

## **DEDICATION**

This is my fifth and final book and I have called it 'Ambush Alley'. It tracks life in the Umhlanga Rocks Village against a backdrop of some of the important socio-political events currently shaping the future of South Africa.



The book is dedicated to my three sons Ryan, Darryn and Devon, whom I love more than life.

They are my only achievement in this world and I am mighty pleased with the way they and their families all turned out.

May they find a peaceful and productive space to grow in the remodelled South Africa?

**Bryan Britton**

**January 2017**

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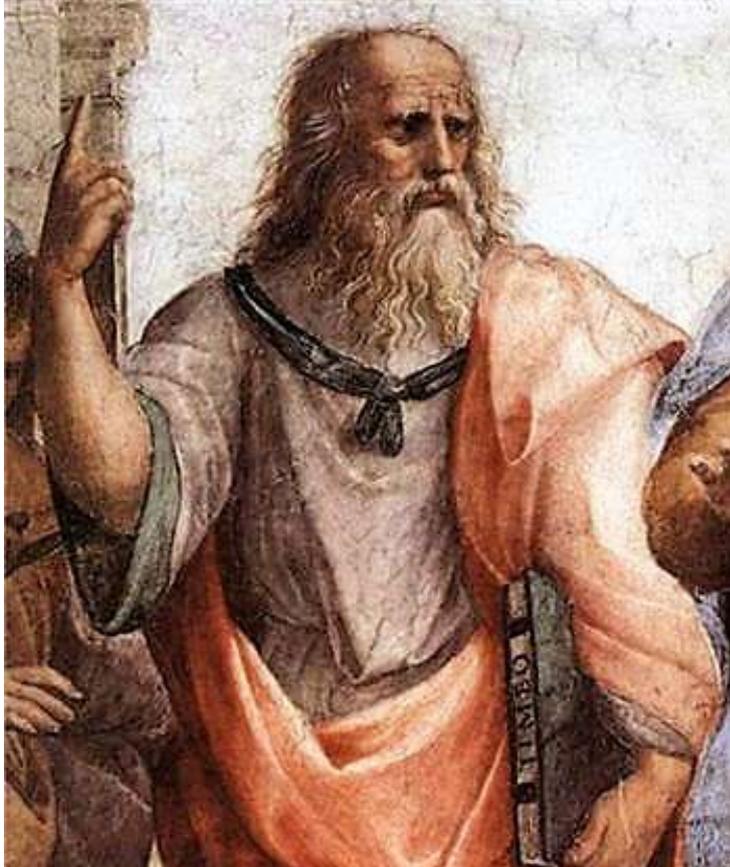
**AMBUSH ALLEY CHARACTERS.....**

## **PREFACE**

### **Plato Philosopher and Writer**

Born 428 BCE – Died 348 BCE

“All the gold which is under or upon the earth is not enough to give in exchange for virtue.”



Ancient Greek philosopher Plato was a student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle. His writings explored justice, beauty and equality, and also contained discussions in aesthetics, political philosophy, theology, cosmology, epistemology and the philosophy of language. Plato founded the Academy in Athens, one of the first institutions of higher learning in the Western world.

#### **He compares the State to a Ship**

Plato compares the state to an elaborate and expensive ship. A ship, to accomplish a safe and successful journey, needs an expert navigator at the

helm, a captain who knows the capacities of the vessel, geography, meteorology, water currents, navigational astronomy, supplies management, and other related matters. An ignorant and untrained person at the helm of a ship would endanger vessel, cargo, crew, and passengers alike. Similarly, Plato suggests, the ship of state needs expert governors at the helm, governors who are well informed about such things as law, economics, sociology, military strategy, history, and other relevant subjects.

Ignorant and incompetent governors can be and have been disasters for both citizens and their states.

## FOREWORD

In putting this book together I have relied on the not inconsiderable skills and courage of the brave and intelligent journalists, authors, correspondents and editors of the Press. Their fight against corruption, mismanagement and criminality can only be admired and applauded. I have taken care to attribute each article reproduced here to ensure the correct accreditation to the original author of the intellectual property. If I have erred in such accreditation I humbly apologize now.

