

# **THE EGOISM OF POWER & THE LIZARD THAT JUMPED FROM A HIGH IROKO TREE TO THE GROUND – THE 2022 BUDGET: BY MARTIN A. B. K. AMIDU**

**“Radix Malorum Est Cupiditas”**

## **THE FIRST BETRAYAL**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, the Minority in Parliament contrary to its own avowed negative evaluations approved the affected ministerial nominees of the President for appointment. The Ghanaian electorate, including some members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Executive and its mass followers outside Parliament, who had the benefit of viewing what transpired in Parliament during the vetting process through public broadcasting felt betrayed, and disappointed by the brazen sell out by the NDC caucus in Parliament to the Government in the approval process.

The Functional Executive Committee (FEC) of the NDC (NDC-FEC) held a crisis meeting the next day, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and acknowledged in a press statement that: “... whatever the disappointment and disagreements may be especially from among the rank and file of the party, care should be taken not to allow these to degenerate into unnecessary bickering at the expense of party discipline and cohesion.” The statement added that:

“We are also of the view that urgent action is required to deal with the matter and consequently we have initiated a consultation process with the Party's Council of Elders in this regard. It is in our collective interest as a party to address challenges facing the Caucus Leadership and the Backbench as a whole. This task will be tackled expeditiously so as to preserve the unity, cohesion and resilience of the NDC parliamentary Caucus.”

The tempers of Ghanaians and the ordinary members of the NDC itself were not assuaged by this appeal. Consequently, the Minority Leader on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 had to make a public statement on behalf of the Minority caucus in Parliament to reject claims that the Minority caucus had been influenced with money to vote to approve the ministerial nominees. He was at pains to point out in the statement that the caucus will never make money or consideration the basis of their engagement with the ruling party:

“The Leadership and entire Parliamentary caucus of the NDC wish to reiterate our commitment to the cause of the great National Democratic Congress. We expressly reaffirm our resolve to hold the Akufo-Addo government to account over the coming days, months and years for their stewardship to the Ghanaian people. This is nonnegotiable. You may be disappointed in this outcome but we will not disappoint or let you down in the future. The Caucus has never been and would never be for sale.”

The Council of Elders of the NDC then met with the Leadership of the NDC on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021, to discuss the developments in Parliament arising from the approval of some of the Ministers designate on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. As a sequel to this meeting the Council of Elders met again on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 with the Leaderships of the NDC and the NDC caucus in Parliament following which the Chairman of the Council of Elders issued a statement collectively agreeing that the incident of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 in Parliament where some ministerial nominees were approved was “regrettable and unfortunate, and runs contrary to the principles and values of the party.” (Emphasis supplied). In the words of the press statement signed by Chairman of the Council of Elders:

“The Caucus Leadership have since pledged to uphold the principles and values of the party in our collective bid to develop our country. .... The Council urged National leadership of the party to resolve issues relating to the Caucus leadership in Parliament and called on the rank and file of the party to remain calm, and provide the needed support to our Caucus in order to hold the Akufo Addo government strictly to the principles of probity and accountability.”

Judas Iscariot could not keep faith with this first compact of integrity with the electorate facilitated by the Council of Elders for even one month.

## **THE SECOND BETRAYAL**

The second betrayal and sell out came on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 when without any tangible reason explaining its volte-face the Minority Leader seconded the approval of the Minister of Finance nominee in a consensus voice vote in Parliament. The real culprits behind the shameless compromises and sell out became public knowledge the next day, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 when the Squealer of the NDC appeared on Peace FM to admit the NDC-FEC’s responsibility and gave reasons for the betrayal by the Minority caucus of the Ghanaian electorate. Peace FM reported the story as follows:

“General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Johnson Asiedu Nketia, has revealed reasons why the Minority Caucus on the Appointments Committee approved Finance Minister-designate Ken Ofori-Atta. And it is shocking to the core as it is vain.”

