



SOUTH AFRICA AND DUBAI – INDUSTRIALISATION AND DE-INDUSTRIALISATION

FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS!

From the 20th century onwards, it was unheard of that a country would disintegrate other than by war, invasion by an enemy or as a result of natural disasters. Countries and nations strove to improve, to develop or to reconstitute themselves after serious setbacks, such as those mentioned.

Rarely has one witnessed the deliberate and methodical destruction of a functioning country by none other than its own government. That people who have lived in Africa all their lives would seriously think that by handing over South Africa to people like the African National Congress (ANC), the result would be different from what occurred elsewhere in Africa after Westerners left, is a mystery. More of a jolt was that the shift from a functioning government to a third world morass was not the result of a takeover, but rather that of a give away!

The decline can be measured in stages: firstly, when negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) were first mooted by the South African government in the eighties, warning voices about the dire outcome that would occur if the ANC came to power were dismissed with contempt. A point for serious discussion should have been to scrutinise the backgrounds of the ANC pretenders as to whether their capabilities could handle the running of a first world country. Their history was swept under the carpet. The fact that they had never developed as a people any further than a primitive, almost stone-age grouping, was ignored, and the results of this

omission are now tragically evident to all.

Secondly, and even more dire, they appear unable to acknowledge their woeful incapacities to create or even manage virtually anything in a modern state. They created nothing, from their original subsistence existence to their inauguration as a political party in 1912, to the present, even with the whole country's resources at their disposal under their policy of legal theft known as Black Economic Empowerment.

They must surely acknowledge these inadequacies in their hearts, but instead of asking for help (which would have been given and is indeed still available), they show resentment towards those who do know how to manage. They insist on clinging to power in positions for which they are clearly unequipped. The result is a huge broad-based inferiority complex within the government party to which they will not admit even to themselves, but which is obvious to even the most amateur student of psychology.

The corollary to all of this is their glaring lack of shame and accountability. They are dangerous illusionists, and the country suffers terribly from this mind set. This was clearly set out in Andre de Ruyter's recent book on the destruction of Eskom, South Africa's prized power supplier, once acknowledged as the best in the world. Self realisation and introspection is an important and corrective human trait: most normal people know when they are not so clever, or incompetent, or unable to cope. Not the ANC! The unfettered power granted to them through a sham democratic process where millions of unlettered and unsophisticated people were given the vote based on promises and lies, has taken on a life of its own. The ANC considers itself untouchable. The party's adherents' behaviour attests to this fact. Criminals within their midst are given important positions. One erstwhile SA president utilised the Western justice system he inherited to keep himself out of jail despite hundreds of charges against him, while billions of citizens' hard-earned funds have disappeared into the black hole of ANC corruption. There have been no apologies, nor endeavours to improve their performance over the years they

have governed. The ANC's priority goal is to stay in power, whatever the consequences to the country. After their takeover in 1994, they proceeded to throw out the good people serving the country whose integrity, skills and work ethic had made South Africa a functioning entity.. They replaced them with their political cadres, and merit didn't get a look-in. Party loyalty was the name of the game and the results are in for all to see. South Africa's plunder and de-industrialisation had begun.

DUBAI AND THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLICS

Compare the ANC's de-industrialisation of South Africa to the industrialisation of a country like Dubai which started out as a mangrove swamp and proceeded to become a halfway house trading station with pearls and fishing as its main industries. In 1966 oil was discovered. Today's Dubai leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum and his family took it upon themselves to move Dubai into the 21st century. The Sheikh sought people with skills, whatever their origin. His country is populated by foreigners from all parts of the world, although but they do not have political rights. So who was worried? Here were leaders with vision and pride in their own country. Salaries were top notch, skills were valued, as was a work ethic and integrity. Dubai now leads the world in so many aspects, one of which is the Dubai international airport, the busiest in the world. The leader of Dubai knew his country didn't possess the skills needed to bring his country into modernisation, so he imported them. Eventually he sent his own young people to Western universities and they became as skilled as the foreigners. The DNA was there – it only had to be uncovered and nurtured. He industrialised his country par excellence.

IT HAS MAINLY BEEN ABOUT THE MONEY

Like gangsters everywhere who are either too stupid or too lazy to work, easy money is their goal. As far as the ANC is concerned, the concept of money didn't exist in their historical tribal societies. 1994 was a new reality, with a very full cookie jar up for grabs. South Africa was developed and functioning, with funds aplenty for those who now controlled the country's purse.

Very few of the current political characters sitting in the Union Buildings were qualified for anything when they came out of exile. During the run-up to the 1994 election, most of them were sitting on the 9th floor of the old Shell House building in downtown Johannesburg living on salaries paid for by benefactors of the ANC. None other than ex president Thabo Mbeki was one of them, taking home the princely sum of R2500 per month. So were many of his contemporaries, including Jacob Zuma.

In his book “The President’s Keepers” (2017), author Jacques Pauw succinctly outlines the almost insatiable greed of our nine-year-long president Jacob Zuma. He almost sold South Africa to an Indian family for 30 pieces of silver!

South Africa is bankrupt under the ANC. The budget deficit at September 2023 was reported to be R144 billion. Tax revenue for the first five months of the 2023 fiscal year is already R22 billion lower than budgeted. This means a deficit of around R53 billion by the end of 2023. In September, the Minister of Finance was calling for “severe cuts in spending”, months before the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS). The situation is clear: tax revenues are down, while spending money for all and sundry flows from the fiscus at a rate of knots.

