



A VERY STRANGE SOCIETY

In 1967, Pulitzer Prize winning author Allen Drury published his book "A very strange society : A journey to the heart of South Africa". It was described as "exploring the then-evolving government and culture of the Republic of South Africa". (Wikipedia)

In general his publication was well received for his "rather convincing case why a minority of whites should be in a position to totally dominate a vastly larger non-white population". (Kirkus Reviews)

After a year of research and study, Drury travelled through the country for two months, without preconceived anything. He found a "complex and troubled country whose gallant people and fearful racial problems make it a country of major importance to the world", for various reasons.

In another review he is said to have found "a prosperous, surging, vigorously booming nation filled with well-meaning, desperately worried citizens of all races who hope against hope that time and mutual effort would permit them to achieve a peaceable, truly constructive answer for one of the "toughest problems history ever handed any country". (www.goodreads.com)

"Deeply worried" has always been a golden thread throughout the psyche of those in South Africa who actually make things work. There was very good reason why the country was "prosperous, surging and vigorously booming" at the time of Drury's visit, and that was the policy of separate development. There was no thought of an ANC government ever taking power, given the pie in the sky goals of their Freedom Charter, composed in 1955 by four white communists. The ANC's plans for the future South Africa were rejected time and time again by the white electorate, and for good reason. They knew instinctively that if ever the ANC came to power, and exercised their "rights" under the Charter, chaos would result. And so it came to pass!

SA's ELECTION JAMBOREE

Why it came to pass, and who it was that enabled it to come to pass, is for another Bulletin. But the "democratic" choices now before us on election day May 29 2024 are something of a "lucky packet" choice. We are confronted by the usual suspects - the big parties of which there are many this year -plus the pop-up factions with incredible wish lists. Meanwhile the ANC has taken itself once again to the hustings, telling the crowds there are still "challenges" ahead and just look at what we have achieved over the past thirty years!! The ruling party's legacy of destruction appears to mean nothing to hordes of voters whose only interest is to receive welfare payments every month. An informed electorate? Political parties wishing to improve our country? Very few of these

appurtenances of democracy exist in our racially, socially and economically divided country.

South Africa is again facing the flurry of promises and platitudes that precede every election. However, many clause contents of their political bible, the Freedom Charter, permeate the manifestos of not only the ANC and the EFF, but have crept into other parties' pledges to provide the good life at someone else's expense. This Charter, written hurriedly by four white communists in preparation for its adoption at the Congress of the People on June 25-26, 1955, still retains iconic status within the ANC. The Charter's clauses below have become a reality under the ANC.

+ "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" - destructive land reform legislation and the nationalisation of farms which has happened when the title deeds of farms purchased by the government for "the people" are not transferred to the beneficiaries.

+ "All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose" - expropriation without compensation.

+ "The people shall share in the country's wealth" - Black Economic Empowerment (Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998) and cadre deployment.

+ "All national groups shall have equal rights" – The Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000.

+ "Free medical and hospitalization shall be provided for all" - the recent signing of the National Health Insurance legislation by president Ramaphosa is a manifestation of this Charter clause.

+ The kernel of the Charter "The people shall govern" became a reality on 27 April, 1994 when the ANC won the country's first "non racial" election and proceeded down the path of destruction which path was feared and predicted seventy years ago when the Freedom Charter became the ANC's promise to the country.

THE PROMISES, THE REALITIES AND THOSE WHO STILL BELIEVE!

"We will vote for the ANC because of Mandela" said a 72 year old Alexandra township woman during a visit to her suburb by the erstwhile deputy president of SA David Mabuza. (In a 2019 New York Times article, Mabuza was reported as being "dogged by accusations of corruption. He suddenly postponed the ceremony to swear him in as a lawmaker, casting doubt on his future as SA's second in command"). This paragon of virtue vowed to attend to "service delivery" issues including sewage blockages and housing problems. Nothing will happen of course after the election and the people of Alexandra will not see Mr. Mabuza again. But they will still believe and trust and hope and they will give the ANC "another chance" to meet the "challenges".

Despite the ANC's 30 years of corruption, mismanagement, nepotism, cadre deployment and lamentable governance, there are many who will vote for the ruling party, despite its record. Their poverty and dependence on the ANC have paid off handsomely for the current regime.

AGRICULTURE

The provision of food security by South Africa's commercial farmers should, as is the case in normal societies, be of paramount importance. Food on the table should focus the minds of politicians of all stripes. After all, only 32 000 commercial farming families provide food for more than 60 million South Africans. This crucial grouping within the economy should be head and shoulders above many other political parties' concerns. Yet there were only a few politico's who took the trouble to focus on commercial farming. John Steenhuisen, head of the Democratic Alliance (DA) attended the recent opening of the famous NAMPO agricultural show, meeting with farmers and remarking on the technical expertise and entrepreneurial spirit of these people, members of one of the most beleaguered entities within the South African economic landscape.

Western Cape DA premier Alan Wilde sees SA agriculture as an important player, a prime employer of labour, mainly unskilled for work in any other sector of the economy, and he understands what farmers suffer through crime. He plans to fight crime with, inter alia, rural safety and K9 units. The DA is pushing for provincial control of policing, transport and harbours: all of these elements are important to agriculture. The Cape provincial government has already introduced the Western Cape Powers Bill.

It is tragic how South Africa takes its commercial farmers for granted: most parties promised to ensure food security, but there was no mention of nurturing those who would make food security a reality.

May 29 could be a turning point for South Africa. Thirty years of the ANC's shambles is enough. There are other political players, many of whom are keen to show they mean business. Some of them are there for the money, others just taking a chance. But there are serious people as well, having a go at public life, concerned like the rest of us. Strange society that we are, our resilience is endless. We will pull together to give our country the government it deserves. We cannot afford five more years of the Freedom Charter.