Sunday Satire

Dictator's way: The Towel of Babble

To be sure, a dictator's panic is part of biblical prophecy, too. It's linked to increased social chaos, war and political unrest as preludes to the "last days".

BY PHILIP MATOGO

The story of the Tower of Babel, found in the Bible's Book of Genesis 11:1–9, explains why humanity speaks different languages and is scattered across the world.

You know that. I know that. Hence, we know that. Right? Wrong.

According to scripture, which seemingly got lost on the way to the printery when the Bible was first published, the story of the Tower of Babel was given the Epstein treatment and thereby heavily redacted.

This is the story of the missing scriptures. It refers to discrepancies between older Bible translations (like the King James Version) and modern ones, where certain verses, such as the "Woman Caught in Adultery" (John 7:53–8:11), appear in older texts but are absent or footnoted in newer Bibles due to textual criticism revealing scribal additions in later manuscripts.

With that said, what really happened 4,200 to 4,300 years ago, around 2200–2300 BCE, at the Towel of Babel?

Google will tell you what was up all those years ago because Google was there even 5,000 years ago, and that's 'googleable'.

Anyway, the story of the Tower of Babel goes: Humanity, speaking one tongue in Shinar, united to build a city and a tower reaching the heavens to make a name for themselves and avoid scattering.

God, seeing their pride and unity as a threat, confused their speech, making them unable to understand each other, which halted construction and scattered them across the Earth, creating different languages and cultures, with "Babel" meaning "confusion."

However, because of humankind's vanity, God created dictators to mirror that conceit (at the Tower of Babel).

This rare breed of half-men, dictators, would only find completion when united with their better halves: power.

They were condemned to turning politics into a zero-sum game, one they must win at all costs.

And they would win but, after their efforts, they will be so poor that all they will have is power. No love, no identity outside of office, no exit strategy to save their legacy.

However, there was a catch. God decided that while the rest of us spoke unintelligibly to one another, dictators would speak the same language. Consequently, dictators would have similar fates.

For language is destiny, so our words, inner narratives, and even the structure of our native tongue profoundly shape our reality, choices and life path.



Accordingly, the twilight years of different dictators can be cross-pollinated to deflower a composite sketch of where every dictator is sure to end up.

For instance, you are all familiar with that dictator who was overthrown by a revolution sparked by protests in one part of the country that spread to other parts of the country leading to mass demonstrations and the military's defection to the revolutionaries' side. After fleeing, the dictator was subjected to a swift, unfair trial by a provisional government, and executed.

Many of you will assume that I am writing about Muammar Gaddafi (Libya, 2011), or possibly Perdinand Marcos (Philippines, People Power Revolution) and what about Omar al-Bashir (Sudan, 2019)?

Well, the dictator in my story is Nicolae Ceaușescu. He was overthrown by the Romanian Revolution of December 1989, executed along with his wife Elena.

In eerily similar fashion to how Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian communist partisans on April 28, 1945, during the final days of World War II in Europe.

Subsequently, due to their aforesaid condemnation, dictators are said to have viewed the Tower of Babel as the Tower of Babble. That's why they babble so much.

Before his ouster, Ceaușescu met about 100,000 workers bused in and provided with placards to chant pro-regime slogans like "Ceaușescu and the People".

A few minutes into his address, the crowd began to boo and chant "Timisoara!"

Protests to his misrule began in Timisoara and spread to Bucharest. As the protests were visible on live television, Ceaușescu's expression shifted from confidence to confusion and panic.

To be sure, a dictator's panic is part of biblical prophecy, too. It's linked to increased social chaos, war and political unrest as preludes to the "last days" when first becomes last and last becomes first, reflecting Babel's story arc.

SATIRE. The week that was. "Cartoons Satire is traditionally the weapon of the powerless against the powerful." Molly Ivins

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