



Numsa Media Monitor

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A daily compilation of local, national and international articles dealing with labour related issues

South African workers

Cops, zama zamas in shoot-out

News24, 21 July 2016

Pretoria - Members of the South African Police Service National Intervention Unit (NIU) and a group of suspected Zama Zamas (illegal miners) got involved in a skirmish this evening at approximately 18:00 resulting in one fatality and a number of injuries.

The police were acting on a tip-off about guns. The unit stopped a minibus with a group of male occupants in the Benoni area in the East Rand believed to be Zama Zamas and their so-called "protectors" according to police spokesperson Brigadier Vishnu Naidoo.

A shoot-out ensued resulting in one NIU member being shot and wounded.

Six suspects were also shot and wounded. One suspect died a short while later while the other five were taken to hospital under police guard.

Another six suspects were arrested and five handguns recovered.

The recovered firearms will be sent for ballistic testing to establish if they were used to commit other crimes.

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/cops-zama-zamas-in-shoot-out-20160721>

Cosatu condemns ANC candidate killings

ANA Reporter, Independent Media, 20 July 2016

Rustenburg - The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) on Wednesday condemned the brutal killings of candidates for the coming local government elections.

“Elections are part and parcel of a constitutional process geared to strengthen democracy and the killings are against the spirit of free and fair election contest,” the federation said in a statement.

ANC candidates Bongani Skhosana from Harding on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast, and Khanyisile Ngobese-Sbisi from Ladysmith in the Midlands, were killed in alleged political killings.

“Cosatu calls on all communities to implement the long standing resolution on establishment of street committees to ensure all residents are free and feel safe.

We call on all residents to share information with the South African Police Services to make investigations and arrest whosoever is/was responsible for the killings.”

The federation called for a high level investigation on these killings saying the people behind the killings were highly trained and well organised.

“A special investigation team like the one that we had to break the hit squads in early 1990's would be best suitable for this purpose.”

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/cosatu-condemnsanc-candidate-killings-2047539>

South Africa

SA poverty lines rise faster than inflation

Dewald Van Rensburg, City Press, 19 July 2016

Stats SA reports that poverty is rising by more than double the inflation rate

South Africa's semiofficial poverty lines are rising far faster than official inflation or the value of social grants, inevitably dragging more people into officially acknowledged poverty.

According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), the so-called food poverty line (FPL) rose by 12.9% from last year, more than double the official rate of inflation, and also more than double the budgeted increase in grants.

This reflects an increase of the estimated cost of the basic foods people need to buy to meet the 2 100 calorie-a-day threshold that South Africa and many other countries use as a measure of extreme poverty.

This hike, from R441 to R498 per person per month, is a result of the extraordinary food price inflation caused by the recent drought.

The annual increase of the FPL is, however, almost always far in excess of the official inflation rate.

StatsSA has provided City Press with the most recent inflation adjustments of the country's three poverty lines. The FPL is the lowest one, marking the point at which someone cannot buy the calories they need to live.

According to StatsSA, this line rose from R335 in March 2011 to R498 in April this year. That's a 49% increase, compared with the 30% increase in the child-support grant over the same period.

The old-age state pension, the mainstay of poverty alleviation, rose by 32% over the same period.

The top poverty line is called the upper bound poverty line.

It represents the money spent per month by people who spend exactly the FPL on food, and it is meant to show what people need to cater for their basic food and non-food needs.

It also shot up this year, rising 8.6% from R992 a month to R1 077 a month as of April.

This increase is also higher than the official inflation rate, which is about 6.3% this year.

The upper bound poverty line rose by 38% over the period.

Poverty lines get crossed

The Stats SA poverty lines are not "official" poverty lines, but are used by government for policy making and progress reporting. The National Development Plan sets its targets using them. Stats SA's new Community Survey released recently uses the food poverty line to gauge poverty levels in all of South Africa's municipalities.

Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini seems confused about what South Africa's poverty lines are. In an answer to a parliamentary question last month, and again in a later press release, she cited an outdated figure of R753, when the actual number is R1 077.

Dlamini's figure comes from a discontinued series of poverty lines that were replaced last year with a more up-to-date set based on newer surveys. Even then, she used the old 2014 value of the old series, though Stats SA was able to rapidly adjust that for inflation at City Press' request.

