

A Letter from Africa May 26 2013

Well here we are again, and so soon after the last one!!

A lot has happened over here that is very important in a local context .Of course we see the news from Oklahoma, Woolwich, Bangladesh etc. etc., but you may not have heard some of our stories.

My last letter covered good news and a great deal of family events.
In the background other matters have been unfolding.

It is common knowledge and generally accepted that our Government is a disgrace as seen from a first world perspective. One need not debate this anymore as even the ANC now refers to years of collapse. I should make a small point here, as it is one thing to not build due to a shortage of knowledge but another to be the architect of the collapse of so many activities like health care, education, civil service etc. Of course there is some good news as mentioned last time.

So, over the years the ANC Government, in all its` layers, have provided safe haven work for family and friends. There has been no accountability and thus a free for all has taken place. Apart from the endemic corruption and theft of tax monies, people have been tasked with vital work loads that they could not manage .This means for example that Government houses are either not built or fall down once erected; infrastructure money is just not spent; hospital equipment lies idle as maintenance is not done or payments not made; children receive poor teaching as there are no textbooks or suitably trained teachers in place; court cases are lost due to poor policing or forensic support like DNA testing. The failure of these “pen pushers” to provide services is almost endless. Street demonstrations happen about one per day throughout the country, as tyres are burnt or stones thrown at authorities. Remember there are now 15,000,000 people on Government hand outs with perhaps only some 3 to 5 million of the total population of around 50 million paying personal taxes. A huge and toxic bubble of unhappy people. I think we all know this and I mention them again as a lead in to the next matter.

Now replace the “pen” with a “gun”! Whoa!!

Well that is now happening as armed cadres show up as Majors or Generals or other ranks.



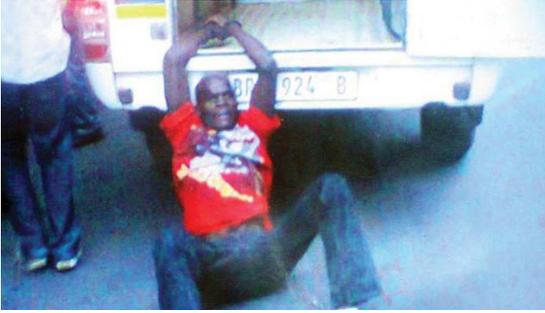
Promoted above their capability they are let lose in the front line of national and international turmoil. The inevitable result is one of people being killed either from incompetence or at times via Police brutality.

To the left we have the Marikana massacre. Some 44 people died here as police opened fire on striking miners. The enquiry continues and no one has taken the blame.

To the right we have the picture of Mr Tatane. Although unarmed he has just been shot by Police at close range using rubber bullets during a service protest.

He died shortly after from these fatal wounds. As I understand it no one has accepted blame and no one found guilty as they could not identify the police officers!!





Then another terrible picture of the killing of Emidio Macia. He was parked on the wrong side of the road and his altercation with the police ended with him being cuffed to the back of a Police van and dragged back to the station. He was held in a police cell and was later confirmed dead.

Caught on social media the police could not hide from this one and murder dockets have been opened. We will see how it turns out.

Then we find that the SA National Defence Force is sent to the CAR for reasons that are unclear and find themselves ambushed by “guerrillas”. The local army flees or just changes side. The President of the CAR makes a quick exit and the SA troops are left without support or quality intelligence to take on some 2000 or so fighters. Running out of ammo they still managed to kill around 600 but lost 14 of their own from a total of some 200.

It is staggering to realise that this inept operation is now going to be repeated as troops are already in the DRC as part of a broader body of forces. At least there should be some higher command available this time. We watch as the M23 rebels have promised to annihilate the SA troops.



Let us replace the “gun” with a scalpel and in the hands of unskilled “surgeons” who masquerade as approved doctors capable of undertaking the task of circumcising the many Zulu initiates who undertake their coming of age ceremony called the Ingoma. It is a big cultural event that also includes a number of challenges undertaken in cold and inhospitable conditions. These “schools” should be approved and the initiatives checked to ensure that they can handle the gruelling conditions that last for a few days.



I am sure you are ahead of me when I tell you that over 30 of the “schools” were not approved either by the tribal chiefs or authorities, and nor were the doctors qualified.

In addition it appears as if most of the initiates did not undergo some kind of medical check.

It seems almost unbelievable that the health authorities allowed this to happen especially as it has so far resulted in the death of more than 30 people either from loss of blood or hypothermia.

The health MEC said that she could not interfere as a woman was not allowed to do so!

As ever the media has laid the story on the front pages and murder charges will be raised although no arrests have been made. This is another story to watch although the latest news is that despite all this evidence the “schools” will not be closed but actually allowed to continue through to July.

The pictures are, of course, not mine and have been copied from the internet.

I am on a roll now and fear that this very negative image of life in SA is not complete unless we cover corruption. This has to lead to the Gupta –gate story.

We know that Government people in high places have been bribed and we know that some VIP families are able to exert undue pressure on the Government when calling in their favours.

Doors open not because you have a security pass but merely because the family implies that some Minister knows about it. Rules, laws and procedures are bi-passed with another stroke of that “pen” we spoke of before although in this case with invisible ink.

The Gupta family who arrived in SA from India around 1996 have established a large business here and are clearly close to the Zuma family. Some of the Zumas work for or with them and others have a cosy social relationship. The announcements of some ministerial positions have even emanated from the Gupta household ahead of official details.

They have started a newspaper called The New Age that sees millions of Rands of Government adverts inserted with little or no critical reporting about Government matters. It is, in effect, a Government newspaper and shunned accordingly.

The Gupta`s had a wedding in the family and they chose SA as the destination with hundreds of guests being flown in to Sun City from India where they took over large sections of this wonderful hotel complex.

The hired aircraft, a 330-200 was quite large and could not land at the nearby Lanseria airport and for some reason they did not fancy the normal arrival at the OR Tambo international airport of Jhb.

SA does have a military airbase at Waterkloof which is fairly close to Sun City. Of course this is a military installation and not open to civilian aircraft and indeed is a high security area.

But undeterred the Gupta`s dropped some big names and the runways of our Military air base were opened to them!!

An unofficial police escort of 88 vehicles was set up with false number plates and this convoy of wedding guests were given an armed blue light escort to Sun City reaching illegal speeds of up to 150km.

An internal report has been compiled that comes to the conclusion that no Minister or the President was to blame!! Of course no one really believes it and an independent enquiry has been requested.

The point is that corruption is now so widespread and deep that the most secure of installations are laid bare just by suggesting that Zuma ,or “number 1” as he is referred to in the report, knows about it. In this particular case the Minister for defence had been asked to approve the landing and had turned it down some weeks earlier but this did not stop them landing.

In parliament the other day the shadow spokesman on defence mentioned that “when Zuma is asked by the Guptas to jump, he replies how high”.

And amongst the wedding guests were, yes you know already, some Government Ministers.

That is all I have for this letter which is sent really to provide some space to these two important areas of how people can be affected by poor governance.

So why do the ANC still receive the majority vote? Well Mamphela Ramphele has returned from doing a tour of rural areas of SA and comes to the conclusion that the vote is given out of fear. By this she means that millions who are on Government assistance fear that this will stop if they do not vote ANC and others fear that they will lose business or work if they do not vote ANC.

There is disbelief that the vote is confidential.

So the good news spirit went rather speedily but hey it is around 23oC today and the patio is in sunlight. I am still in shorts although aware that winter is round the corner. Next time I will find some lighter matters to talk about.

Bye for now.

Love Bev and Alan

