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During a recent trip to Namibia I found a crime wave in Windhoek, and a reign of terror in the Northern territories of Caprivi, Kavango and Ovambo.

South West Africa (now renamed Namibia) has been an increasingly important part of my life since I first visited it in 1974. Over the past years I have spent several months each year in SWA/Namibia both as a soldier and as a missionary. Having energetically ministered to all sections of the population in almost every town and corner of the vast territory, I grew to love its harsh beauty and its diverse people.

It was therefore traumatic to revisit Namibia and evaluate the effect of UN435, the military occupation by United Nations troops (UNTAG), the South African withdrawal, the return of SWAPO terrorists, the UN supervised election, and the handover of the country to the Marxist terror group SWAPO on 21 March 1990.

At first there didn't seem to be much outward change. The Namib Air 737 aircraft which we flew in on was the same SAA aircraft we had previously used. The air crew were SAA trained and the aircraft was on loan from South Africa.

The South African built Windhoek airport looked the same, except that the blue, red and green striped Namibian flag flew over it. The South African made roads and SA financed and constructed capital — Windhoek — still looks appealing and calm. The shops are still full of South African products and the everyday lives of the people seem outwardly the same as before independence. Even the currency used in Namibia is still South African Rand!

However once you turn on the television set for the NBC - 9.00 p.m. news - you are immediately confronted with the new dispensation. Long rambling speeches by "the President", endless

interviews with SWAPO leaders, regular technical breakdowns, repeated apologies for the bad quality of film broadcasts, very little actual news, but loads of socialist terminology and propaganda. It was so blatantly bad and absurd that I was regularly in stitches with tears pouring down my cheeks in uncontrollable laughter. It helps to maintain a sense of humour.

"We call it the 9.00 p.m. Comedy Show" said one Namibian.

"It's downright embarrassing —the Government is discrediting itself. This ridiculous propaganda is going to back-fire on SWAPO," declared another.

"We call it the Apology Show because it so often breaks down and NBC has to apologize for the break in transmission or for the poor quality of the visual or audio material."

You have to see it for yourself to believe it.

The same diverse selection of Newspapers are available on the streets. 'The Namibian' is now pro-Government because it was always pro-SWAPO, 'The Observer' is still anti-Government because its editor is anti-establishment. 'The Times' and 'Die Republican' are still pro- the DTA opposition and therefore daily expose the SWAPO Government corruption and the atrocities of its border guard 'Askari's'. But now SWAPO has its own 'Namibia Today' newspaper which reaches new depths in one dimensional, unimaginative, stereo typed, inaccurate, sloppy propaganda "journalism".

What is fascinating is the prevalence of graffiti, posters, headlines and speeches declaring how wonderful it is to be "free - at last". As I was unable to observe any new freedoms (nor remember any visible lack of freedom before independence) I regularly asked people:

"What are you free to do now that you could not do last year?" Without exception everyone replied that increased unemployment, crime, the rampant spread of AIDS and the economic decline were the only noticeable changes. "The war is over but the war never affected us in Windhoek any way."

"This is one of the problems", explained one businessman. "SWAPO promised free cars, free houses, no taxes, top jobs, etc. before the elections. There is no way they can fulfil any of their irresponsible promises. So there is a growing dissatisfaction and backlash for them. People feel cheated, lied to and used. Now they see SWAPO leaders in expensive suits, in chauffeur driven new Mercedes Benz.

Nothing has changed, except the faces of the leaders. This is now leading to an unprecedented crime wave as people steal what SWAPO promised to give them." "It's a privatized redistribution of wealth" quipped one.

Many Namibians complained that the new SWAPO Government was squandering the country's limited resources recklessly. Government overseas (first class) airtickets cost over R30 million in the first three and half months of independence.

The proposed Namibian budget allocates almost as much money to Government officials' houses and mansions as it does for the entire population and whole fleets of expensive cars have been bought, and smashed. One garage had 10 new luxury cars in for repairs at one time. Each had the green GRN Government number plates. The average cost of repairs was R25 000 for each vehicle. Some had less than 300 km on the clock.

Also surprising was the large number of building projects under construction — new office blocks, shopping centres and an elaborate pedestrian mall. This was surprising because unemployment is increasing, tourism is down to 20% of the 1989 figures and the economy is depressed and declining.