The minister was responding to an attack from the DA about the low increases of social grants this year. The opposition party had asked her, in a parliamentary question, whether she thought the grants were enough for a poor person to live on and if this year's increases were enough.

Dlamini responded by saying that, apart from the child-support grant, the state grants were all higher than the upper bound poverty line. She cited the old R753 poverty line as proof. This led the DA to launch a campaign against Dlamini, accusing her of saying that people can live on R753 a month.

The department criticised the DA's "disingenuous" campaign and pointed out that the opposition party's own policy position has traditionally been against extensions of the grant system. When asked by City Press what the DA would propose instead of the current social grants, the party's shadow minister for social development, Bridget Masango, said that they were "still developing our policy on the issue".

The department did not respond to repeated queries over two weeks.

<http://city-press.news24.com/Business/sa-poverty-lines-rise-faster-than-inflation-20160719>

Is Marius Fransman in or out?

Warda Meyer, Cape Argus, 22 July 2016

Cape Town - It seems the right hand of the ANC does not know what the left hand is doing. In what can only be described as a power struggle in the ANC's top leadership, Luthuli House has taken a firm stand, categorically denying that troubled Western Cape ANC leader Marius Fransman has been reinstated.

The ANC's Zizi Kodwa stressed on Friday morning that there was no confusion, and said that Fransman has not been reinstated.

"The ANC's Integrity Commission had recommended that his case be referred to the DC (Disciplinary Committee) of the ANC. That recommendation has been accepted and that's where the matter is going," Kodwa said.

However, on Friday morning Fransman confirmed that he had been reinstated and was re-assuming his leadership role.

On Thursday, ANC head of elections campaigns Nomvula Mokonyane, while on the campaign trail in Cape Town, told reporters Fransman was back on the job.

Fransman also said on Thursday that he was humbled by the fact his party has given him the green light to return to his post.

He was asked to step aside following the sexual harassment allegations brought against him by 21-year-old Louisa Wynand, during the ANC's 104th birthday celebrations in January.

On Thursday Fransman caused a stir during an unexpected appearance in Philippi, joining President Jacob Zuma on the campaign trail as he drummed up support ahead of the local government elections.

It was the first time Fransman has been seen at a high-profile ANC event since the party leadership asked him to "step aside".

The move comes as police continue probing the sexual harassment charge opened by Wynand and amidst claims the ANC's integrity commission, which handled his sexual harassment complaint, recommended he relinquish all his party positions for bringing the party into disrepute.

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe earlier said that Fransman will face the party's national disciplinary committee following a recommendation made by the party's integrity commission.

But Water Affairs and Sanitation Minister Mokonyane told reporters on Thursday that Fransman was back in the ANC as chairman and the issues had been resolved.

Party insiders said Fransman was asked to attend a campaign meeting prior to the president's visit on Thursday, during which the announcement was made.

Asked for comment, Fransman said it was great being back on the ground doing what he loved best and supporting the ANC's mayoral candidate, Xolani Sotashe, while hitting the campaign trail with Zuma and Mokonyane.

"With less than two weeks before the elections, we have lots of work to do. We need to take this election battle to the next level. We need to unify and stabilise the organisation. Our main goal must be the upcoming elections. We need to make sure the City metro is turned into an inclusive city for all our people," he added.

Thanking his family, the party leadership and all those who stood by him through "trying times", Fransman said he was humbled by the support and well-wishes he had received.

"We must unify and make sure we put up a united campaign and a united front in the upcoming elections," he added.

The EFF provincial leader Bernard Joseph said they are "bemused" by Fransman's return from the wilderness.

"It is a clear sign that it's panic stations at their provincial and elections HQ. The ANC has been dysfunctional in representing the best interests of the poor and the working class. Bringing in Marius Fransman only compounds the ANC's weakness and incompetence with desperation."

Joseph described the ANC in the Western Cape as a sinking ship.

"If Marius has been brought on to captain this sinking vessel, then he must be prepared to go down with it too," he added.

The DA also criticised the ANC for reinstating Fransman. DA Chief Whip in the Western Cape Legislature Mark Wiley said the DA in the Western Cape provincial parliament was amazed at the reinstatement.