The excellent articles included are intended to be a narrative and commentary on the parlous state of our young democracy. Although these articles have appeared in the public domain it is hoped that by stitching them together they tell the story of how we as a nation declined from world famous celebrants in 1994 to our current status of tenth in the list of threats to the free world in 2016.

## Rainbow stagnation

The  
Economist

**How corruption and bad policies are strangling South Africa**

## **Business and the government are pulling in opposite directions on growth**

Nov 26th 2016 | JOHANNESBURG

The sprawl of cranes around Sandton, South Africa's swanky financial district, and a dearth of empty beds in Cape Town, its tourist Mecca, point to an economy that shows some signs of rebounding from a deep slump earlier this year. Taken individually many indicators are buoyant: good rains mean that farmers are likely to plant 35% more maize this year; a weak rand has encouraged a 20% jump in the number of international tourists.

Yet add these numbers up and the equation still turns out badly: the economy will be lucky to limp in with growth about 0.5% this year and will not do very much more than 1.5-2% over the next few years. This is a percentage point or two below the long-run trend rate of 3%. So what explains this black hole in the economy? The answer is almost entirely poor governance by Jacob Zuma, a president who may soon face 783 charges of fraud, corruption and racketeering.

Foolish policies play a part. Take tourism. Although the number of holiday-makers has soared, the government itself reckons that there ought to have been many more bottoms on South African beaches. Thousands have been turned away by absurdly

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strict rules requiring families to carry birth certificates for their children. But corruption is also hurting the economy. A recent report by an ombudsman revealed details of how the government and Eskom, the state-owned power monopoly, muscled an international mining company into selling a coal mine to friends of the president.

The effect of mismanagement and corruption is best seen in measures of business confidence and the currency, both of which have plummeted since the start of Mr Zuma's presidency in 2009. Investment has fallen to 20% of GDP from 23% over the same period.



Economist.com

Growth is so slow that credit-rating agencies are fretting that the country may struggle to repay its debts. Moody's, which in May said it was minded to cut its rating, was due to deliver a verdict on November 25th. Standard and Poor's, which rates the country's debt one notch above junk, will give its assessment a week later. Some 80% of economists polled by Bloomberg, a news agency, expect the ratings firms to downgrade South Africa in the next year.

The threat of a rating cut is prompting feverish attempts to open up the economy by Pravin Gordhan, the respected finance minister. On November 20th the deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa, announced a new national minimum wage of 3,500 rand (\$247) a month in a bid to get unions to agree to labour-law reforms that would make it harder for them to call strikes of the sort that shut down the country's platinum mines for almost half of 2014.

The chief executives of major banks are also involved in efforts to liberalize the economy by, among other things, getting big firms to agree to hire hundreds of thousands of youngsters on one-year internships. "In the last year South Africa's reformist voices have been ascendant," says Goolam Ballim, an economist at Standard Bank. "After almost a decade of political and economic drift, 2016 may yet prove to be the inflection point...in confidence and investment." But without better leadership, such optimism is likely to prove short-lived.

## **Zuma's disastrous rule goes on as a corrupt elite robs South Africa blind**

**Stephen Chan**

**November 7, 2016**

A special judicial report into the capture of South Africa's state institutions has found that President Jacob Zuma is at the very least associated with corruption, if not just as deeply embedded in it as many South Africans believe.

He never seems to learn. After the scandal of his grandiose home improvements, his unsavory association with the supremely wealthy Gupta family, and after his failed first effort to tar his finance minister, Pravin Gordhan, with dubious corruption charges, Zuma might be expected to be wary, to attempt circumspection – but he's clearly determined not to back down, even as the political tide and South African civil society alike turn against him and his party.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation called for him to be removed from office. The opposition has been elected to take over the country's great municipalities. Even the ANC chief whip called upon him to resign.

To add to the tawdriness, Zuma has now failed for a second time to get rid of Gordhan, whom he almost certainly regards as an obstacle to unfettered corruption. Gordhan is standing firm, which makes him a problem – although there are indications he could be hit with more corruption charges again soon.

