

The African renaissance and other lies

By Ian Cox



Have you often wondered why people use words to describe the exact opposite of what those words mean? It is sadly the reality of government today where the old soft flannel is increasingly being replaced by the outright lie. It is a sad thing to say but I think it is true that government lies to us these days more often than it tells the truth.

Thus when government talks of empowering its people it really means empowering government officials. Similarly laws meant to enable business do the opposite. They enable officials to increasingly control business. It gets much nastier than this in the environmental space where you could be excused for thinking that one is dealing with the inmates of a particularly dangerous lunatic asylum.

Senior officials in the DEA are travelling the world assuring anyone who will listen to them that they mean the trout value chain no harm by trying to list trout as invasive. This is a barefaced lie. The truth is that any fish that is not indigenous living in its wild sate is regarded by these people as dirty diseased and dangerous or worse still mutants that must be eradicated at all costs. There is no doubt that environmental officials want to eradicate trout. They refer to the existence of trout as an infestation. Their recent actions to try and hurt the trout value chain in Mpumalanga speak for themselves.

They lie to government because they know they can get away with it just as they can tell the President and his Cabinet to take government's plan to grow fresh water aquaculture and stick it where the sun does not shine. Strong language I know but I am not joking. This is what they are saying.

My other favourite lie is the story that we are a constitutional democracy living under the rule of law and united by our diversity. That is the dream of the African renaissance. I know I say it a lot hoping that someone out there may feel as I do that we must work to make this true. The truth regrettably is something much uglier. Ours is not an African renaissance. Ours is a nation that is rapidly reverting to a pre renaissance state where dogma rules over reason and “big men” supported by privileged officials rule absolutely over all. The truth is that our government increasingly resembles the kind of corrupt court that King Henry the Eighth would have been familiar with. It is a world where cliques rule within cabals all directed at preserving the flawed magnificence of the national leader while getting personally rich or powerful (depending on what floats your boat). King Henry bankrupted Britain as our current government is bankrupting South Africa.

Business has been co-opted as has the press and most recently our universities who gave up their autonomy in the fight over fees. The number of people employed by government and parastatals or who the beneficiary of social security grants is more than 50% of those who voted in the last elections.

The only truth still out there is nothing is for free but that is also true of freedom and South Africans have told the world that they are not prepared to pay the price for freedom.

That is the reality of the New South Africa as it is developing today. It is the real world the department of environmental affairs and environmental officials are working so hard to create. Trout SA deal with this terrifying spectacle in submissions to the Minister on proposed changes to our environmental laws. You can access those by clicking [here](#).

What make this even scarier is that business is doing nothing to stop this. The reason is that a diminishing group of businessmen are getting very rich out the process. Think I am wrong look at the DEA’s attempts to make it a criminal offence to sell property without notifying the buyer of the presence of invasive species on the property. The regulation is completely unlawful. Indeed one can say attempts to make it law were dishonest. Yet the property industry has stood back and done nothing, no doubt because they hope to make money out of it. Click on the link to my submission on regulation 29 [here](#).

The fact that present and future generations of South Africans are suffering and will suffer for this selfishness means nothing to these people We are truly a nation who is its own worst enemy. Cry thy beloved country may well turn out to be South Africa’s true motto.