"They must be desperate... This goes to show what the ANC thinks of women. It is disappointing indeed."

He said the investigation into whether Fransman's membership to the Western Cape provincial parliament must cease was also ongoing, following his continued neglect of his parliamentary duties this year.

"The truth of the matter is that Marius Fransman has failed in his duty as a leader of the opposition in the legislature. He fails to comply with statutory obligations and continues to use taxpayers' money to avoid accountability for wasteful expenditure during his time as Western Cape MEC of Transport and Public Works," he added.

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/is-marius-fransman-in-or-out-2048326>

Black people must vote so ANC can win: Zuma

Zintle Mahlali, Independent Media, 20 July 2016

President Jacob Zuma took the ANC's election campaign to Tembisa in Ekurhuleni on Wednesday, urging residents to unite as black people in order to ensure a victory for the ANC in the local government elections.

Zuma was accompanied by the party's Ekurhuleni mayoral candidate Mzwandile Masina and Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba. He also encouraged the more than 200 residents, most of them wearing ANC T-shirts and caps, to vote for the ruling party.

"White people, they all vote even though they are a small percentage of the population because they know the importance of voting," said Zuma in IsiZulu.

He told supporters to vote on August 3 and not to think that because black people made up most South Africans, that someone else would vote on their behalf.

"Don't say that because we are many, others voted and it doesn't matter if you don't vote... no then you have not understood the importance of changing our country," said Zuma.

The president kicked off his door-to-door campaign with a visit to the township's hostel where he met election hostel leaders.

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/black-people-must-vote-so-anc-can-win-zuma-2047545>

SABC

SABC tells judge he cannot reinstate axed journalists

Genevieve Quinta, Business Day, 21 July 2016

THE SABC says the Labour Court does not have jurisdiction to deal with the application lodged by fired journalists.

This was according to the answering affidavit filed by the SABC on Thursday night.

Trade union Solidarity on behalf of four of the seven journalists axed — Foeta Krige, Suna Venter, Jacques Steenkamp and Krivani Pillay — lodged an application in the Labour Court to overturn their dismissals.

The public broadcaster suspended eight journalists for questioning an editorial decision to ban footage of violent protests where public property was being burned. Seven of the eight were subsequently fired.

The court hearing was set to start on Thursday but was postponed because the SABC had not yet filed answering papers to the amended application.

Judge Rob Lagrange gave the public broadcaster until 7pm on Thursday to do this.

The matter is expected to go ahead on Friday.

In the answering papers, the SABC argued that the court, as set out in the Labour Relations Act, could only decide whether a dismissal was unfair, either substantially or procedurally, and could declare it void and unlawful, which it said the journalists had "pegged their case on".

The SABC argued that the journalists had not followed the proper mechanisms under the act, which obliged them to approach the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for conciliation and thereafter arbitration before approaching the Labour Court.

"In conclusion of this jurisdictional point, we submit that an order by a court which lacks jurisdiction is incompetent and is a nullity," the SABC said.

In the papers, the SABC said the journalists had defied their employer and revolted against it and had taken part in a protest against the public broadcaster.

The public broadcaster also claimed the group had breached their employment contracts.

The SABC argued that it was not true that the journalists had been subjected to disciplinary action because they questioned editorial decisions internally.

"The employees were charged for externally and publicly criticising and distancing themselves from the editorial decision in relation to their condition of employment."

It said even if the journalists were reinstated the disciplinary proceedings against them would not be revived automatically but would have to be reinstated if the SABC deemed this necessary.

The public broadcaster also denied that the editorial decision had been "universally condemned" by all major political parties, including the ANC.

ANC communications subcommittee head Jackson Mthembu lambasted the SABC for the decision to ban protest footage, calling it unconstitutional and censorship. ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe later confirmed that this was the party's stance.

However, in its papers the SABC said the editorial decision was criticised mainly by opposition parties and by "some members of the ANC".

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/media/2016/07/21/sabc-tells-judge-he-cannot-reinstate-axed-journalists>

IFJ demands restoration of basic workers' rights after four sabc journalists fired

IFJ/AllAfrica.com, 20 July 2016

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) must respect workers' rights, end censorship and reinstate bargaining rights to the journalists' union.

