



PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA'S ECONOMIC HUMBUG

What are we now hearing from the president about the economy? White privilege? Apartheid and colonialism? Inequality? Radical economic transformation? These reasons for his party's failures are beginning to sound like a broken record! Is this all the president can come up with when faced with yet another economic crisis?

The Covid-19 virus pandemic has hit South Africa like it has hit the rest of the world. But it's an adequate enough red herring on which the president can rely to once again deflect attention from his government's appalling 27 years of mismanagement and corruption. His hoary old chestnuts about apartheid and colonialism still have traction with the poor and desperate, but the bottom of the barrel has now surely been reached with regard to excuses: there are not too many more rabbits the ANC can pull out of its hat.

President Ramaphosa continues to play on perceived black fears of "a return to apartheid" plus other well-worn race cards – he uses (mainly white) taxpayers' money to fund his government's welfare system which virtually guarantees votes for his party because of the almost total dependence on the state by millions of citizens just surviving below the bread line.

On Wednesday 18 June, the South African president made one of the most extraordinary - and untrue - statements of his career. He told Parliament that the South African economy is where it is today because the "apartheid and colonial governments" from the past advantaged only the whites of South Africa.

This is historic nonsense. Who created the economy of which he speaks? Did the ANC create it? The ANC created nothing. The South African economy is a Western system created by those who came to this continent from Europe centuries ago. "Approximately seventy years before the apartheid government took office in 1948, almost all the blacks in Southern Africa lived a stone age existence. They had no trace of the science, education and industry as practised already by ancient civilizations such as the Phoenicians, or those of Mesopotamia, China, Persia, and so forth. Whatever they had – including

life itself - was by courtesy of the despot ruling them at any particular time. Private land ownership was unthinkable". (Excerpt from Report presented to the United Nations in 2016 by the VVK, Pretoria).

These are empirical facts. Thus the clothes the president wears, the language he speaks, the car he drives, the roads he travels and the Parliament from which he vocalizes his diatribes against the white community are all products of the civilization which these Western peoples, against whom he rails, brought to South Africa. (By this same yardstick, the president's vitriol must extend to the peoples who "colonized" the rest of the new world - Australia, Canada, most of South America and the United States, the latter from whom he is now applying for loans to prop up the country which his party has knee-capped because of corruption and mismanagement over the past 27 years.)

The president's ludicrous and untrue statement has made South Africa the laughing stock of world's markets. His pals in the African Union, in Cuba and the other sundry losers to whom he is in thrall were clearly not approached for the loans he so desperately needs to keep us all afloat. It's always the West to whom he turns for help, although he appears to loathe that source of his proposed salvation. What a conundrum for him!

THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT AFTER 1948

Because of this gross disinformation by the president, it is necessary to revisit the policies and spending patterns of the government which came into power in 1948. When it took office, there was no state education system for blacks whatsoever. Black education was mostly run by religious denominations, while some farmers had set up schools for the children of their employees. No black schooling system has ever been created by the African National Congress although that party has been in existence since 1912.

To fill this particular education vacuum, the Bantu (later Black) Education Act was introduced in 1953. The then government quickly reverted to mother tongue education in newly-set up black schools. (This was in contrast to the mistakes made by Canada and Australia which forced indigenous children to learn in a Western language, while their cultures were almost snuffed out by trying to turn these people into Westerners).

Despite the subsequent huge black population growth, the apartheid government kept pace. By 1950, the government had spent more (mainly white) taxpayer money on black education than the education budgets of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria combined. During the middle 50's, 40% of black children were at school. (At the same time, the Indian government, a

strident antagonist against South Africa's policies, provided education for only 25% of Indian children.) The budget of black education outside the homelands increased by a huge 587% between 1965 and 1980, and from 1980 to 1992 it increased by 1,584%. (See Jansen, TT: Masters' Thesis on Education, UNISA, 2006, P.162).

During the first ten years of the Black Education Act, black children attending school increased from 869 000 to 1 800 000. By 1979 the figure was 3,484,329. Whereas 90 African pupils passed matriculation with grades enabling them to enrol at a university in 1955, that figure rose to 45 000 in 1994 – an increase of 68 000% over 39 years. Between 1954 and 1979, the number of black schools increased from 5 700 to 11 495.

The first black university in sub-Saharan Africa opened at Fort Hare in 1916. By 1963 there were over 2 000 black graduates, more than the rest of all British colonies in Africa combined. In 1948, SA had 10 universities: four Afrikaans, four English, one Black and one distance-learning university for both black and white. By 1981 the government had built 11 new universities, seven for blacks.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Figures for Health Services are just as remarkable. The black infant mortality rate prior to 1948 was 174 per 1000. Within a few years this had decreased to 55 per 1000. At the same time, black life expectancy rose from 38 years to 64. By 1975 there were 108 hospitals with 24 000 beds in the homelands alone. In the early 1980's there were almost 300 hospitals for blacks, with 104 000 beds for in patients, one bed per 179 people. (At the same time the figure for Nigeria was one bed for 1378 persons).

