

ANGER AND EXCITEMENT AT LAST NIGHT'S RUMBLE IN THE URBAN JUNGLE

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There was both anger and excitement at last night's Rumble in the Urban Jungle debate but it proved to be a good opportunity to examine widely differing points of view on land expropriation and the consequences for the economy of the country.

The debate was organised by the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry and sponsored by Nandos. The participants were Andile Mngxitama of Black First Land First and economist Dawie Roodt.

Events of this nature encourage people to face up to difficult issues and unpack the various aspects of the problem. I wish to thank everyone present for taking part in the robust but respectful debate and hope that it brings us a little closer to a solution.

In the debate Dr Roodt argued that land was not the real issue as it did not have any intrinsic value and that it was only modern farming methods, technology and investment that gave land its value. Because of this any piece of land in South Africa was at least a 100 times more productive than it had originally been.

He said surveys showed that only 5% of black people considered land to be the most important issue facing the country. The most important issue was unemployment and people wanted jobs in cities rather than land for agriculture.

Wealth was created in the cities and not in agriculture and he pointed out that in every country in the world farms were getting larger and employing fewer people so the answers did not lie in land redistribution.

Mr Mngxitama said the land had been stolen and he represented people who wanted it back and that no real dialogue would be possible until the land had been restored to the descendants of its original occupiers. He predicted that land expropriation would not occur and the only solution was for black people to reoccupy the land even though this would mean bloodshed making a land war was inevitable.

He claimed that 35 000 white people, not enough to fill a stadium, owned 85% of the land.

Mr Mngxitama said that the value of mining in SA was about R20-trillion in terms of the known mineral resources, but mining only employed 400,000 people. This was highly inefficient and a similar situation existed in Agriculture which employed only 700 000. This was inefficient and for that reason these economic sectors should be redistributed.

Zimbabwe was an example and he said that Zimbabwe was 300 years ahead of South Africa and it was now producing enough maize for its own use.



CAPE CHAMBER

OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

In his reply, Dr Roodt said Mngxitama had manipulated the facts, his figures on land ownership were wrong and the claim that Zimbabwe was 300 years ahead of South Africa was absurd.

Mr Mngxitama said there were “black facts” and “white facts.”

Members of the audience said he did not speak for them and that they agreed that the issue was jobs and how to grow the economy for the benefit of all. There were strong objections to Black First Land First’s exclusion of all South Africans other than blacks.

[Click here to watch the recorded version of last night's debate.](#)

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber

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