Early this week, eight suspended SABC employers, Jacques Steenkamp, Krivani Pillay, Suna Venter, Vuyo Mvoko' Thandeka Gqubule' Busisiwe Ntuli, Lukhanyo Calata and Foeta Krige, were emailed termination letters for speaking out against SABC's editorial policy, which the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) recently branded outrageous censorship.

The IFJ has now called on the ANC - the country's ruling party - to use its good offices to help fully restore the bargaining rights of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA) in order to protect basic workers' rights.

Earlier this month, eight SABC journalists were suspended for challenging the editorial policy introduced by the broadcaster's chief operating officer, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, which banned the coverage of violent protests. The suspended journalists are currently appealing to the Constitutional Court to reverse the SABC's editorial policies, declaring them unconstitutional. Four of the journalists that were fired on Monday night had applied to the Labour Court to reverse the suspensions. The case is due to be heard this Thursday. The four remaining journalists received termination letters on Tuesday.

Last week, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) ruled that the SABC should reverse its decision to ban coverage, including visuals, of violent protests. After the ruling, Motsoeneng told the press that no one could tell the SABC what to do. The SABC is currently requesting Icasa review the ruling.

On 11 July, the ANC held a special meeting to discuss the crisis at SABC and concluded there have been severe managerial problems under Motsoeneng. They also reaffirmed their charter, which guarantees media workers' rights.

The journalist trade union and IFJ affiliate MWASA represents approximately 700 workers at SABC, however, Motsoeneng refuses to acknowledge the union's right to protect its members. MWASA claims that over 120 members have been fired from the SABC without disciplinary hearings. Earlier this month, Motsoeneng is said to have intimidated MWASA members in order to prevent them from going on a planned strike. On 4 July, Motsoeneng was scheduled to meet with the union but cancelled minutes before without reason.

IFJ President Philippe Leruth said: "We urge the ANC to use their good offices to ensure the rightful place of MWASA as the representative of workers at SABC is restored and that the ongoing violation of basic workers' rights, including freedom of association and freedom of expression, is ended. We stand in solidarity with our affiliate and the journalists of South Africa".

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201607200610.html>

This is not a small workplace dispute

Just when you thought it could not get worse at the SABC

Zwelinzima Vavi, Politicsweb, 20 July 2016

Former COSATU secretary general says what is happening at SABC is a test of strength that will impact on our democracy if unchallenged.

Over the last two days we have witnessed the kicking out of the SABC of some of its most illustrious and dedicated journalists and media workers. Busisiwe Ntuli, Luciano Calata, Foeta Krige, Suna Venter, Krivani Pillay and Jacques Steenkamp have all been summarily dismissed. Vuyo Mvoko's contract with the corporation has ended and is not being renewed.

Last week, the very same people were awarded the prestigious Nat Nakase award for fearless journalism. This week they have been fired for being just that, and for approaching the Constitutional Court to intervene on their behalf against their arbitrary and senseless dismissals.

What is at stake here is not some small or insignificant workplace dispute. This is a test of strength that if allowed to go unchallenged will most definitely impact on the future of our democracy.

Hlaudi Motsoeneng is a self-confessed President Jacob Zuma acolyte. He owes his position as the now de-facto head of the SABC to those, like him, who will do all that they can to be in the good books of No 1. If President Jacob Zuma is the deity, the God of Patronage, then Hlaudi is his worshipping Emperor.

As talented and committed media workers desperately look elsewhere for employment, the reign of Emperor becomes more and more repressive, and delusionary! Who else could make a statement that all the staff in the SABC are wonderfully happy, when it is clear that the opposite is true? Who else could say that he is protecting the integrity of the Public Broadcaster when in fact he is placing it at the service of a faction within the ruling party? Who else could be so self-delusionary to believe that he and his limp Board are above the legitimate regulatory body, ICASA, and then twist and turn in order to avoid being accountable to any public institution? Who else would tell us personally that he will respect the rights of Union members, and then lock them in when they have secured the right to take protected strike action? This is not the workings of a person committed to quality public broadcasting but someone who responds only to his master's voice.