As staying in power is by far the ANC’s priority number one, then winning elections is a corollary of this; hence, keeping the faithful as well fed and comfortable as possible is an absolute necessity. The hoi poloi in the townships will have to get by on promises as this stunt has worked many times before. Whether it will work in 2024 is a moot point, but the promises will flow thick and fast in any event. State spending is geared to satisfying the ANC’s influential supporters, so government has buckled once again to the public service unions by granting an unbudgeted R24 billion this year, compounding to R74 billion in the medium term.(Daily Maverick DM 1.11.23).

Because of this type of ad hoc spending, the government continues to borrow: they will cadge R553 billion a year over the medium term. Gross debt is set to rise from R4,8 trillion to R5,2

trillion over the next financial year. Debt service costs will rise to 22.1% of revenue by 2026/7. The annual interest rate on debt will amount to R385.9 billion. This means the country will be paying R1,057 billion PER DAY to creditors.. (This sort of runaway spending has been a hallmark of African nations post independence. There are frequent requests from an “African bloc” to write off debt. They are called “poor nations”.)

The narrative to “cut spending” is of course ANC government nonsense. The cuts will be selective –hospitals, schools, the police, roads’ and harbours’ maintenance, municipal assistance and general infrastructure will probably see cuts, but government and civil service salaries will not be touched, nor will the R3,4 billion a year for protection services for politicians and senior government officials. As well, there may be a pre-election increase for the 28 million social grant beneficiaries. Why not? It’s not their money the ANC is spending!

BEST PAID IN THE WORLD

More than 55 000 public servants earn more than R1 million per year, and this is not performance driven. The government’s work force is nearly 2 million. The Treasury admits this is 3,5% higher than the average of the 38 member countries of the OECD. From 2015 to 2021, the SA public service grew by 2.1% and the wage bill by 6.2% per year. (City Press 5.11.23)

Almost half of public servants earn between R350 000 and R600 000 a year. In March this year an agreement was reached with the trade unions for a 7,5% pay hike in the current financial year. This led to a R23,6 billion payout which was not budgeted for in February . Citizens are in fact paying for the ANC’s pre-election campaign. The gravy train doesn’t stop. You don’t even have to work to enjoy the fruits of ANC patronage. There are more than 400 public servants who have been “suspended” but they still receive R128 million per year.

South Africa’s step child ESKOM continues to haemorrhage money – it has around R3,6 billion left of its diesel budget for the 2023/24 financial year which ends on March 31, 2024. It has

spent on average R3 billion a month this year on diesel which means the kitty will dry up before the end of the year. In May 2023, DM reported that Eskom had spent R12.4 billion in four months. To put this in perspective, it took eight months for Eskom to spend R12 billion on diesel last year.

AND SO IT GOES ON

This end-of-2023 report on the ANC's financial waste and profligacy may have some influence on voters in the 2024 election. The governing clique's primitive and dissolute indulgence with other people's money must be stopped. It has affected every sector of South African life, including and especially the farming community. Load shedding alone was a serious setback for most farmers, never mind the chaos on our roads and the shambles at our ports. Fresh fruit which makes up 35% of South Africa's agricultural exports, brought R63 billion into the country in the 2021/22 season. This sector employs 324,000 people directly on farms. More jobs are created upstream and downstream in the value chain, making fruit one of the biggest employers in the agricultural sector.

Yet visits to Europe by representatives of this sector were met with the same customer complaint – your logistics are your Achilles heel. “They are a nightmare”, said the Europeans. We have the best farmers in the world, and the worst government in the world. What a curse they are! How did it happen that this agricultural achievement which punches well above its weight is brought down by a bunch of third world incompetents and plunderers?

One hundred thousand containers are now stuck outside three SA ports. Eastern Cape businesses have been forced to transport their goods for export to Maputo harbour in Mozambique or Walvis Bay in Namibia, miles away from the Eastern Cape. Meanwhile, importers wait while 46 000 containers are stuck outside two Eastern Cape ports. The excuses are the same for all that's wrong with ANC rule - our ports have been “marred by congestion and delays due to equipment failures, a lack of maintenance on port

infrastructure. An estimated R7 billion worth of goods currently cannot berth into SA ports.” (News 24, 29.11.23)

Individual stories of crookery, scheming, lies and corruption are in every newspaper and on our TV actuality programmes. Our country has changed dramatically. It is a parasite’s paradise. Parliament quietly handed its CEO Xolile George a salary hike of almost 70% to a whopping R4.4 m per annum. (Sunday Times 8.10.23). Parliament was told that Mr. George was “happy to take a pay cut” from his previous job as CEO of the SA Local Government Association where he was paid more than R5m a year.(Local government? Isn’t this the worst performing sector in the SA economy!)

Then there are all the unpaid bills. “Johannesburg’s City Power ditches plan to cut Charlotte Maxeke hospitals’ electricity over unpaid R41m bill”. (DM 30.11 23). A “humanitarian crisis” was avoided, SA has been told. Four other hospitals are on City Power’s debtor’s list: Helen Joseph Hospital – R13 million; Rahima Moosa Hospital – R4 million; South Rand Hospital – R3 million; and Chris Hani Baragwanath – R2,6 million. As well, City Power is owed more than R500 million by government departments!

And the cherry on top! Food which was loaded onto a SA Air Force plane which flew President Cyril Ramaphosa and an ANC delegation to the funeral of Queen Elizabeth in England cost the SA taxpayer R569,000. This included the most expensive meat and fish, wine, chocolates, flowers, cases of nuts and biltong, inter alia. This despite the fact that 85% of the SA Air Force’s planes are out of service due to “financial shortfalls”.

The list is never ending. It is imperative that the ANC be relieved of their posts as soon as possible. The election in 2024 could do it. Another five years of ANC control “is too ghastly to contemplate”, to quote one of SA’s erstwhile politicians.