It was indeed shocking to the core as it was vain. The Squealer of the NDC said on air that:

“We have strategies as a political party and some of the NDC leaders sat down and considered the approval of the nominee as to whether passing or failing him, which one will be in the interest of the party. So, we all decided that if we allow him to be the finance minister, it will be in the interest of the NDC....We realised during the vetting of the finance minister, he was exposed in all his wrong deeds...The banks he collapsed, PDS deal and bad financial decisions he superintended over; we needed him to be there to remind Ghanaians what he has wrought on this country.... tell Nana Akufo-Addo that if it is this lame-back finance minister he wants to still be in control of the country’s finances, so be it, and that is why we told our people to approve him.”

The capitulation of the Minority caucus in Parliament in approving the Minister of Finance nominee who is now bent on inflicting a draconian and harsh 2022 Budget with economic and social hardships on Ghanaians was the handy work of a former Minister of Finance of the NDC and the NDC-FEC as I have written and pointed out in my analysis available online and on my website as: “The MPs Double Salary Criminal Investigation Docket Was Handled By the Attorney-General and Never By Martin Amidu As Special Prosecutor”, at page 3 under the sub-title – ‘The Double Salary & Other Criminal cases were Negotiated for Ministerial Approvals’ thereof.

## **THE THIRD BETRAYAL**

The third betrayal and sell out begun Nicodemusly with what appeared to have been the repentance of Judas Iscariot in the first two betrayals of the Ghanaian electorate on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 when We the People were deceived into believing that the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy had been rejected by Parliament because of the vigilance of the Minority caucus in Parliament. The NDC Minority caucus had unbeknown to the public been assimilated into the Nana Akufo-Addo's one-party Kabuki dance ensemble. The Minority and the Majority held a secret meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at which the Minority agreed to absent itself from the main Parliamentary sitting that day to enable the Majority abuse the 1992 Constitution and Standing Orders of Parliament in purporting to rescind the rejected 2022 Budget of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The latest in the Nana Akufo-Addo one-party Kabuki dance is that, as expected, a letter with reference number PS/CS/167 dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 [sic] under the signature of the Clerk to Parliament and addressed to the Minority Leader has put an end to the Kabuki dance as far as the sham attempts by the Minority caucus to save face in the name of rescinding the rescission of the rejected 2022 Budget on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 is concerned. The two paragraphs of the letter state:

"Please refer to your communication dated 7th December, 2021 on the Motion relating to a ruling of the Hon. First Deputy Speaker on Wednesday, 1st December, 2021.

The Hon. First Deputy Speaker, pursuant to Order 13 (2) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, has directed that I inform you that the Motion is not admitted.

Meanwhile, the reality, substance and purpose of the Nana Akufo-Addo Kabuki dance was achieved in the acceptance by the Minority caucus on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 of the Majority decision on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 rescinding and approving the 2022 Budget. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 the Minister of Finance laid before Parliament a modification to the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for deliberations. The First Deputy Speaker directed that modification be made to the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government by attaching the modification submitted by the Minister of Finance to the original budget.

The Minority Leader acknowledged the modification laid by the Minister of Finance and in preliminary comments to the Speaker's directives for modifications to the 2022 Budget was reported by Joy News to have said that "the Minority was a very responsible opposition; declaring that 'and therefore, we engage and we are engaged with Government, appreciating that social consultation is important to save our country and the economy...'" He also said that:

"Mr Speaker, we believe that the e-levy is punitive and it will undermine our quest to build a critical economy in seeking to tax (electronic financial) transactions," Mr Iddrisu said. ... So, Mr Speaker, we on this side (of the House), we are unable to support the Government in its quest to impose an e-levy at 1.75 per cent on momo (mobile money) and affiliated transactions including remittances... Therefore, we stand opposed, and at every level that e-levy is introduced, we will stand united to oppose it because of the effects on the core poor of the Ghanaian people."