And what of those who are supposed to ensure that the Public Broadcaster remains non-partisan, truthful, and is able to provide a full picture of events to the South African people?

The Minister responsible for the SABC is Miss Faith Muthambi, who was appointed in May 2014. Not only has she given Emperor Hlaudi a free reign to do all that he can to quell dissent, and to domesticate the Public Broadcaster, she has also personally messed up on a range of measures that could have helped to improve the lives of our people. She has derailed the transition to a digital service, bungled the decision of her own party on the TV decoder issue, played up to the big money in television and telecommunications, and shown herself to be incapable of delivering on any of the manifesto promises. But she has one thing in common with Hlaudi.....they are both at the mercy of No 1's patronage. For now they are among the favoured! But deep down they know that when they are no longer fit for purpose, when they can no longer protect No 1, they will be dispensed with quicker than an analogue receiver!

It is however, shameful that a Cabinet Minister can be so unwilling to protect a vital public asset like the SABC and in the process belittle not just ICASA, not just the

Public Protector, High Court who ruled on Emperor Hlaudi's extraordinary and highly irregular rise to power, but who is also prepared to sideline the very party she has pledged allegiance to by refusing to attend even her own party's watchdog committee.

The inability of the most senior ANC official, Secretary General Gwede Mantashe, to insist on discipline and adherence to ANC communications and broadcasting policy has shown how powerless those who thought they were powerful have become. Mr Mantashe along with Jackson Mthembu who chairs the ANC Communication Sub Committee, are left twiddling their thumbs while Faith Mthambi, the Ever Faithful and Emperor Hlaudi do as they please to please he who must be pleased!

But sooner or later as with all delusional Emperors, Hlaudi will be declared naked and without substance, so will all those who have fallen into the trap of believing that they will be rewarded by a few scraps off the Emperors table. Here we are thinking of not just the obvious culprits, those who feasted alongside the Emperor and showered him with praise in the hope that they get a few scraps more, but also those who believe that they will materially benefit from the Emperors policy on local content, as if we don't accept that intervention. All we can say is, do the arithmetic. If you think that more airplay is going to make you a millionaire, think again. Don't take our word for it. Ask about what this will mean to you in terms of rands and cents before you throw your lot in with the Empire!

The real tragedy of this unfolding farce is that the millions of our people who rely upon the SABC for their news and entertainment are being denied the vital information they need, not only to understand the complexities of the world we live in, but also to be able to make an informed and reasoned decision about the direction of our country. A Public Broadcaster that is subservient to the whims of such an Emperor and fuelled by the political edicts of the powerful is not a Public Broadcaster at all! Instead it is a conveyor belt to dish up a good story to tell, to try and actually mislead our people, and to use every trick in the book to refute the evidence of mass poverty, unemployment and the gross inequalities that our people actually experience.

In the run-up to the local government elections, an independent and open public broadcaster has a vital role to play in our democracy. It is up to all of us to make sure what is happening at the SABC is not just roundly condemned, but is stopped, and reversed before it is too late.

Several organisations of civil society have played a sterling role in alerting us all to the degeneration of the Public Broadcaster in Emperor Hlaudi's hands. We in the trade union movement, have made common cause with civil society, with media workers at the fore, and are now preparing a campaign that will mobilise the one power that even No 1 cannot resist, the power of the people, and that will once and for all take the SABC out of the hands of the sycophants, and place it back under democratic control. We are on the move next week. Watch this space! Don't mourn or moan...mobilise!

Issued by Zwelinzima Vavi, Convenor, Committee to Form a New Trade Union Federation, 20 July 2016

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/this-is-not-a-small-workplace-dispute--zwelinzima->

International

South Korea's HHI union launches partial strike after wage talks broke down

Rigzone, 20 July 20 2016

Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) union members launched a partial strike Tuesday after wage negotiations broke down with the South Korean shipyard, with about 700 workers from the facility operation unit participating in the collective walkout, according to local media Korean Herald.

The strike, which lasted for three hours, is the first collective strike by the union in 23 years after it was established in 1993. HHI union planned to stage strike action again on Wednesday and Friday.