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Nevertheless, as far as Zuma's concerned, it is business as usual. He has come up with no solution or compromise for the increasingly furious student protests roiling the country's campuses, no plans for expanding and improving healthcare, improving the delivery of public services, and no plan for ensuring electricity. He doesn't seem to care if the value of the rand falls because of his machinations, which serve himself and his cronies above even the ANC, much less the nation.

### **Slow-motion collapse**

And that's precisely the point. Zuma goes on, and knows he can go on, because the ANC itself – no matter what people say about an internal struggle – has been captured by an elite cabal of corrupt people. They have firmly ensconced themselves at the top of a trickle-down structure of corruption and patronage, one that extends to the most remote parts of the ANC apparatus in South Africa's outlying provinces. If you want a contract for public services or delivering public goods, you have to have it sanctioned by the ANC.

All this could certainly work without Zuma, but he is simply too useful for his cronies to depose him. The corrupt elite he enables are anxious to safeguard their personal revenue-raising schemes. The president is a lightning rod: as long as he's the focus of public attention, most of his dubious associates are not.



And so they prop up an unpopular president, one who looks increasingly silly, so they can continue go about their business – which amounts to nothing less than the slow ransacking of the nation.

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Gordhan might be able to keep making a stand, and he's no doubt trying his best. But a pebble in a river is not a dam. South Africa's corrupt elite are too lazy for their pillage to be especially sophisticated or elusive, and in one sense, that's just as well. But in another, it simply adds to the disaster engulfing the South African body politic and body economic.

Nobody thinks any more about modernity, internationalism, South Africa's disappearing place in the sun. Nobody thinks of complex engagement with the rest of the world. The theme of the moment is plain and simple theft on a national scale by those who control the party and the state alike.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **SAVAGE NOBELS**

I was born in South Africa. My parents are South African. My children are South Africa. We carry no passports other than South African ones. My grandparents were naturalised South Africans being originally from Europe – England, Ireland, Holland and Germany to be specific. They were attracted here, invited here, offered citizenship here, accepted here, employed here and happy here.

At no stage were they part of a foreign marauding tribe that dispossessed anybody. They observed the laws of the land, worked hard, bought land, built houses, paid taxes, educated their children and loved their adopted country South Africa. They fought as South African troops in the two great wars. They absorbed the derision, scorn and sanction meted by the international community in the Apartheid years between 1948 and 1994 even though they voted against the governing party of the day. They never once supported nor condoned the policy of separate development. I am a South African and proud of it.

Why then are certain ANC Parliamentarians telling me to go back where I came from? I came from here, South Africa. I have no other country that I call home. This is the country in which I was born and I still live here.

There are a lot of South Africans in a similar position. We are stuck in a country that we used to call home. Once the domain of the noble savage it has become the enclave of the savage nobles. South Africa has become a typical African Kleptocracy in its decline to third world standards through greedy elitism and black on black suppression. The governing party has surrendered the country's position as the leading nation on the African Continent to become a mere also-ran.

We expected too much in 1994. With the collapse of communism, we anticipated that the ANC under Mandela South Africa would subscribe to Western Democracy. For a while under him and later Mbeki, we did just that. We applied Western Economic Policies and stepped back from the precipice upon which we were finely balanced.

Under Zuma that all changed. We are now in bed with Indian Gangsters, Russian Oligarchs, Chinese Colonialists, impoverished Brazilians and anyone else who will pay Zuma and his cronies enough money.

Who stole my country?

