

Govt Is Effectively Promoting Corruption

I WOULD like to make some comment on what the Press reported as President Sam Nujoma's "sitting" on the Frank Commission Report, after having seen the Prime Minister's tragic, pitiful appeal on television, where he tried to impress on the people that it is the President's sole prerogative as to whether he lets the Frank Report out for full public scrutiny or not.

"It's up to him," he wheedled, thereby in one sweep, setting aside all the structures of accountability and putting the entire integrity of the nation at the discretion of one man - the President. This simply cannot be the case. This cannot be consistent with our constitution.

What the "ruling party" cannot seem to understand is that what they were fighting for, when seeking independence, was not simply getting out from under colonial, or white, rule.

They were fighting for independence from oppression; from injustice; from dictatorship; from the arbitrary acts of those in power; from being blocked from access to resources needed to lead a decent, dignified life.

For example, Catholic against Protestant in Ireland, Nazi against Jew in Germany and communist against Christian (said PW Botha as he goes straight home from church and orders a few more political opponents assassinated) in RSA.

If one looks deeply into the motives behind these "fights" they are always economic. Some perceived "have not" is having a go at some perceived "have" but it has always suited the second-rate leader to drag some false scent across the mental tracks of the ignorant amongst their followers to confuse them, and to get them to follow a false trail, as the justification for the fight, or oppression.

Now, after old "whitey" has gone (gone in the sense that he is powerless to exert the influence and domination that he was able to do before), we are gradually falling subject to the whims of a new oppressor. Being black, he is not so clearly distinguishable. In fact, he came into power wearing totally different garb.

The new oppressor came riding in after the victory over the colonial regime, on the hopes of the common person for a better life. The hope and expectancy of "freedom": of being able to control one's own life. The freedom to become educated and trained. The freedom to contribute to the creation of the structure of upliftment for all. The establishment of a new constitution; government ac-



Hage Geingob

countability and transparency. The creation of civic structures that would be empowered to control the most vicious problem of history, being the indiscriminate, excessive abuse of the arbitrary political control of dictators and power cliques (broederbonds). What they wanted to prevent was the gathering of more and more power by those who enjoyed political control of the country. Finally, the worst, most sinister thing of all that the people need to prevent, was the gradual destruction (the breaking down, corrupting) of the so-called "democratic structures" that were put in place to ensure "freedom".

There was a structure that was empowered to call for the Frank Commission: Judge Frank was in turn empowered by legal instruments to discover the massive evidence of corruption in the country. Judge Frank gave the report to the government - hang on! no! - effectively he gave it to President Nujoma, who "sat on it" (to quote the Press) for 18 months. He



Ephraim Kasuto

has now apparently assumed the sole power, the sole discretion to do (or not do) something about corruption.

What the President and government (and by government I include the opposition), do not seem to understand is that if you do nothing about a problem, which in the the public perception you patently have the power to address, you are effectively condoning it and thereby perpetuating and becoming part of the problem.

It has apparently become the President's unbridled, despotic power to become part of the problem of corruption and not part of the solution.

When the Frank Commission Report was finally released, it was laundered to a meaningless 20-page summary of the original document and delivered to the National Assembly, for the fabled, but now emasculated democracy to do its thing.

It was sad to watch Prime Minister Geingob trying to explain away the President's act of autocracy. Geingob was a strong, respected man at



President Nujoma

independence. Many citizen's hopes rode on the expected leadership from his type of person. The rhetoric of the day was democracy, accountability, transparency, legitimacy. But to see him on television - shift, almost cowering, wheedling, trying repeatedly to justify the State's sins by saying that everything, everything is capable of being released only at the pleasure of the President, all the while knowing full well that we would not believe him. Mr Prime Minister, that was a corrupt act in itself!

Corruption in its purest definition refers simply to all civic acts and processes that "break down" or rupture the structure of civic order in society. Bribery is only one form of corruption. The exerting of undue political influence is another, as is nepotism. Fraud is another. These are one-and-all corrupt practices.

What Mr Geingob and the President cannot seem to realise is that if they close down the access of the public to the knowledge of corrupt practices, they are simply promot-

ing corruption. They are denying the citizens access to justice. They are breaking down the effectiveness of the very structure of order. They are aiding and abetting the corrupting of the structures of the civic order.

The other sad sinner in this context is the so-called acting Ombudsman, Mr Ephraim Kasuto.

More than six months ago he was given a copy of the now famous cheque of the builder Bampton to Axaro Tsoawaseb. He then sat dithering, doing nothing. He did not act as he was empowered to do; what he was being paid to do and what he was responsible, to the public, to do. That was also a corrupt act of omission. It completely, and sadly, broke down a corrupted, the democratic, accountable structures of the office of the Ombudsman. As a citizen I hope that the judicial commission is aware of this. If Ephraim Kasuto ever gets the job of Ombudsman in the future, it would be an unbridled tragedy.

What is also seemingly not understood is that during the period that Mr Kasuto sat there dithering and failing to act, about another N\$8 million was allegedly pinched from the taxpayer by the NHE officials and possibly also the Ministry people as well as an insurance agent turned project manager. Kasuto was therefore the direct cause of a loss of millions of dollars! Can he be required to make good those losses?

The State cannot afford to pay the nurses who are

performing an essential service higher salaries, but we are happy to allow millions of dollars to be drained away on Single Quarter scams; drought scams; ostrich smuggling scams (by Ministers nogal) and casino scams - both Windhoek and Swakopmund. N\$24 million of Stocks and Stocks "losses" are simply written off, and don't forget these are also Swapo party "losses" as they are also shareholders in Stocks and Stocks and the casinos.

One could go on and on and on with this sorry tale of willful societal destruction, of the willful breaking down of the economic, social and political fabric of this great country by the sins of omission of those in power and by their failure or refusal to do what they were elected and are paid to do.

A final message to the poor in Africa. Buckle up for a rough ride! The poor are becoming poorer and their numbers rising. The rich are becoming richer and their numbers decreasing. The gap between the two is widening. All this purely due to the massive impact of the biggest and most destructive disease in Africa - corruption! Unfortunately the "colour coding" is not as it used to be. Africa's poor won't be able to see or recognise their oppressors so easily and surely, because they are now black like them!

THINGS FALL APART
(CHINUA ACHEBE)
WINDHOEK