"The strike of Hyundai Heavy Industries is against the company's lack of sincerity for the wage deal and an attempt to deter the restructuring plan ... (the union) will stage a collective strike anytime if necessary," the union said, as reported in Korea Herald.

Union members were seeking higher wages and bonuses, while hoping their views would be reflected in the formation of disciplinary committee and the appointment of non executive directors in the company. On its part, HHI demanded a repeal of special welfare measures for workers such as overseas training programs and special bonuses for those who have worked for over 20 years.

[http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/145725/South Koreas HHI Union Launches Partial Strike After Wage Talks Broke Down](http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/145725/South_Koreas_HHI_Union_Launches_Partial_Strike_After_Wage_Talks_Broke_Down)

Trade union protests affect sales performance overseas

Jhoo Dong-chan, The Korea Times, 21 July 2016

Workers in red bandanas demanding a higher wage in massive rallies every summer is not an unusual scene here. Industry insiders, however, say such annual events may concern foreign investors, contractors and buyers, calling the country's creditworthiness into question.

According to Newshub, a New Zealand media outlet, the country's lawmakers have recently expressed concerns about a ship order with Hyundai Heavy Industries, doubting that its \$500 million shipbuilding order will be completed in time by 2020.

"I think it will be a concern that the state of industrial relations of Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) has been as bad as it has over the last three years," New Zealand Labor Party lawmaker Phil Goff said.

"It's certainly a risk factor."

Having approved a strike, workers at Hyundai Motor and HHI staged a series of concurrent strikes this week. They also staged a joint rally Wednesday, the first of its kind in 23 years when the two largest trade unions called together for better wages in 1993.

Some 200 unionized workers at HHI staged a three hour rally Tuesday while 1,500 workers staged a four hour rally the following day, and will do so for seven hours today.

They had not gone on a strike for 19 years, but have staged rallies for three consecutive years since 2014.

Experts point out that enduring strikes every year will hurt the shipbuilder's credit standing amid its restructuring process and declining market demand, a blow to its sales performance overseas.

According to U.K.-based shipping and offshore gas industries analyst Clarkson Research, shipbuilders in Korea have secured only 27 orders in the January-June period this year, an 88 percent decline from the previous year's figure of 151 orders. Of them, HHI has received 13 orders.

"Strikes won't help the company at all," said an industry insider.

"Strikes raise concerns about the company's building quality and whether it can complete orders on time. It really hurts the credit standing."

Hyundai Motor is suffering a similar problem.

According to a Hyundai Motor official, Thursday, the company suffered a 39 billion won loss in auto production due to a two-day long protest, Tuesday and Wednesday.

As Hyundai Motor workers plan to stage a 4-hour rally today and a 14-hour one on Friday, the damage to production may reach over 200 billion won.

Such a loss is expected to influence the nation's largest automaker's exports overseas.

According to the Korea International Trade Association, unionized workers' strikes affect the export performance of Hyundai Motor's Ulsan plants. It had an export value of \$970 million in September 2014, the lowest figure in 25 months. Its export value in October 2015 was \$1.33 billion, a 13.5 percent decline from the previous year's figure.

"Hyundai Motor has already secured enough exports so it won't be a problem anytime soon," said a company official.

"However, the workers' decision to go on strike obviously negatively influences the company's public image. I hope the company and workers narrow their differences and settle the issues as soon as possible before it really damages overseas sales."

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2016/07/123_209988.html

Comment & Opinion

The Zanufication of SABC?

Terry Bell, Fin24, 21 July 2016

The sacking of journalists at the SABC in flagrant disregard of the ruling made by the Independent Communications Authority is the latest indication that we are on a

slippery slope toward autocracy, says Terry Bell in his latest Labour Wrap. This is what Deputy Public Works Minister Jeremy Cronin referred to 14 years ago as “Zanufication”.

However, Bell adds there is evidence that the journey down that slope may never be completed; that it may be aborted long before a point of no return is reached. He points out that South Africa’s “liberal reformist bulwark” remains in place, that the courts are still free from manipulation, the unions and media remain relatively independent and the Chapter Nine institution serve the common good.

But since the country is clearly on a slippery slope, there is no time for complacency and South Africans should learn not only from what has happened in Zimbabwe and the monarchic tyranny of Swaziland. He maintains that there is a good lesson to be learnt from the events in Turkey over the past week.