## South Africa is finally African

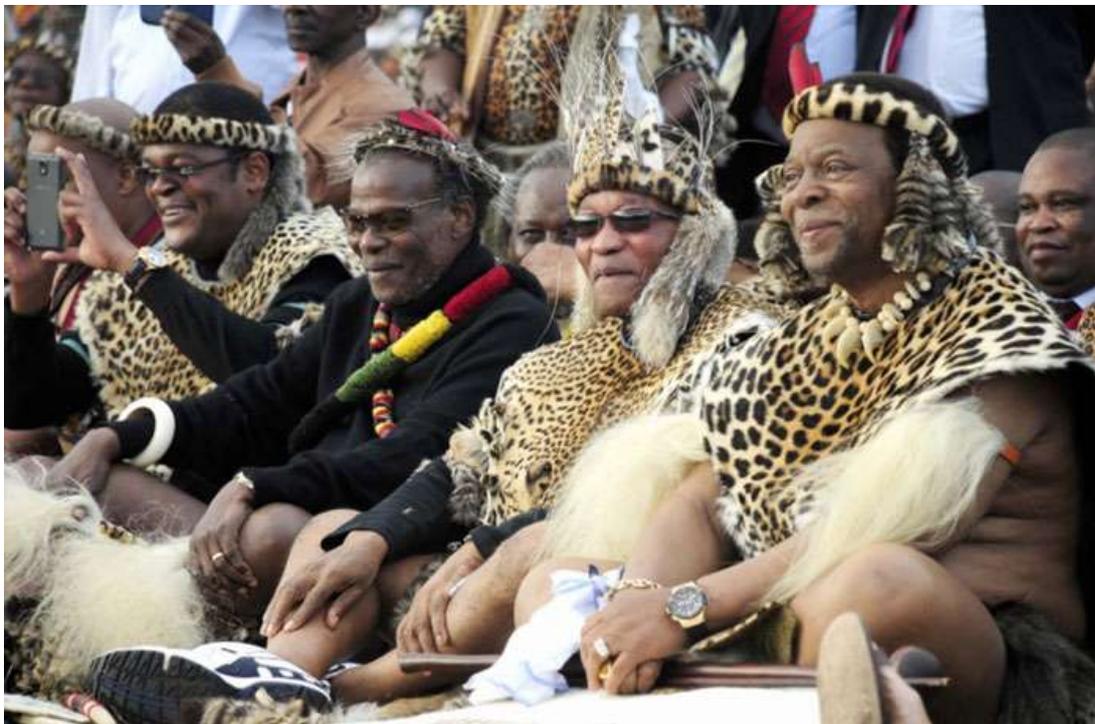
**By Prince Mashele**

*Prince Mashele is a South African national and has a Master's Degree in Political Science from Rhodes University; he has lectured in the Dept of Political Science at the University of Pretoria ; he has been Executive Director of the Centre for Politics and Research and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation ; he was speechwriter for President Thabo Mbeki ; he writes regularly for the Mail & Guardian and The Sowetan ; his book of 2014 'The Fall of the ANC : what next' was a best seller.*

'In the midst of the political confusion that has gripped our country many people are wondering if we have finally come to the end of South Africa.

The answer is simple: the thing called an "end" does not exist, not in relation to a country. South Africa will be there long after Jacob Zuma is gone.

What Zuma has done is to make us come to the realisation that ours is just another African country, not some exceptional country on the southern tip of the African continent.



During the presidency of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, some among us used to believe that the black people of South Africa are better than those of other African

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countries. We must all thank Zuma for revealing our true African character; that the idea of rule of law is not part of who we are, and that constitutionalism is a concept far ahead of us as a people.

How else are we to explain the thousands of people who flock to stadiums to clap hands for a president who has violated their country's constitution? Such people have no idea of constitutionalism.

Now that we have reclaimed our place as another African country, we must reflect on and come to terms with our real character, and imagine what our future portends.

In a typical African country, ordinary people don't expect much of politicians because people get tired of repeated empty promises.

In a typical African country, people have no illusions about the unity of morality and governance. People know that those who have power have it for themselves and their friends and families.



The idea that the state is an instrument for people's development is a Western concept, and has been copied by pockets of Asian countries.

Africans and their leaders don't like to copy from the West. They are happy to remain African and do things "the African way".

The African way is rule by kings, chiefs and indunas in a setting of unwritten rules. Is there anyone who has seen a book of African customary laws?

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The idea that a commoner can raise questions about public money spent on the residence of a king is not African. The ANC MPs who have been defending Zuma are true Africans.

