

# Care needed in combatting intolerance

BY S. JABU THABEDE  
Guest Writer

I applaud the efforts of individuals and organizations that bring a much needed awareness of the intolerable racism black people face daily to keep the wheels of change turning. Much does need to be expressed about the forms of institutionalized racism and the perpetuance of racial constructs that exist in society.

Appropriately, considering what course to take in these issues reveals the ineluctable tension, of which Hans Morgenthau speaks, that exists between moral command and the requirements of a successful political action. What are the responsibilities of leaders and individuals?

Whatever your viewpoint, it suffices to say that prudence is of the essence in matters of such gravity given the moral ambiguities of political actions past and present.

Within the reconciliation efforts amidst South Africans, it has been a hard task recognizing the importance of being careful in our efforts to combat intolerance. We, ourselves, should not become intolerant lest we be guilty of the same crime. We should not fall

into the trap of ignoring the fact that there are tragedies and fundamental grapplings on both sides of the [black/white] political coin. To deny this would be to deny human vulnerabilities.

Intolerance breeds contempt, and though you may not agree with the statements made or questions asked by some individuals, as a democrat—someone who is fighting for human inalienable rights not afforded to black people as they should be—you should defend their right to say it, lest you be guilty of perpetuating that which you are dedicated to changing. I, for one, would much rather have these individuals talk openly than have their bitterness, unresolved grapplings, and tragedies go underground.

To perpetrate the same bitterness you accuse the racist establishment of is self-defeating. Democracy happens because the human heart desires it. Similarly, racial justice will happen because the human heart desires it. Historic mindsets and racial intolerance will only change when you appeal to

the heart. In this way, the change will be sincere and qualified as opposed to false and politically expedient.

Martin Luther King said, "It's fine to tell a man to pick himself up by his boot straps, but it is nothing more than cruel just to tell a bootless man to pick himself up by his boot straps." If things have to change, they must change in a way consistent with human dignity and respect, lest we replace one form of unacceptable intolerance with another.

There is an idiom once explained to me by my mother and father that goes, "Bend the tree while it is still young." A prevalent doctrine of South African apartheid white security forces

was, "Kill them while they're young and before they become ANC terrorists."

In attempting to curb my anger toward such realities, it has been suggested to me that I live my life by the biblical standard (although, in truth, this is hard, particularly when I feel that my hatred is justified) which states that unless we ourselves are free of sin, we cannot stone others into compliance with the letters of the law or how we think of the state of affairs should be viewed. Nor can we demand repentance, unless we ourselves have repented, and above all this, we dare not judge lest we ourselves be judged.

I am not beyond hatred because I have hated. I find it difficult to forgive because both my family and I and those alike have suffered much, and I often feel justified in my need for retribution especially being a target of institutional racist crimes not only in white-ruled South Africa but in other parts of the world. Perhaps it would be useful for me to offer astute solutions to South Africa's endemic problems, and those alike globally. However, I can only offer suggestions.

A fellow countryman told me that "together in faith and with willing hearts, we can make this country work, if only we would stop to look at the good and try to work despite the bad." I agreed that negativity destroys the human psyche and that we can only take so much, but ultimately, we must acknowledge the truth and work together towards a solution.

To those of Future Leaders Fu-

ture Changes caliber in the struggle for racial justice, I encourage your passion as well as your honesty. However, I insist that if are to move forward, we must be teachable. This means sitting down with people we perhaps dislike and those with opposing views and beliefs and talking a solution. To call a spade a spade can be constructive, but rather than digging graves with the spade, I have learned, in some of the most painful ways, that we must build bridges, if not for our sake, for the sake of our children and the future.

Like many who share similar experiences and histories, I have lived a bitter life that has persistently generated sentiments of emptiness. Do our children have to be banished to such a life? We have to set the stage, whatever our race and beliefs. The challenging duty is knowing how to set the stage, facing the dilemma of having to act without any certainty that what one does ought to be done.

I have learned the value of mutual understanding, respect, and a meaningful love from the teachings of life, where, everyday, I work with the cards a white-dominated history has dealt me. If you are dedicated to impacting our "spirit of the times" by engaging moral consciousness, then human dignity and respect must be of prime concern to you future leaders so as not to emulate the oppression you are working to decimate.

An esteemed comrade asked me to challenge myself by questioning my beliefs and actions. He encouraged me to ask myself if I would be willing to die for my beliefs. If your heart and your being have a difficulty with such notions, I ask you then to ponder why it is you maintain the beliefs you claim. If you find as many contradictions as I did, you are well on your way.

Whatever your answer, I hope such questions help you evaluate the purpose of your efforts and the reasons for your beliefs and actions.

That, when tackling racism, it is not out of guilt, out of blind following, out of justifiable bitterness but that your heart and mind have firmly settled on truth and have thus forced you to speak and act.

To the community at large, I hope you continue to ask questions so your hearts and minds are convinced of the truth. Reasons for changing must be sincere and qualified. I challenge you!

## Posters are sexist

BY JOHN ASTOR ANKNEY  
Staff Writer

I am sickened by the idea of rape. I have trouble watching movies (*Thelma and Louise*, for instance) in which a woman is forced to have intercourse.

I also have trouble believing that date rape is always the man's fault.

For anyone who has not noticed the two posters in the stairwell of Founders Hall, the first reads, "It was 2 a.m., we were in my room, we were drunk." Tell it to the jury." The second reports, "Even though it's your fault you got drunk, it's his fault you got raped."

I get angry every time I see them.

I get mad for various reasons. The first of which is a blatant double standard this creates between men and women.

By date-rape reasoning, women are not expected to take responsibility

for their actions.

Men are expected to take better control their alcohol. Regardless of how you look at it, men and women are inherently unequal under this law.

I admit that it is rape if a woman says "no" and the man has sex with her whether it be against her will or after she is unconscious. But if a woman says nothing, and is still conscious, she is responsible for her actions.

A man that wakes up the morning after regretting his decision to have sex has no recourse.

A woman in this situation can claim rape.

Date rape happens, and it is a disgusting thing. But if a woman does not say no, and she is in a position to do so, she must be held accountable for her actions.

I believe women and men are equal in all things. That includes responsibility.