While Turkey has a popular image as a paragon of democracy, Bell says it is not. And he maintains this is something its embattled trade union movement and international union organisations can confirm.

Bell sees Turkey’s ruling AK Party as a “putative party dictatorship” under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a situation brought about as the party began to lose its grip on the electorate.

As such, says Bell, the failed military coup at the weekend was a godsend to the regime, a serious unrest incident that provided the excuse to introduce an effective state of emergency.

Within days, in what must have been clearly prepared prepared lists, tens of thousands of civil servants, police, teachers and university personnel were dismissed or suspended, along with nearly 3 000 prosecutors and judges. An estimated 6 000 individuals, many of the them trade unionists, were also arrested.

Turkey has completed a journey that Bell says South Africa should not - and need not - repeat.

<http://www.fin24.com/Economy/Labour/InsideLabour/avoiding-the-slippery-slope-to-autocracy-20160721>

The tale of two blue-collar voters polls apart

Jonny Steinberg, Business Day, 22 July 2016

EVER since Brexit, it has been tempting to compare the shape of events in Britain and SA. In the UK’s recent referendum, the poor and the working classes in the north of England voted in large numbers to leave the EU. The well-heeled and the cosmopolitan have, on the whole, thought this decision to be little short of insane, catapulting their country into a prolonged period of wilful, gratuitous uncertainty.

In SA, the rural and small-town poor keep the ANC in power by voting for it in vast numbers. In the cities, the cosmopolitan and the well-heeled, both black and white, have increasingly come to see the ANC as a reaper of national doom.

And so, in both countries, the poor and the marginal, by dint of their electoral numbers, are leading their nations down a path that fills the sophisticated with fear.

The comparison goes deeper. Cosmopolitan Britain believes the poor have been deceived. People voted to leave the EU because unscrupulous men whispered sweet lies: that there would be more money for health, for instance, and that immigration could be controlled substantially. Thinking they were voting to regain control of their lives, the poor in fact handed power to the very elite they have come to loathe.

In SA, too, it is said, the poor — who vote en masse for the ANC — have been tricked. Ever patient that their beloved liberation movement will eventually deliver, they simply do not know enough about the world to understand the damage corruption is heaping upon public institutions. Each time they put their ballot in the box, they are adding fuel to a wrecking ball.

And so, in both countries, it is said, dishonest people with no care for our common future are abusing the pain and incomprehension of the poor.

This argument is seductive, not least because it contains some truth.

But it is still wrong, and profoundly so, for it absolves those who tell the story of any responsibility for it. As if the urbane and the cosmopolitan are mere observers, as if they can only look on helplessly while other people destroy the world.

When the poor vote as they do, they are in fact defending themselves against the urbane and the cosmopolitan. They are doing so inadequately, potentially disastrously, but the point is that they are using the only tools at their disposal.

In SA, it is from the ranks of the urbane and the sophisticated that we hear again and again that all we need is economic growth. And yet the past quarter century has shown without doubt that even when the economy is healthy, the benefits of the growth path we have chosen are shockingly distributed. Growth in SA has done nothing for levels of unemployment in the shacklands of the eastern Free State or the remote villages of the Transkei. On the contrary, unemployment has grown steadily there, even during good times.

What does come to these places are the welfare system's cash transfers and the public sector work dispensed by politicians. These are the only bulwarks against a growth path that has left swathes of SA in the cold. And both are delivered courtesy of the governing party.

When people in these parts vote en masse for the ANC, they are defending themselves, ineffectively and with the inadequate means they have, against an economic trajectory shaped by those with no concern for their interests.

The story in the UK is not that different. There, the urbane and the sophisticated have cheered on the financialisation of the economy, bringing prosperity to the southeast, while leaving the erstwhile industrial engines of the north in decline.

The north's vote for Brexit was a cry for control. That it was also self-destructive is a sign only of the bluntness of the tools at ordinary people's disposal.

Telling stories about other people's shortcomings is always a dangerous business for the purpose of such stories, whether consciously or not, is self-exoneration.

One ends up saying silly things.

Like that everything would be okay if only the poor were not so ignorant.

