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## Accounting's fate in modern authoritarianism

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### Collins C. Ngwakwe

Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership,  
Faculty of Management and Law,  
University of Limpopo, South Africa  
Webster Street, Block B,  
P.O. Box 756, Fauna Park 0787, Polokwane, South Africa  
Email: collins.ngwakwe@ul.ac.za  
Email: ccnjb@hotmail.com

**Biographical notes:** Collins C. Ngwakwe received his education in accounting at the Abia State University in Nigeria. He has lectured accounting at his alma mater in Nigeria, at the University of Cape Town South Africa, and currently at the University of Limpopo South Africa, where he is Professor and Head of MBA program at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership University of Limpopo South Africa. His research interest borders on sustainability, accounting and business. He has published in international journals. He is a member of the Association of International Accountants UK. His writing hobby is in accounting rhymes.

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*Oh accounting, a tool in the hand of the mighty!*

*A weapon in the hand of modern tyrants; subjugated and trampled –*

*Asphyxiated to suppress alertness,*

*And to suppress the roaring voice of public finance watchdog.*

*Squeezed along the corridors of power –with no escape route –*

*But to gape at the master despot as he plunders public fund*

*Via undemocratic and asymmetric budgets –*

*Via mandatory expense authorisations*

*Devoid of budgetary routine;*

*Bereft of internal control process; and*

*Bereft of accounting standards;*

*But armaments and tyrannical security is elevated –*

*Elevated in preference to public health and education,*

*Thus accounting is infested with misty eyes to see;*

*Infested with withered hands to report,*

*But sit and watch helplessly as if enthralled –*

*Waiting for unscrupulous command from the despot*

*And a petrified voice is heard in the thin air – yelling –  
Where lays the power of accounting under autocracy?  
Where lays the power of accounting under the tyrannical barrel of gun?  
Toothless and powerless, as transparency and objectivity is laid to rest;  
Standards and public finance regulations are incarcerated in the despot's  
offices.  
Thus unwittingly accounting becomes a tool of oppression in the hands of  
tyrants.  
Thus the hope of the public is damned as the watchdog –accounting, is caged.*

*Then alas, in the streets, lay the guiltless children,  
The frail and innocent women –blameless though,  
But have fallen victim of weapons of mass destruction –  
Amassed with public finance – devoid of democratic budgetary appropriations;  
And in defiance to public financial protocols;  
Sporadically the voices of transparency and fiscal discipline rise and fade in  
the thin air,  
Crying for help but to no avail*

*And the voice of financial corruption cries out –  
And is still crying in the streets;  
But the voice gets faint as artillery music beclouds it,  
But who may confront finance venality?  
Who can tame tyrannical excesses? Washington or London;  
But the Western censure is rebuffed sharply,  
But economic hegemony and penchant of allies reassures tyrants.*

*Let the mourners be comforted,  
Let the economically impoverished be hopeful,  
Let the exiled auditor generals and chief judges be consoled  
A day of accounting for accountability is fast approaching  
And the malfeasance of public finance shall be interrogated –  
Then accounting shall preside over his oppressor –the despot  
By means of accounting standards and public finance regulations*

*Though accounting is currently silenced; but this is transitory –  
This same accounting – trampled under tyrannical supremacy,  
Shall arise; arise after the power of artillery shall have waned  
Shall arise after the colossus has exited the bloody scene;  
To audit tyrannical financial transgressions  
If not the tyrant; then, the tyrant's progenies and cohorts,  
Then accounting shall rise again, to restore fiscal discipline,  
To restore investments and economic growth,  
To accelerate job creation and wipe out hunger tears from the poor  
To usher in FASB and SEC –to reinstate transparency to the fore  
To rebuilt the shattered shopping malls and public places  
To restore financial sanity to the stock exchange and central banks  
To instil independence to private investments and to grow same*

*Then accounting shall flourish under modern democracy  
And its scions – objectivity, transparency, and independence,  
Shall police the offices of public finance and  
The offices of the democratic leader unmolested  
Then the reminiscence of humiliated despots and their cohorts  
Shall deter public finance avarice and manipulation of power*