On the next day, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 the NDC's Squealer told Ghanaians that the NDC MPs are using every legal means to reject the budget. In typical Orwellian doublespeak fashion, he

prepared the public's mind for the obnoxious compromise with the Majority when he stated in his contradictory speech at the NDC Public Forum on the 2022 Budget that the approval of the Budget does not mean the e-levy has been approved since Select Committees have to further assess the fiscal policy. The General Secretary then gave the order of the FEC to the Minority caucus in Parliament in the following words:

“So we are at a stage where maybe from tomorrow, we will revisit the approval or non-approval of the budget. But whatever happens, we still stand by our position and we have agreed with our MPs that a boycott is not an option because if we boycott, what it means is that all these other stages will be a railroad. So we will be present and undertake our key responsibility of holding the elephant accountable.” (Emphasis supplied).

The Minority caucus had thus moved away from the draconian hardships and ills that afflict the 2022 Budget to concentrate on the E-Levy as its main objection to the rejected 2022 Budget which it treacherously facilitated to reinstate. The NDC Minority Leader was under instructions from the NDC-FEC to test the waters with the announcement he made on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary launch of the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications on the Minority accepting a 1% e-levy. This position was repeated by the NDC Squealer in his address to the NDC Public Forum on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. This explains the massive rescue operations undertaken by the NDC outside and inside Parliament to redeem the image of its Minority Leader after his speech at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary launch of the Chamber of Telecommunications backfired. Anybody reading my last article – “The Shameless Compromises of the One-Party Political Elite against the Ghanaian Electorate” should have noticed that because I knew the real traitors behind the scenes, I portrayed the Minority Leader's speech as the NDC position and not his own.

The Ghanaian electorate had been hoodwinked with a circus of deceptions since 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 of sham disagreements amongst the Nana Akufo-Addo one-party dance ensemble in Parliament. Rational and reasonable patriotic Ghanaians have always been on the alert to the machinations of such comprador political elites. Patriotic citizens were never deceived. Patriots unraveled every step in the betrayal process. We are now at the stage of what the two caucus in Parliament wanted and anticipated the most in the 2022 Budget season – the Budget Committee hearings and specially the accompanying allowances of various forms and shapes. As usual the Christmas calls and both sides must be one in the Kabuki dance against the interest of the Ghanaian electorate.

There were still ugly noises by the Minority on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 about demands for the financial proposals in the 2022 Budget including the e-levy to be laid before the House for appropriate consideration to avoid hasty approval under a certificate of urgency. The Minority Chief Whip stated on Friday that: “Mr. Speaker, in the business statement from Tuesday to Friday, conspicuously missing was the financial bills including the Electronic Transaction bill.” Parliament may rise on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021 instead of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 ostensibly to give it time to consider outstanding estimates and other matters. But this is going to be business as usual amongst Nana Akufo-Addo's Kabuki dance ensemble which has fully integrated the Minority caucus as it has been during each budget season. The Budget as an important policy, and the Appropriation Act affecting the economic and social wellbeing of Ghanaians for the next year will be railroaded through Parliament and passed without prior consultation with affected stakeholders and We the People. We the People can go to hell. The next election is three years away in 2024.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Majority caucus which has internalized the egoism of power of the Government has learnt to recruit the Minority for the Nana Akufo-Addo One-Party Kabuki dance. The Minority caucus has since the beginning of the second term of the Nana Akufo-Addo Government accepted integration and has become “the lizard that jumped from a high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no-one did” even when the electorate and its own ordinary members see them as traitors to the Constitutional role assigned an opposition party of 137 Members of Parliament in an equally split Parliament. The Minority enabled the appointment of the Minister of Finance together with any 2022 Budget hardships he inflicts upon Ghanaians. Judas Iscariot repented. The NDC can do the same.

The best defence for the 1992 Constitution is for all patriots to continue exposing the one-party political elite who are really comprador bourgeois for neocolonialist interests for who they really are by putting Ghana First!

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