

Why incompetent governance will continue

From amongst the many political representatives, this includes Councillors, Mayoral Committee members, National and Provincial Ministers and Parliamentarians, only ward Councillors are voted for, directly, by the people. None of the other politicians were elected via a broad public vote. In South Africa in general, we vote for parties.

In most political parties, the decision of who gets onto the proportional list for Council, Provincial and National Parliament, is made by a select few. The decision makers decide behind closed doors. Often, what is in the interest of the decision makers assumes pre-eminence, what is best for the party comes second and what is paramount for the country and its citizens comes last. Rarely is the situation reversed.

“Some men change their party for the sake of their principles; others their principles for the sake of their party” - **Winston Churchill**

As a result, the majority of politicians and officials appointed by political parties serve the directive of the decision makers and not necessarily the need of the public. It is the decision makers in the party that appoints, evaluates and rewards. It is they, who protect the “unfit for purpose”. Even those who were directly elected by the people, it is by virtue of the party who nominated them, that they were eligible for election.

“Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other” - **Oscar Ameringer**

Decision makers understand the predisposition of its party members and tend to attract those with popular mass appeal, to maximize the election vote. Some are invited because they can access campaign contributions, while others are rewarded for historical loyalty. Rarely are individuals selected because of cumulative knowledge, experience or insight. As a result, the primary concern for those elected, becomes self-preservation and continued upward mobility at the expense of the rate and taxpayer.

According to Willie Hofmeyr of the Special Investigating Unit “South Africa is losing billions of rand every year to corruption, incompetence and negligence in the public service”.

Consequently, catastrophic decisions are made, because those responsible, lack acquired and fluid knowledge and general life experience which are the foundation blocks of wisdom. Without insight, the uninformed experiment with projects, policy and tariffs while surrounded by “yes men”. How else can we explain the billions wasted at all levels of governance and the numerous qualified audits received by so many municipalities and departments?

To quote Aristotle, “The most perfect political community is one in which the middle class is in control, and outnumbers both of the other classes”. This wisdom dictates that, what South Africa needs is a political/intellectual not a purely materialistic aristocracy to re-charter a collective course for the next generations.

In the end it was Plato the philosopher, who said: “There will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now

call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands”.

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