Or, that the world would work just fine if only the masses were as savvy and educated as I.

For an urbane and sophisticated person, that is pretty shoddy reasoning.

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<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2016/07/22/the-tale-of-two-blue-collar-voters-polls-apart>

IMF executive's lecture a warning to change course

Peter Bruce, Business Day, 22 July 2016

BY FAR the most important message delivered to the South African body politic — the government, private sector and labour — this century came from the lips of a man called David Lipton at the Wits University Business School earlier this week. It was a call for economic reform, for urgency, and for compassion.

And it was important. Lipton is the deputy MD of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the world's lender of last resort. The newest member of its core leadership group of the US, Japan, the UK and the European Union is the government of China and its currency, the yuan. The lecture Lipton delivered was a warning and a supplication. Change or die. And please don't die.

In strict numbers, SA's threat is best measured by the ratio of its debt to its gross domestic product. It is now almost half and as the economy slows and slows that ratio gets harder to control. Lipton's warning is what might happen when what we produce no longer pays the debt. It is what would happen if we were forced to ask the IMF or World Bank for a bail-out — and that is no longer an idle fantasy of the ANC's many critics.

I don't want to sound alarmist, but we would not be the first country to discover just how quickly things go downhill if we do not manage our affairs with the utmost discipline. The government pays more than R500m a day in interest on its debt. We are not disciplined. The state is profligate and corrupt, business is aloof and uncompetitive and labour is entirely self-absorbed and indignant. The unemployed now number so many, and their numbers are growing so rapidly, that our reasonable growth forecasts do not even come close to relieving their absolute poverty. We cannot go on like this. Something must be done.

"The bottom line," Lipton told his audience, "is that the root of your problems contains the seed of their solutions. Inclusion of the excluded one-third of South Africans could and should be a source of growth and dynamism for the generation to come. But now, the cost of insufficient action has reached the critical point. The present trajectory is simply not good enough."

And, he added, "if our projections for the economy materialise, per capita income in 2017 is set to fall to 2010 levels". In other words, and probably as anyone with half-a-

brain realises, we are going backwards. The government has utterly squandered its legitimacy and with it the opportunity to be daring and creative. Now it is fighting for its political life ahead of local elections on August 3.

And it is not just the fault of the government. "A huge part of the labour force is left on the outside looking in, undereducated and with no opportunities for advancement," Lipton said. "There are township youth who ... cannot find work. The formal economy is not absorbing them, nor are they able to strike out on their own. There is a crucial structural issue at play: those included in the advanced economy — large businesses, banks and unionised workers — maintain entry barriers against their potential competitors — small and medium-sized enterprises and the unemployed."

Exactly. How often have we not heard small business complain that big companies stitch up wage deals that smaller companies cannot afford? No-one listens. We are leaving it up to big business to work out a way out of the crisis, but what can they realistically do if they are so manifestly a part of the problem?

Established white business has allowed a new black elite to shield it from the ugly truth of the desolate lives half of our fellow South Africans suffer. It's time is up.

We need to start afresh. To be brave. To measure every decision we take against one single thing. Will it create jobs?

Eskom has just decided to stop buying power from new independent producers. How many jobs will that create? SA Airways, drowning in debt, is "under pressure" from the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal to reopen a route between Durban and Cape Town that it closed six years ago to stem losses. How many jobs will more losses create? Government still has impossible visa regulations in place. How many jobs do the rules create? A minimum wage is about to be introduced. How many jobs?

You get tired of asking the obvious, but there are no answers if we continue to follow convention.

"What is needed now," said Lipton, "is a new approach. It is a question of fundamental, transformational reforms that can boost employment — particularly for young people — reduce inequality, and promote economic inclusion. This approach should focus not just on leveling the playing field, but opening up the playing field, for individuals and businesses. Tackling vested interests and promoting a truly inclusive economy will require buy-in from all stakeholders, and require ... a long-term view of their interests in a more dynamic SA of the future."

Indeed. What is needed now is courage and vision. I see it nowhere. Not in big business, not in government and not in the opposition. We are locked in a dialogue of the deaf and the price for the country will soon become overwhelming.

• *Bruce is editor in chief*

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