

Onwards with INTEGRITY

Quest for an honest society necessitates an honest struggle for it. You are the way you struggle

reflex reactions take them back. In seeking to calibrate behaviour, many wait for the guidance of those who fought for freedom to show the way to the future that was invoked in the struggle.

But 18 years later, the national project appears to have been replaced by the self-interest of new political elites. Those who have been waiting for guidance must wait no longer. They must focus on making their contribution to the unfolding mind, spirit and imagination of a new people.

Our Constitution gave us the foundational values that Cabral long foresaw as essential prerequisites for a new society: transparency, honesty and truth. These will be at the heart of a new national community of trust.

The immense possibilities of this trust are severely tested and even assaulted each time something like the public phenomenon of Nkandla comes along, and the public is called upon to accept it despite the deepest intuitions that such acceptance is self-demeaning and violates the integrity of self. Such feelings are shared by millions across the land, whether or not they support the party behind it all.

It is impossible to accept Nkandla without accepting to live with a violated private and public intelligence, and the conscience served by it. This non-acceptance carries with it certain implications.

Firstly, the morality of Nkandla is clear. It is totally unacceptable. Secondly, the legal and governance issues at stake speak to the professional and ethical capability of the state for self-correction. An independent parliamentary inquiry into Nkandla is necessary and essential for this capability to be safeguarded.

This is not so much about a current leader. It is more fundamentally about the impact of current actions on the future of the integrity of government and its processes. The inquiry must determine what happened, how it happened, what players were involved and what their roles were.

And, in particular, where the head of state is involved, the inquiry must look into and recommend what actions are possible, including impeachment, to correct the situation



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for the future. Beyond that, it must recommend how state funds might be recovered from players found to have caused their illegal appropriation.

These interventions are vital for the evolution of jurisprudence around statecraft.

A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Earlier, I expressed an insight abstracted from Cabral's thinking: you are the way you struggled.

It says to me that what political parties are to themselves, they will be to the nation once accorded the privilege to rule. If they are tolerant of indiscipline, of a lack of accountability to their own constitutions, of cultivating the cult of personality, of opening instead of narrowing the threshold of what is acceptable, of being entitled without demonstrating the qualities requisite for access to rights and privileges, of not subjecting their members to the rigours of membership, of wearing heroic attributes they may not have deserved, of

dwelling overly on past success, of not cultivating the courage to face the uncertain future with a deep belief in the justice of their vision.

If they are tolerant of all these, they will be tolerant of them all when they are a government in office.

Cabral enables us to visualise the new citizen: one with a new sense of self and public awareness. The new citizen must learn first to know what he or she wants of and for the local community they live in, and then to be more demanding of those who would become politicians.

They must demand to know what mettle those politicians are made of. They must demand of those politicians to articulate clearly the contribution they intend to make to the community should they be elected. They must demand of them to show how they will exercise their accountability at all times they are in office. The new citizen has a right to know about the thoughts and feelings of politicians, whoever they are, on the key and pressing issues of the day.

There is a paradox about power worth pondering. The more a leader gives it away, the more he/she gets it back. To the extent

