

# Living In Dangerous Times

AS we rush headlong to the end of the millennium, I have this very unsettling feeling that the edges of our frail society - brave new Namibia! - are crumbling under the onslaught of insecurity, fear and outright paranoia.

Over the last decade, the world of ideas has failed to deliver anything credible to hold together civil society - the idea of organised religion still hangs it by its fingernails but has failed to address our physical needs, the great battle between capitalism and communism has ended with communism defeated and yet there is an uneasy feeling that capitalism should not have won the day, because now we are left at the mercies of robber capitalism, a market-place driven beast that has no eyes and ears for the suffering of the little people of the world.

Organised labour, in our own country, has been co-opted politically by the ruling elite who have simply swapped their cloaks of socially-conscious respectability for tailor made Mao suits, hiding their ever-increasing wealth and just-arrived-on-the-market cellphones from the poor behind the tinted windows of their armour-plated Mercedes Benzes and BMWs.

Right now, we have a government in place which, after eight years of all the political support they could wish for, have showed no other inclination than to abuse the powers granted to them to ensure that they will remain in power. Yes, the great Swapo, which once held the only

promise of social justice in the face of overwhelming odds, is now little more than a self-serving, self-perpetuating mutual admiration club of aging men, held together only by their unashamed glorification of the cheap trinkets of conspicuous consumerism and their fear that, by failing to assure their president that he is indeed the only answer to Namibia's future, may find themselves out in the cold at the next Cabinet reshuffle.

And so they have all become, their fearful leader included, the unwitting prostitutes of the "forces of international imperialist capitalism", to use one of their favourite phrases. What sickening irony!

And yet, we are expected to believe them when we are told that the war in the Congo is in the defence of international solidarity; that we are fighting a noble war against the dark forces of American designs to have us recolonised.

The truth is that the ruling elite have dreams of becoming richer than Croesus in "joint ventures" with an equally morally corrupt Zimbabwean ruling elite in grabbing the precious natural resources of the Congo for themselves only (but in the name of international solidarity).

Their Plan - seize control of the resources, and then sell it to the highest bidder, which in any instance would be those very forces they profess to oppose... Time will prove me right here, I just know it.

And for this, we have to sacrifice our sons, brothers, lovers and friends in a senseless, genocidal slaughter that ignores the plight of millions of ordinary Congolese people and that only really benefits those international merchants of death, the arms merchants from the United States, Britain, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia and China, now living amongst us like ticks in a dog's hairs...

If we truly support international solidarity with oppressed people elsewhere, why has Theo-Ben Gurirab yet to say anything about the ongoing and brutal massacre of more than 250 000 East Timorese people since 1975, hunted from British-made Hawk jets and spied upon by American satellites?

Why has the Namibian government not said anything about the forced labour, the unspeakable atrocities committed by General Ne Win and his killer General Khin Nyunt of Burma's murderous military SLORC regime? All this while the democratically-elected leader of the people, Aung San Suu Kyi, remains locked up in her own house and her supporters defy death by torture just to hear her say anything, anything at all that will give them hope?

And why are we silent on the systematic rape and pillaging of Tibet by China, not to even mention the Beijing regime's brutal suppression of democratic hope in their own country? Just who are the forces of the international imperialistic capital-

ist conspiracy, who have become the stooges of neo-colonialism?

The ugly reality is that our leadership has found that they have more in common with other dictators and right-wing regimes than with oppressed people elsewhere; they will not say anything about Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor because they would like to have cheap credit in order to buy more weapons and other tools of death in order to prop up their ivory-tower dreams of being an invincible African power!

Is this why Prime Minister Geingob held a separate briefing for diplomats from the weapons-producing countries like Brazil last week, giving out the

impression of wanting peace to the others but possibly asking for military assistance from the favoured few? Please deny this, Mr Prime Minister - but if you are shown to have lied to us, you must - if you have any iota of integrity - be willing to resign from your exalted position, if the opposite proves to be true. And if you are forced into doing these things because your boss demands this at the pain of your dismissal (like you were forced to motivate his third term), be brave, and tell us - you will end up being the hero.

We are living in very, very dangerous times, my fellow Namibians. The President, sadly unable to relinquish power and Plan clear succession without exposing himself to eventual revenge from his frightened minions,

is retreating deeper and deeper into his shell of paranoia and fear. And far more dangerously, he has resurrected the Plan army inside the Namibian Police, where they now outnumber the ordinary police by two to one - just how many Caprivians does he expect? Or is it that, under the guise of creating employment, he is setting up a little insurance policy for himself?

Why is it that the aging leaders of Africa all fail to see the truth, namely that when they go against the will of their own people, they always end up creating civil war in their own societies; that in failing to heed the true wishes for justice, they only see themselves as being capable of dispensing justice and then end up igniting genocidal wars?

Will you, Mr President, give up power gracefully if and when you are defeated politically and retire to Etunda Farm? Or will you and your minions seek to hang on to power, change the Constitution to suit your fear of political obsolescence and install you as President for Life? These are very hard questions - but we, the young generation of Namibia, deserve a future - and we want to know if there is going to one.

Wake up, fellow Namibians - we are living in very, very dangerous times. Speak up, or forever hold your silence.

**PATRIOT, WINDHOEK**  
(via e-mail)

## Schools Should Precedents For Flight Concerns