Asking a ruler to be accountable is a foreign - Western - idea. In a situation where there is conflict between a ruler and laws, Africans simply change the laws to protect the ruler. This is why no single white person has called for King Dalindyebo to be released from jail.

The problem with clever blacks is that they think they live in Europe, where ideas of democracy have been refined over centuries.

What we need to do is to come back to reality, and accept that ours is a typical African country. Such a return to reality will give us a fairly good idea of what SA's future might look like.....

This country will not look like Denmark. It might look like Nigeria, where anti-corruption crusaders are an oddity. Being an African country, ours will not look like Germany. SA might look like Kenya, where tribalism drives politics.

People must not entertain the illusion that a day is coming when SA will look like the United States. Our future is more on the side of Zimbabwe, where one ruler is more powerful than the rest of the population. Even if Julius Malema were to become president, it would still be the same. African leaders don't like the idea of an educated populace, for clever people are difficult to govern.

Mandela and Mbeki were themselves corrupted by Western education.

Zuma remains African. His mentality is in line with Boko Haram. He is suspicious of educated people; what he calls "clever blacks". Remember that Boko Haram means "Against Western Education".

The people who think we have come to the end of SA don't realise that we have actually come to the beginning of a real African country, away from the Western illusions of exceptionalism. Those who are unsettled by this true African character need help. The best we can do for them is to ask them to look north of the Limpopo River, to learn more about governance in Africa.

What makes most people restless about the future of SA is that they have Western models in mind, forgetting that ours is an African country. The idea that a president can resign simply because a court of law has delivered an adverse judgment is

Western. Only the Prime Minister of Iceland does that; African rulers will never do that.

Analysed carefully, the notion of SA coming to an "end" is an expression of a Western value system - of accountability, political morality, reason, and so on.

All these are lofty ideas of Socrates, Kant, Hegel, and so on. They are not African.

All of us must thank Jacob Zuma for introducing us to the real African Republic of South Africa, not some outpost of European values'.

*So, I'm thinking, does that mean that as a nation we should accept mediocrity? Should we happily move from the powerhouse of Africa to a lowly also ran? Should we surrender our claim to First World Status to become a more comfortable basket case developing nation?*

*Should we not aspire to become the best that we can be as a nation?*

## **ANC has been co-opted by capitalism**

**By Sandile Memela.**

**NEWS / 3 January 2017**

*Many have come to appreciate that disunity and conflict has always plagued the ANC and that there have always been two camps in the organisation, such as the negotiators, like Thabo Mbeki and those, like Chris Hani, who believed in a hostile armed struggle. Chris Hani believed in a hostile armed struggle. All camps or factions within the ANC have been captured and are trapped in the racist, capitalist and patriarchal economic system*

Over the past year many South African citizens and observers of political developments have been baffled and confused by divisions and conflict in the ANC. What seemed to deepen the confusion was lack of understanding of what was at the root of this conflict that resulted in an internal fight to the death that saw comrades turn against each other.

But, as the ANC prepares for its 105th anniversary in Soweto on January 8, what seemed uncertain and confusing is sure no longer.

Many who believed the ANC was a solid, united and homogeneous organization has come to appreciate that disunity and conflict has always plagued the party.

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It was transmogrified into a 'broad church' that accommodated contradictory political schools of thought, with capitalists, moralists and communists all belonging to the party.

The difference and disagreements were ideological and based on principle. But this is seen as a relic of the past now.

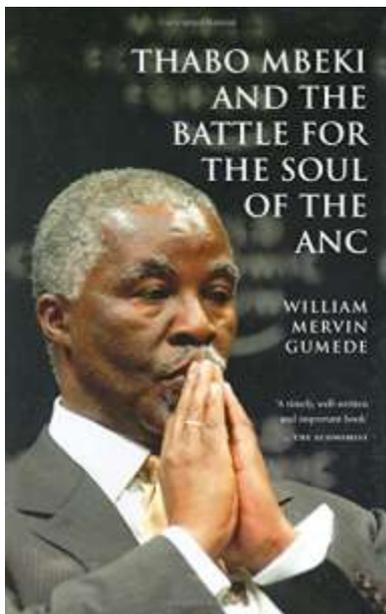
For an increasing number of observers and sober activists, the difference that divides or separates what is perceived to be different camps or factions is the same.

