

Bad Dreams For The Namibian Taxpayer

AN American road movie goes like this: A harmless person tries to get a lift from another human being and runs into trouble. They are heading in the wrong direction. He/She smells that something is fishy. He/She is taken to a forced ride and tries with all his/her wits to escape from this menace. Usually in the end he/she drives on a dirt road in the direction of the setting sun as a free person leaving his/her experience as a bad dream like the dust cloud behind.

A Namibian road movie is different. It goes like this: A Ger-

man craftsman tries to establish a metal workshop in Namibia. His idea is to substitute some imports through his manufactured products. His intentions are sound. His would-be products are badly needed. He has a similar outfit in the former eastern part of Germany. Therefore he thought he could profit from his clever dealings within a socialist society he has lived in. He managed to arm himself with a letter from a high ranking German official, who was also a high ranking official in the sunken so called "DDR", although in a totally different posi-

tion. He handed over his letter (from ex-party partisan to still-party comrade) to a highly positioned person and was introduced to a manager of a DBC company as the competent counterpart for his project. There the forced ride started. They flew together to the Ondangwa fair to see how the market would react to the offer. The market reacted positively. They decided to found a common company and to start as soon as possible with the production. The German craftsman could see no problems in getting orders for the products, since his coun-

terpart was a well known and trustworthy comrade with the usual backing of high ranking officials. They had everything to start, like an existing fully equipped company, except the right specialised equipment for manufacturing the new products.

The craftsman promised to see that this equipment would be bought as soon as he was back in Germany and sent to his future counterpart in Namibia.

After some time he came back and saw the unpacked equipment in the production hall. He was told that everything went well and right on

track, only a little bit delayed. The equipment would be paid soon and they could start the next week or so to mount everything in the right place. The craftsman was irritated and flew to Germany, but promised to

come back immediately to train the workers and to start the production, once he gets the signal that everything is installed. The signal never came. He had to pay for the still unused equipment out of his own pocket. He decides to go back to Namibia to gather some information about his situation and the business habits of his comrade counterpart. Something he should have done in the first place. He found out that his comrade counterpart is manager of a DBC company which has produced nothing so far since it was founded. The salary this gentleman draws amounts

to N\$600 000 per year. The secretary gets N\$360 per month. The workers have not been paid for quite sometime. He is shocked and develops some racist ideas. He still does not believe that all he heard before were just words without any meaning. But he decided for himself to cut his losses, recover his equipment, go and forget the whole thing.

The last he saw in Namibia before taking off from Hosea Kutako Airport was a drunken Namibian trying to penetrate the only Air Namibia Boeing 747 with the help of a forklift! But in the end all his bad dreams were over. He could leave relieved, with a cloud of exhaust fumes behind.

But for the Namibian taxpayer the nightmare, to be taken for a forced ride by numerous incompetent "managers", or have his car penetrated from behind by a drunken countryman,

is not over.

It is argued that the parastatal companies have to pay these inflated salaries so that they, "the managers" do not get employed by somebody else. This is a blatant lie. The people using this argument know very well that there is no production industry in Namibia worth its name, which would consider employing such people. Only the government is in the position to "burn" money to satisfy the greedy new class. These managers should pay the company instead for the privilege of being in a nice cool place with telephone and tea service, watching people trying to earn their crust of bread. It seems that for the Namibian taxpayer the bad dreams have just started.

We are, after all, not in Hollywood.

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