The Bible Society reported that sales were down to a fraction of previous years. The South African Defence Force had purchased more Bibles than all the other institutions combined. But now the SADF had left, the Chaplaincy of the SWATF had disbanded, the local authorities were no longer purchasing Bibles for every student, tourism was down, and so were donations — because SA soldiers had been the most generous supporters of translation and Braille Bible projects. By way of contrast, in response to my queries, I was told that during the year long United Nations (UNTAG) military occupation, of the over 7,000 UN soldiers, policemen and officials, only one had once purchased one Bible from the Bible Society. Although some South Westers had purchased a few Bibles to give to UNTAG members — the numbers involved were

insignificant.

With the departure of the South African Army (which was the greatest employer in SWNNamibia) and the United Nations personnel there seems little chance of providing adequate business to existing shops, let alone to over 100 new shops. Admittedly there has been a large influx of ex-SWAPO terrorists, "exiles" and returnees. And the proliferation of foreign embassies should provide a fair amount of business. But returnees and refugees are not likely to create jobs as much as increased unemployment and strain on support services.

Nevertheless despite rampant house breaking and car theft, there is widespread optimism in Windhoek. Many previously nervous and fearful residents have relaxed and are cautiously optimistic for the future. "We had expected the worst when SWAPO won but when after a week nothing had changed we realized that everything would be alright."

"Everybody at work wanted to move to South Africa when SWAPO came in. Nobody wanted to live under a government that had come into power through landmines and terrorism. But then all the news of violence and unrest in South Africa stopped us. We are still here only because South Africa seems more unstable and violent than here." And the NBC radio and TV reports play on this perception daily.

However Namibia has some serious problems. Firstly communist regimes seldom crack down on all dissent immediately after attaining power. That SWAPO is Marxist is plain for all to see. Nujumo condemns Israel but praises the PLO terrorists. He identifies with the MPLA of Angola, Castro of Cuba, and Gaddafi of Libya. And SWAPO's rhetoric is Marxism and their tactics are Leninism.

It is a fallacy to relax after a few months and say it won't get worse than this. Marxists never lay all their cards on the table. Deception is an integral part of their strategy. With the economic collapse of SWAPO's Eastern Europe sponsors, SWAPO is now heavily dependant on Western economic aid. With its shaky and slim majority in the last election SWAPO realizes that it still has some way to go before it can fully control Namibia.

(We received many reports that SWAPO never attained a majority at all. Senior officials confirmed that 32 sealed ballot boxes were found abandoned in Ovambo. Untag officials feared

that this discovery would upset SWAPO's victory and so all 32 ballot boxes were incinerated at SWAWEK with out ever being opened.)

And SWAPO is moving to control the Media, Army and Police as its first steps. Already religious programmes on Sunday evenings have been stopped, and remaining religious programmes have been warned not to be divisive or evangelistic but only to emphasize love and peace and reconciliation.

"There is a spirit of compromise sweeping most churches," confided one Christian leader. "The fear of SWAPO has given way to compromise and appeasement. Many ministers have sold out to the CCN (Council of Churches of Namibia) already." Along with this spiritual apostasy has come a moral downslide. Many church leaders have indulged in extra-marital affairs, others have been abandoned by their wives. Many were overcome with suspicion, caution and scepticism. "There is a satanic attack on the Church in Namibia and it is the families which are the first target."

Another source of instability is that untrained, and often illiterate political appointees have been promoted over the heads of experienced and qualified officers in the Army and Police.

Next, the educational institutions have been targeted. In a policy document entitled "Education in Transition: Nurturing Our Future" submitted to the National Assembly on 23 July 1990, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport proposed a compulsory non-Christian religious education to replace the present evangelical course.

3.6 (d) of that document states as its aim:

"The establishment of a non-confessional religious curriculum where teaching about the role of different religions and other philosophies of life in the history of mankind is introduced.."

During the independence celebrations the Christians were forced to include Bahai's, New Agers, Muslims and Liberation Theologians in the liturgy. A Peace Pole has since been planted by New Agers in Windhoek.

Even more disturbing is the news that two Full Gospel missionaries, Gert and Sharon Van der Merwe, have recently been expelled from Namibia for their evangelistic work in Kavango. Many churches have been harrassed and even closed in the Northern provinces of Caprivi, Kavango and Ovamboland. Many credible reports reached us of daily murders, robberies and looting of shops and homes by the ex PLAN fighters (SWAPO terrorists) who now form the border guards in the Northern provinces. We spoke with people who had been threatened, harassed and abused by these unruly border "Askari". Press reports of tourists and businessmen being abused formed a normal part of the daily news. And over 1200 ex-SWA Territorial Force soldiers and policemen have fled North to join Savimba's UNITA freedom fighters in Angola.

So, while Windhoek seems peaceful, it is the tribesmen of Caprivi, Kavango and Ovambo who have the dubious privilege of tasting "the first fruits of liberation".

Peter Hammond