agricultural sciences, in order to ensure the sustainable production of agricultural land.
- Land markets should be monitored against undue opportunism, corruption and speculation through various institutional arrangements.
- Land should be successfully transferred by streamlining the land transfer targets with fiscal and economic realities (NDP 2011:206).

While many individuals in the ANC-run government support the NDP, the President and his faction appear to be exponents of the NDR. The realities of a market driven global economic world order remain serious challenges for a more radical implementation of the NDR. While the NDR as an ideological point of departure drives political rhetoric in South Africa, Johnson (2015:14) indicates that many communist leaders in the governing alliance are frustrated with the lack of real implementation. The diagram below explains how some ideological categories and radical ideologies currently evident within the Tri-partite Alliance create a policy meltdown in government that hampers meaningful dialogue around land reform. The ideological impasse affects not only the implementation of policies and programmes that should complement government's transformation and developmental goals, but also impacts negatively on policy implementation at an administrative level. The ideological see-saw is the most prominent cause of investment inhibiting policy uncertainty in the country. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



(Source: Author's own construct)

The ideological meltdown of the ANC resulted in an increasing use of radical political rhetoric around the most visible racial transformation failure, namely land reform. The white dominated ownership of land is also a source of political mobilisation for politicians who require political scapegoats for their own failures. Added to this is the problem that, contrary to what many people in South Africa might believe, the country is not well-suited for agriculture. A large portion of the country is drought prone and most farms survive as businesses due to the efficient manner in which the land is managed. About 20% of farms supply 80% of all food in the country. Commercial farmers account for 95% of all locally produced food, while the remaining 5% is produced by the approximately 220 000 emerging farmers and two million subsistence farmers. While 69% of land in South Africa is estimated as good for grazing alone, only 13% of land is arable (good for cultivation) and 3% is considered to be high potential agricultural soil (Kotzé and Rose 2015:4-5, 10). This cannot be ignored in discussions around land reform.

While radical land reform proposals form the basis for ongoing political discussions in South Africa, the implications of failed attempts at radical land reform in the PRC, the former USSR and Zimbabwe cannot be ignored. The most serious outcomes of these failures are the impact on food security and the economy. Land reform in South Africa must take into account the need to balance existing property rights and food security against the political pressure for speedier redistribution of land. The economic implications and food insecurity experienced in the countries that implemented radical land reform policies

must serve as a warning to policy makers and legislators in South Africa. The political urgency that is being created around land reform must be countered by inclusive and sound policy and legislative proposals, based on dialogue among all stakeholders.

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