What this means is that all camps or factions have been captured and are trapped in the racist, capitalist and patriarchal economic system.

People are increasingly becoming aware that what is certain is that what the different camps or factions are fighting for is control over State resources for themselves, fuelled by a desire to succeed in terms of capitalism.

It is about being the dominant force in the establishment that is based on capitalist greed, selfishness and putting personal interest above all else.

There are very few people in either camp that desire to radically transform the economic system, or substitute it with an alternative. There is almost nobody that talks about an alternative economic system. They are all about making it good in the capitalist system.



Even the communists and church leaders have stepped forward to fight to find themselves comfortable and secure in the capitalist economic system. It seems there is no alternative.

But how did the ANC get itself into this bind?

It is interesting to trace this to the days before the ANC was unbanned. Sad as it is to admit, the ANC has always been riddled by internal strife and division.

Perhaps there was never a time when it was so solidly united to be homogeneous.

Over the last few years these divisions have become more apparent in what has been dubbed 'the struggle for the soul of the ANC'.

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But what people forget is that when the exiled ANC returned - separate from the ANC in Robben Island or one that was underground in the guise of the UDF - it was fragmented and divided against itself. It could not agree on anything or speak with a coherent voice.

For example, there was lack of clarity or agreement on whether an imprisoned Nelson Mandela should engage in talks with the apartheid regime.

Even before that, there was no unanimity on pursuit of a non-violent agenda or armed struggle.

Worse, as the internal upheavals intensified in the mid-1980s, the ANC could not agree on the route to a new future. Was it going to pursue a negotiated settlement or push harder with the armed struggle?

There have always been two camps or factions in the ANC approach.

First, there was the heir apparent faction led by the erudite and cosmopolitan Thabo Mbeki. He was the leader of the sheep group that believed in negotiations.

This was rivalled and competed with the goats group, associated with Chris Hani and/or Joe Slovo, who were hostile and resented the idea of talks. They believed in pushing the armed struggle to the end.

The frightening realisation is that, with hindsight, both approaches were terrifying and menacing political choices.

The Mbeki sheep route would not and could not deliver return of the land, redistribution of the wealth or eradicate stereotypes and prejudice. It was a step in the right direction, but would need to be settled on the apartheid regime's terms.

Its detractors believed no genuine liberation could be achieved through big talk.

On the other hand, the Hani-Slovo goat's approach of fighting to the death would leave the country a wasteland.

There are no winners in war and the apartheid regime had the military might that could be unleashed mercilessly against black people.

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Perhaps what needs to be acknowledged is that both the sheep and goats have been defeated by being sucked into the system. In fact, they have become part of a system and history they fought against.

The new culture actually finds that former freedom fighters are all worming their way into the belly of the beastly capitalist system.

What this has produced is the overnight multi-millionaire who is not satisfied with what he has accumulated for himself, his family and his friends. The haves want more.

The original and true image of the ANC - a nationalist organisation that represented indigenous African interests - can no longer be captured in a word, image or phrase.

Over the century it has evolved to be all things to all men.

Worse, what the ANC stands for now cannot be explained or articulated in a revolutionary theory or vision that defines it outside the capitalist economic system. It is completely integrated into the unjust and unequal establishment.

Thus, whatever ideas either faction provides, it is to lead the African majority to the capitalist economic slaughter house that does not discriminate between sheep and goats.

The masses are trapped because the ANC is trapped in being a pillar of the economic status quo. Its duty is to make the country work by protecting and preserving the rapacious economic system.

Any attempt to make sense of the so-called internal divisions literally boils down to who serves the interests of black or white monopoly capital better.

The ANC now functions in a predictable way that its leading political strategist and thinker, Joel Netshitenzhe, said it would.

He used the phrase 'phuma ngingene,' which literally means 'leave office now as it is our turn to eat'.

Everybody wants the same piece of capitalist gain for themselves, friends and family.

Much as the ANC is portrayed as torn into different factions, they are essentially the same.

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