The world-class Baragwanath Hospital near Soweto was the second largest in South Africa and Africa, with 500 full time doctors who served 100 000 out-patients per year and thousands of in-patients. In addition, SA's non-white population could make use of out-patient treatment (for 50 cents a visit) at hundreds of municipal and district clinics throughout the country. Against payment of a one dollar registration fee, practically all black patients were entitled to free hospital treatment – including accommodation, medicines, collateral aspects like X-Ray photography and surgical services, irrespective of the specialist level thereof. By the mid 1970's, there were 80 welfare institutions like orphanages, care and training centres for the handicapped and old age homes in the homelands alone, plus many more in the rest of South Africa.

Apartheid South Africa drew Africans from all over the African continent. By 1964, illegal African immigrants numbered approximately one million. In

addition, more than one million legal migrant workers found work and accommodation in apartheid South Africa, which work was unavailable to them in their “liberated” countries like Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique and others. Indians in South Africa enjoyed the highest per capita income of any Indian community in the world during the apartheid years, including their country of origin.

WHAT HAVE WE NOW UNDER THE POST-APARTHEID ANC?

Despite 27 years of governing what was in 1994 a functioning first world country, the ANC’s economic trajectory reveals a collapse on all fronts. SA’s national debt is more than 80% of GDP (Britain’s opposition disparages that country’s current debt of 15% of GDP as “shameful”).

Blaming SA’s “advantaged” whites is ludicrous – history refutes Mr. Ramaphosa’s humbug. If anything, whites have been disadvantaged for centuries, carrying millions of people who had occupied this earth for millennia without creating even a rudimentary civilization. Even now the ANC government has created nothing on its own. It has been a destructive force for most of its existence, the most glaring example of this being the shambles which is now a South Africa on its knees. The president fools no one with his blame game, least of all world markets, canny investors and the rating agencies which have dumped SA into junk status.

The ANC government and its allies have stolen South Africa blind, hence the lack of funds for everything a current government clarion cry. Their hallmark is plunder, corruption and incompetence. Ordinary citizens are forced to take Mr. Ramaphosa’s government to court so that water can be provided for basic living. Some people have had only intermittent water supply for the last seven years. Schools have water tanks but there’s no water to fill them - more than 21 million South Africans don’t have access to clean water. Raw sewage flows down South Africa’s streets – municipalities don’t have engineers to repair sewage pumps, yet the government continues to exclude whites in their job advertisements for local council technical and other personnel.

The backbone of South Africa’s transport system – taxis – which carry 15,6 million passengers a day, have been left high and dry after government’s passenger restrictions introduced during the Covid-19 lockdown. Every day the South African police receive over 100 cases of reported rape. Violence is so endemic that violent crime, including gender violence, is a daily norm. Last year 2700 women and over 1000 children died at the hands of another person.

CRIME AND AGRICULTURE

SA's commercial agriculture is the only real high point in today's SA economy – the first real growth in four quarters for this sector is now at 27,8%, despite a contraction of 6,9% in 2019 because of drought and other problems. Farmers now await the second largest mealie (corn) harvest ever this year, at 15,5 million tons. Yet farm attacks and murders continue unabated. TLU SA has confirmed 40 assaults, including six murders, in the month of June 2020 alone. Attacks are savage and barbaric, with boiling water recently being poured over aged farm couples. Others have been branded with heated irons. Social media pictures leave nothing to our imagination as bloodied and half conscious farm victims move their lips to try and say something as they are tended by medical personnel. Some are almost unrecognisable as human beings. Instead of concentrating on farming, a normal way of life for most farmers in the civilized world, South African farmers must spend time and money patrolling their properties, keeping in constant radio contact with each other, enduring huge stock and produce theft and battling to take their produce to markets along roads which have crumbled to third world status. Yet in a speech in Europe recently, seen and heard by millions of South Africans, SA's president roundly stated there were no farm murders in South Africa.

During his first Covid-19 speech to the nation, the president thanked everyone and his dog, including farm workers, but no thanks was proffered to the 45 000 farmers who provide 90% of the food consumed by 58 million South Africans every day. Some agricultural groups have been trying since February to meet with the Minister of Police Bheki Cele to discuss the remorseless spate of farm assaults and murders, but he refuses to classify this barbarism as a special crime, to be handled by a special section within the police service. A member of the official opposition has tried to introduce a debate in Parliament to discuss these crimes but has received no answer from the ruling party.

What an irony that the country's best performing sector should be treated with such contempt by people who themselves could not grow a potato. What would the ANC do if farmers decided they'd had enough, and kept back produce from the central food markets for a week?

DROWNING

The country is not only drowning in debt, it is drowning in people. Under the ANC's watch, the number of squatter camps outside South African cities is now assessed at 3 200. New ones mushroom every day. Uncounted millions of people, both local and from outside SA, exist in squalid, fetid shack dwellings. This is a direct result of the government's lack of border control.

The list of Mr. Ramaphosa's party's failures is endless but a point he should ponder is this: had apartheid not been introduced in 1948, the alternative would have been a Kwame Nkrumah/Jacob Zuma type shambles from which the South Africa we know today would never have emerged. There would have been nothing for Mr. Ramaphosa to complain about because there would have been nothing worth complaining about.